

HAWKER'S
BIBLE CHAPTER
SUMMARIES
AND
REFLECTIONS

VOLUME 1



BY
ROBERT HAWKER

GENESIS – 2 CHRONICLES

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CONTAINING
GENESIS – 2 CHRONICLES

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PREFACE

Dr. Hawker delighted to speak of his Lord as "My most glorious Christ." In his *Poor Man's Commentary on The Old and New Testament*, "Christ and Him crucified" was emphatically the burden of his comments and the keynote of his ministry. Hawker, began his comments on each Bible chapter with a *Summary* of the chapter at hand, and concluded his verse by verse comments with *Reflections* on the same. This three volume set, entitled *Robert Hawker's Bible Chapter Summaries and Reflections* omits all of the verse by verse comments and presents only his chapter summaries and reflections. Perhaps it could more appropriately be termed Hawker's concise commentary on the entire Bible. While it *is* abbreviated, you will find it very thorough.

Dr. Hawker preached his last sermon in Charles Church on March 18th, 1827, and on April 6th he died, after being six years curate and forty-three years vicar of the parish. On the last day of his life he repeated a part of Ephesians 1, from the 6th to the 12th verses, and as he proceeded he enlarged on the verses, but dwelt more fully on these words: "To the praise of His glory Who first trusted in Christ." He paused and asked, "Who first trusted in Christ?" And then made this answer: "It was God the Father Who first trusted in Christ."

C. H. Spurgeon once commented concerning Robert Hawker by saying, "Gentleman, if you want something full of marrow and fatness, cheering to your own hearts by way of comment, and likely to help you in giving your hearers rich expositions, buy Dr. Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary. Dr. Hawker was the very least of commentators in the matter of criticism, but he sees Jesus, and that is a sacred gift which is most precious whether the owner be a critic or no. There is always such a savor of the Lord Jesus Christ in Dr. Hawker that you cannot read him without profit."

The Publisher

GENESIS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE first, and most important observation, to be made on this Book of GOD, is what our LORD himself declared, concerning the writings of the Author of it, in general; that *Moses wrote of Him*. John 5:46. And as the Redeemer did not say, in what part of this man's inspired writings, more particularly it is, that mention is made of Him, (perhaps with an intention to enforce a more diligent search through all,) it should seem to be our wisdom to keep this direction in view, through every part, in going over the whole of the *five* Books of Moses; that we may not overlook a single passage, in our search for Him, *of whom Moses and the prophets did write*, JESUS of Nazareth.

Reader! I charge you to place these four words of the LORD JESUS, as a motto for remembrance, at the head of every Book, and every Chapter: *Moses wrote of CHRIST*. And as from this unquestionable authority, whenever we open any of the writings of Moses, we may with safety say, whether it be discovered by us or not, JESUS *is here*: conscious also that from our own blindness, untaught of the HOLY GHOST, we shall never find Him; how ought we to look up, for light, and direction from above, and say with David; LORD open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law!"

There is another general observation to be made upon this Book of Genesis, before the Reader enters upon the perusal of it; namely, how gracious, and condescending it was in GOD, to cause those Sacred Records to be made, and carefully handed down to us, for giving us information concerning those interesting points, without which, they never could have been known by us. May divine grace make us duly thankful for such distinguishing mercies!

In this first Book of Moses, we have brought before us the history of the creation; the original state of man as innocent; his fall, by reason of sin; the gracious promise of redemption; together with the Church's history, in the lives of the Patriarchs, comprising a period of about 2369 years.

Reader! in observing how short an account we have of the lives of the Fathers, during so long, a period, contemplate with due seriousness, the fluctuating transitory state of man upon earth! And while the reflection suitably affects the mind, recollect no less, how sweet, and reviving the thought is, that amidst all the changing scenes of succeeding generations, in which one passeth away, and another cometh, our Covenant GOD in CHRIST, liveth and abideth forever. LORD, grant to him that writes, and to him that reads these lines, that when their hour is also come, in which both will cease from their labors, be gathered to their fathers, and have seen corruption, they may find thee to be the strength of their heart, and their portion forever.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

As the very foundation of religion must be formed in the knowledge of GOD, and our relation to Him; the Sacred Historian opens this Book of GOD, with a general account of the glorious work of the Divine Persons of the GODHEAD, in Creation; and the particular recital of each day's work, in the progress of it: concluding the Chapter with an account of the Divine Complacency, in the review of the whole, as being all perfect in its kind, and very good.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST many other precious instructions arising out of this Chapter, which I pray GOD the SPIRIT to unfold to the mind of the Reader, there are some which I venture to suggest to his more immediate attention.

And first. Is it not a very refreshing thought to the true believer in CHRIST, to behold, in the very opening of the Bible, in time first verse of it, and almost in the very first word of the verse, that the glorious doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which is the foundation of faith, is so strikingly set forth? What an exalted thought is this for the human mind to dwell in contemplation upon, that the GOD with whom we have to do, and from whose goodness we originate, is so widely distinguished, in the nature of his own existence, from all his creatures! And with what veneration, humility of soul, and the most profound homage, ought we at all times to be looking up to this first, greatest, and best of Beings!

But this is not all. It is not enough to look up to the Great I AM, as he is in himself; but we are authorized, nay enjoined, to contemplate and adore the Divine Majesty, as he stands revealed to his creatures. In the 26th verse of this Chapter, we behold the Sacred Three in One, conferring together for our creation: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. As if by this act, they called upon the human mind to admire and adore the GODHEAD in this threefold character of Persons, as the united source of all our mercies. Well might David exclaim, and so may you and I, fearfully and wonderfully am I made! Wonderfully made, indeed, when our creation thus occupied the joint agency of the Sacred Three! Wonderfully redeemed, also, when the redemption of our nature engaged their joint concern! and wonderful will be that joy, which is unspeakable and full of glory, when their joint praises will employ the innumerable host of the faithful before the throne; when that hymn shall be sung: Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive all glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter is remarkable for the events recorded in it, which took place immediately after creation-work was finished. In it is

contained, also, the first institution of the sabbath, the blessings GOD pronounced upon it, and the sanctification of it. A description of the garden of Eden; of the tree of life; and of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A more particular account of the formation of the first woman; and of the sacred institution of marriage.

REFLECTIONS

MANY are the sweet reflections which are suggested to the Reader's mind, from the perusal of this Chapter. Here is the first institution of the holy sabbath. And here we meet also with the first institution of the holy estate of marriage. Both of divine authority. Both sanctioned by GOD himself; and therefore both worthy to be observed with suitable reverence. Concerning the former, I would say to the pious Reader, may it be your mercy, and mine, to honour the LORD'S day, on account of the many precious purposes, for which the LORD himself honoured it: and to cease from our own works, as GOD did from His. And concerning the latter, I would add a prayer, that a due sense the Divine appointment, in the institution of holy wedlock, may make every one engaged in it, remember what the Apostle says: *Marriage is honourable unto all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge.* But doth not the idea of union in the marriage-state, in this life, awaken a spiritual improvement, and call up to the recollection of the true believer in JESUS, the sweet thought of our spiritual union with Him, who hath betrothed his people to himself, forever? Oh! what a precious scripture is that; *Thy Maker is thy Husband, the LORD of hosts is his name.* Isaiah 54:5. Dearest JESUS, be Thou my Husband, Shepherd, Friend!

May the recollection, which the 7th verse of this chapter awakens, of the dust of which our nature was formed, remind you and me of our earthly extraction; so that we can truly say *to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.* Job 17:14. But at the same time, may the pleasing thought, that the LORD GOD hath breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, make us never forget our heavenly relationship. And oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST would breathe upon the dry bones, both of him that writes and him that reads, and bid us live.

Reader! do not overlook the very gracious doctrine of the 20th verse. *There was not found an help meet for Adam.* No! There is not, there cannot be, in any, or in all the creatures of GOD's providence, an help meet. And though the LORD GOD brought the woman to our first father, as a suitable help meet for the *body*; yet it is the *Seed of the Woman*, alone, which can become an Help-meet for the *soul*. Dearest JESUS! be thou my Help, my Hope, and my Portion forever.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

I know not, whether we ought to consider this chapter, as the most melancholy, or the most pleasing in the whole Bible. It certainly contains the substance of what forms both. Here we read the sad origin of sin, and its unavoidable consequences, misery and death. And here, we, no less, behold the first discoveries of grace, in the promised redemption, by our LORD JESUS CHRIST. So that while that sentence is still felt, In Adam all die; that mercy is, no less promised, In CHRIST that all be made alive. The contents of this chapter may be summed up under a few particulars. The account of the devices of Satan; the fall of our first parents; the arraignment of the sinners at the bar of Divine Justice; GOD's sentence, which followed; and the expulsion, in consequence thereof, of the first transgressors from Paradise.

REFLECTIONS

How dreadful is sin! and to what an awful state hath it reduced our nature! Oh! my brother, let us pray for grace, to flee from the first approaches of sin, and never let us, as our deluded parent, tamper with the temptations of the devil; but seek strength from above, to resist him, that he may flee from us.

I would beg to suggest one precious thought to the Reader's mind, from the difference of the sentence pronounced by the LORD GOD, upon the several transgressions. The Serpent is cursed, but Adam is not. The earth, indeed, is cursed, for his sake, and the whole

creation doomed to groan, and travail together in pain, on his account. But, praises to the divine mercy, in the midst of all this train of evil, induced by sin, our first father is not cursed; but, though justly condemned, is yet promised mercy. And is not this the reason? He, who in after ages, should come, *to do away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself* was to assume the nature of man. Hence, therefore, the nature is not cursed, for he saith, *Destroy it not, there is a blessing in it.*

Is there not a spiritual signification in the sentence pronounced upon our first mother, when it is said, *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children?* What traving pains can exceed the pains of a guilty conscience? What are the pangs to bring forth in a state of nature, compared with those which sinners feel, before their delivery into a state of grace? But what were the unequalled pains of the LORD JESUS, when He travailed for souls, in the garden and on the cross! Dearest LORD! didst thou, for me sustain the wrath of thy FATHER against sin? Oh! mayest thou see the travail of thy soul in my salvation, as well as in the salvation of all thy church and people, that thou mayest be satisfied.

One thought more, let me add, before we leave this precious chapter, which is suggested to the mind, in the foolish attempt of our first parents, after their transgression, to seek shelter from the Divine presence. Reader! may it be your mercy and mine also, upon all occasions of guilt, to seek a throne of grace, though both sin and conscience accuse; and not run away from mercy. May we never forget that there is One there, whom the FATHER heareth alway. Oh! may the blessed SPIRIT lead us to our GOD in CHRIST, not in the flimsy covering of anything we call our own by way of finding favor, like the fig-leaf righteousness of our poor parents, to conceal our shame; but clothed in the perfect robe of JESUS' righteousness typified by the coat of skins, that we may appear comely, in His complete covering, and be accepted in the Beloved, *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This chapter begins that subject, which all succeeding history hath been manifesting, of the distinction between the church and the world. Abel and Cain form the great head of each, and their generations preserve the evidence of the original stock, to mark the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth Him not. We see, in this chapter, the truth of that awful sentence, of the enmity, which the seed of the Serpent bears, in all ages, to the Seed of the Woman. The sacred historian carries on the account, in this chapter, of the different branches of Adam's family, down to Enos, the son of Seth.

REFLECTIONS

The honest employment of our fathers, in the patriarchal age, gives the highest sanction, both of antiquity, and right order, to the different labours of life. It was the saying of a good old saint, now with GOD, "Give your children a Bible, and an honest calling, and then leave them with GOD, for his blessing." From the offerings of the sons of Adam, of their first-fruits to GOD, we learn how early the practice hath been, and how becoming it is to acknowledge the LORD, as the original Giver of all we have or enjoy. And is it not right that, as we are but tenants at will, we should be always ready to pay our rents, by way of acknowledging our holding. But what a sweet thought it is, that amidst all GOD'S gifts, of which we are only stewards, he hath given us the LORD JESUS, to have and to hold forever!—Contemplate, my soul, with due self-abasement, the awful effects of our fallen nature, in the horrible view of the murder of Abel. Alas! what crime is there, that man is not capable of committing, unless restrained by Almighty grace. LORD, keep me in the hour, and from the power, of temptation! Reader! remark, with me, that the first who tasted death, in consequence of the fall, died in the faith of JESUS. Blessed Redeemer! as thou art, thyself, the first-fruits in resurrection, so the first-fruits of the dust of the earth are thine! But, do I not see in Abel, a type of the blessed JESUS? Was not

JESUS hated, and, at length, murdered by his brethren, when, as the great Shepherd of his FATHER's sheep, he came to seek and save that which was lost? But, Oh! how infinitely short, Abel falls, in comparison of JESUS. The blood of Abel cries for vengeance. The blood of JESUS pleads for mercy. Dearest LORD! in all things it behoves thee to have the pre-eminence. May it be my happiness, like Abel, to offer all my poor offerings, in faith, with an eye to thy blood and righteousness; then will GOD my FATHER have respect unto them, and I myself shall be accepted in the Beloved.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This is an interesting chapter, though at the first view, it seems to contain nothing but the pedigree of the first patriarchs. But when we consider that this is the pedigree which, uniformly leads on to the promised Seed, and ends not, until it is summed up in the Person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, it is not what the apostle calls the fables of endless genealogies, (1 Timothy 1:4.) but contains the power of an endless life. Hebrews 7:10. This chapter is further remarkable for containing the short lives, and short history of the patriarchs, before the flood, including no less a period than 1656 years.

REFLECTIONS

What a vast succession of years and ages, related in so few words! Here is no less than the whole history of 1656 years, folded up in a chapter of 32 verses! Oh! my soul, seriously consider the frailty and shortness of all human excellence. What doth the whole history of man contain, more than this short history of the patriarchs, than that one man lived so many years, and he died! and another lived so many years, and he died. Blessed JESUS! what a relief is it to my soul, amidst all the death of the world, that thou livest and abidest forever!

Are we not (in the view of Enoch, the dedicated one, walking with GOD, amidst a crooked and perverse generation) led to

contemplate him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens? He was, indeed, the only one who truly walked with GOD, being one with the FATHER, from the beginning, over all, GOD blessed forever. How sweet are all the types of JESUS! But how sweeter far, he, to whom all types, prophecies, and sacrifices, ministered? Walk thou with me, O LORD, and, by thy blessed SPIRIT, may I be enabled to walk with thee, until, like Enoch, I come to be translated from this region of shadows and ordinances, to serve thee in thy temple for evermore.

Let us not dismiss the view, which the sacred historian here gives us, of that highly favoured servant of the Most High GOD, until we have taken another look at his character. By faith, (saith an Apostle) Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because GOD had translated him; for before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased GOD. Precious testimony! Gracious GOD, may it be my portion. Enable me, O thou Holy and Eternal SPIRIT, so to walk with GOD, by a living faith on the person and righteousness of JESUS, as to please GOD, that having my conversation holy in this world, I may be truly happy in another.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us the evil effects of sin, and the sure consequences which follow; the wages of which, is, and must be, death. The abounding iniquity of mankind, and GOD's just determination to take vengeance thereof by an universal destruction. The distinguishing mercy of GOD, in the salvation of His people, in times of general visitation, is here beautifully represented, in the case of Noah and his family. GOD's compassion to the brute species, in providing for their preservation. Noah, in obedience to the Divine command, prepares an ark, to the saving of his house.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT dreadful consequences of the guilt related in this chapter, soon followed ungracious and unholy connections in the marriage state, between the seed of Seth and the seed of Cain! What sad events is sin ever producing in private life, and in public bodies! How hath it drawn away the wisest of men to idolatry! See 1 Kings 11:1,4. How hath it corrupted the church itself, and brought misery upon it! See Ezra 9:1,2. Reader! remember what the Apostle saith, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Or what concord hath CHRIST with Belial?*

What a sweet thought is that of the apostle: *The gifts and callings of GOD (he saith) are without repentance.* Romans 11:29. Though it is said, GOD repented that he had *made* man; yet it is nowhere said, he repented that he *redeemed* him.

May it be my mercy, to remember, while reading the account of Noah's finding favor with GOD, that it is by him alone, of whom Noah was a type, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that I can find favor and acceptance with GOD in this life, or salvation in another. In him, as the True Ark, may I be found, when GOD shall arise to judge the world.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This is a very interesting Chapter, in that it enables us to look back and read the destruction of the old world, by water; as the scriptures teach us to look forward to the sure destruction of the world that now is, by fire, in the great day of the LORD JESUS. We here behold Noah and his household entering into the ark, on the seventeenth day of the second month, in the year of the world, 1656, before CHRIST'S manifestation in the flesh, 2348 years, and in the six hundredth year of Noah's life. The fountains of the great deep are broken up from beneath; the rains descend from above; and forty

days without intermission, the deluge continues to increase, until the highest mountains are covered, and the waters prevail, to the depth of nine yards, above the surface of the earth. All flesh is destroyed excepting Noah, and those who are with him in the ark; and the flood continues upon the earth for the space of one hundred and fifty days.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a precious consideration is it to the faithful, that amidst all the judgments of GOD, upon the wicked, the LORD is never inattentive to the interests and safety of his people. Before the flood sweeps away the sinner, an ark shall be provided for the saint. Before that the wicked shall be driven, with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the LORD, JESUS will make up his jewels, and be glorified in them that believe. In that decisive hour, LORD, may it be my portion to be found in Thee. Reader! pause over this wonderful deliverance, in the instance of Noah and his family, and consider, whether in the ark, you do not behold a type of the LORD JESUS, preserving his church and people. Doth not his GODHEAD appear in the fulness and all-sufficiency of his salvation? Is not the almightiness of his merits and death demonstrated, in bearing up the whole weight of redemption, when the wrath of GOD, like the torrents and tempests descending upon the ark, destroyed everything but this place of safety? And who doth not see, that in the blood and righteousness, the doing and suffering, of CHRIST JESUS, the eternal safety of the believer alone is found, O! for an ardent faith, to believe *the record which GOD hath given of His SON.*

Let us not dismiss the contemplation of this interesting subject, until that we have taken another and another view of the ark of safety. While GOD, as a kind Father, foreseeing the storm approaching, doth not think it enough to call his children from the field, but takes them by the hand, to bring them home into the house; so, the same mercy, which provides the shelter of the Saviour, provides help to the sinner, to embrace it. The call of grace, is not, to Noah, Go thou into the ark, but *come*; evidently teaching, that while GOD the FATHER hath so loved the world, as to give his only begotten SON, for salvation, he gives also his HOLY SPIRIT, to render that

salvation effectual. Holy and Eternal SPIRIT! while thou kindly enablest me to hear the voice of entreaty, calling me to enter into the ark CHRIST JESUS; and while thou, as graciously, art pointing to Him, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Oh! add another blessing to the undeserved favor, and *make me willing, in the day of thy power; work in me, both to will and to do, of thy good pleasure.*

One word more, before we close the Chapter. As all are not Israel, which are of Israel; so, let it be remembered, that all who went into the ark, were not like faithful Noah. Men, by virtue of the *profession* of religion, may mingle with the people of GOD, may be found at ordinances, and, from their connection with them, may receive many temporal deliverances. Hence, we find *Ham*, among the household of Noah, in the ark; and *Judas* among the disciples of CHRIST. But all this is widely distinguished from the *possession* of the divine life. Tares may, and will spring up with the good seed. And we know who it is that hath said, *Let both grow together until the harvest.* But the hour is hastening, when a perfect discrimination shall take place, and then an everlasting separation will follow, *between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth him not.* My soul! be it thy earnest prayer to GOD, never to rest in a name to live, while virtually dead before him. Grant, dearest LORD! that, while fleeing to the LORD JESUS, as the Ark, for refuge, CHRIST may be *formed in my heart, the hope of glory.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The last Chapter concluded with the melancholy relation of the world destroyed, and the church brought within very narrow limits. This opens with an account of the renewals of mercy, in restoring the former and enlarging the borders of the latter. The fountains of the great deep, which were broken up, are stopped; the windows of heaven, for the out-pouring of the rain, are closed; the whole earth recovers its verdure: and Noah and his family are brought forth

from the ark, after inhabiting it for the space of a year and ten days. Noah erects an altar, and offers sacrifice. GOD accepts the oblation, and promiseth never more to drown the world, but that the seasons of the year shall have their appointed weeks, while the earth remaineth.

REFLECTIONS

I SHALL detain the Reader but with two observations, only, on this Chapter; and if they are well founded, may a gracious GOD give them their due weight on the mind!

Did Noah and his family remain perfectly secure in the ark, in the time of such awful destruction of the whole world? Think, then, O my soul, what infinite and inexhaustible resources are in CHRIST JESUS, for all the wants of all his people. There are no straits, neither is there any narrowness, but what we ourselves make, in the everlasting covenant of grace, founded on the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; but abounding love and abounding mercy, answering to every necessity of his people. Gracious GOD! cause the reader and writer of this reflection to be abundantly supplied out of this fulness, and grace for grace, until the heart's experience of both, can join issue in the apostle's song, and, under the same assurance, say, as he did, *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

The other observation I would beg to offer, ariseth from the different characters which the raven and the dove seem to suggest to our minds. May we not, without violence, consider the raven as an emblem of the carnal mind, which, amidst all its profession, can live upon the mere carcass without, and feels no desire to enter within the ark, for its comfort and enjoyment? and is not the dove a lovely similitude of a gracious soul, which can find no rest for the sole of its feet, until taken in and secured in CHRIST JESUS? LORD! grant that I may never be found among those that can rest satisfied *without* the ark; but, give me that dove-like simplicity, and godly sincerity, which pants to enter *within*. And Oh! Thou, who art the *Almighty Noah* of thy church and people, as without thee, LORD, I can do nothing, do thou, like him who was thy type, put forth thine hand,

and take me into the ark, that I may live forever with thee, that where thou art, there I may be also.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens, to us, the beginning of the account of the new world, after the destruction of the old; so that here we commence, again, as it were, the history of mankind, in general, and of the Church of GOD in particular. In the contents of this chapter, we are highly interested; not only because it relates to us the goodness of GOD, in a way of providence to the world at large; but because we have in it the outlines of divine mercy, in the way of grace, confirmed afresh by covenant engagements, to Noah and his descendants, unto the latest generations.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if your feelings correspond with mine, from the perusal of this sweet chapter, you will like to dwell with peculiar rapture on what GOD saith in it, concerning the rainbow; and if, under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, you are led to discover some of those precious things, which seem to be connected with it, you will love to consider it again and again, in the most devout contemplation. Methinks, I could forever gaze on it, while the words of the LORD vibrate on my ear, or are present to my remembrance. What though I know that beautiful arch it forms in the heavens is produced from natural causes, and is constructed solely from the reflection of the sun-beams on the drops of rain; yet do I not know, also, that the GOD of nature is the GOD of grace too; and that such is the sovereignty of his goodness and his power, that all things are made to act subordinate to his high designs, who worketh according to the counsel of his own will. And shall I not indulge the pleasing thought, when my GOD causeth this glorious object to be hung out for man's notice in the heavens, though the means producing it be natural, yet the sign intended from it is gracious? Great FATHER of

mercies! hast thou said, that thou wilt set thy bow in the cloud, that it shall be a token of thy merciful engagements to mankind; that thou wilt look upon it, and that thou wilt remember thine everlasting covenant? Oh! then, give me grace, to look upon it also; and to behold in it, by an eye of faith, that mighty Angel, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom John, the beloved apostle, in after ages, saw clothed with a rainbow round the throne. May I so look by grace, until mine eye awakens all the affections of my heart, and my soul is confirmed and established in the full assurance of faith and dependence upon all the covenant promises of GOD the FATHER, in CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the history of the first branching out of the race of men, into families and households, of which, in after ages, the whole earth is overspread. Here are no less than seventy distinct roots of nations noticed, but only one nation upon earth, and that is, GOD's ancient people, the Jews, who can say from which of the seventy it sprung. The sacred historian gives a short account of the posterity of Japheth, and of Ham, but enlargeth chiefly upon that of Shem, because from that stock, after the flesh, the Messiah was to arise.

REFLECTIONS

How graciously hath GOD watched over the promised seed, in the family of *Shem*, and so particularly marked down the descendants of the chosen race, from whom, after the flesh, that Holy Thing (as he is emphatically called in his own word) was to spring, CHRIST in the flesh, who is over all, GOD blessed forever. And how graciously hath GOD been pleased to note the features of his people in every age, by that uniform mark, by which they are known, of a poor and afflicted people. While the posterity of *Ham*, are said to be the *Nimrod's* of the earth; the offspring of *Shem*, with

whom the blessing was deposited, is among the bond-slaves in Egypt. Let this teach us, how much better it is to be poor and humble, while belonging to the household of faith, than, void of faith, to be found related even to nobles.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The sacred historian relates in this Chapter an awful proof of man's fallen nature, and thereby confirms the divine declaration concerning it, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. For notwithstanding that the flood had swept away the whole human race, excepting that part preserved with Noah in the ark; and GOD's displeasure against sin had manifested itself in this dreadful judgment, yet the sin of man soon broke out afresh; and, in the daring attempt of building the tower of Babel, evidently discovered that man ventured to defy the Omnipotency of GOD. The relation of this foolish, as well as impious undertaking, is contained in this Chapter, together with, the divine judgment which followed. Towards the close of the chapter, the Reader is first introduced to the history of Abram, of whom such honourable testimony is afterwards given throughout the whole volume of Scripture.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT an awful view is here again afforded of man's apostacy! So little effect had the remembrance of the deluge left upon the human mind, that instead of being humbled under the mighty hand of GOD, we behold the workings of the heart occupied in contriving a plan to counteract the divine sovereignty in future. Perhaps infidelity, which is the same in all ages, ventured to do, what it is forever doing, to put down to second causes what was evidently the effect of a first ordination; and denied any divine interference in the flood of waters. Alas! my soul, what are all the rebellious murmurings and transgressions arising in my heart, but the effects of

the same cause, unbelief! LORD I would pray, (as a pious father of old used to pray) “Preserve me from that evil man, myself.”

I cannot close this chapter without stopping to remark, how striking an instance of the sovereignty of Almighty grace is here given, when we consider that from the confusion of languages, sent as a judgment in this instance, arose, in after ages, an occasion for the display of mercy, in the gift of tongues, to the Apostles; so that the wonders of the day of Pentecost sprung out of the ruins of *Babel*. What a precious testimony to the truth of that scripture: *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*. Psalm 76:10.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The History of Abram, just glanced at in the close of the preceding Chapter; the HOLY GHOST enters upon in this Chapter more particularly. The account of GOD’s first call of Abram; his gracious manifestations unto him; the removal of the Patriarch in consequence thereof, from his native country, to go into Canaan; his going down into Egypt, with the events which followed. These form the subject of the present Chapter

REFLECTIONS

METHINKS I would not read this call of GOD to Abram, and observe the Patriarch's ready faith to obey it, without begging grace from GOD, to attend to the many precious invitations with which I am called upon to follow JESUS in the regeneration; and, like Abram, to arise, leave house and home, and kindred, and relations; and by faith become *the follower of them who now through faith and patience inherit the promises*. And oh! that He, who endued the patriarch with such holy fortitude, would arm my mind with the like confidence, that, amidst every discouragement, *against hope I might believe in hope*; and trust GOD, where I cannot trace him. Dearest JESUS! grant me as thou didst the patriarch, the frequent visits of thy

love, and then whatever famine shall arise, or straits surround me, in the midst of all, a wilderness with thee will, to my soul, be far preferable to a land flowing with milk and honey without thee!

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The history of the Patriarch Abram, is continued through the whole of this Chapter. He is still in his pilgrimage state, wandering and removing under the guidance of Heaven, from one place to another. His wealth is here particularly noticed; as also his remarkable piety. But troubles beset him. A strife between his servants and the servants of his kinsman Lot, soon causeth them to separate from each other. Lot removes eastward towards the fruitful plains of Sodom, and Abram remains still in Canaan.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST all the competitions, strifes and jealousies, which this world's goods excites among men in life, let Abram's portion be my portion. Let me but be able, in a well-grounded assurance to call JESUS mine, and I value not what sinners value of the perishing things of time and sense. Precious Redeemer! it is thy favor which gives a sweetness to every joy, and softens every sorrow. Let the cisterns of all creature-comforts be dried up, if thy wisdom see it fit: the stream of thine everlasting love will still flow. And while, like the prophet, I can truly *rejoice in the LORD, and joy in the GOD* of my salvation it matters not, even if *the fig-tree doth not blossom, neither fruit be in the vine.*

Methinks this gracious call of GOD to Abram, which is always sweet in mercy, is uncommonly so in this instance: *lift up thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art.* And is not the same in effect said to every believer? Lift up thine eyes, and behold in every direction, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, how all mercies and promises are continued to the faithful, in the Covenant of grace which is in CHRIST JESUS. *All are yours* saith the

Apostle, *if ye are* CHRIST'S; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come. Blessed GOD! May it be my mercy to enjoy all things in JESUS, and JESUS in all things!

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

If the history of the first battle ever fought be interesting, this chapter which relates it, must be so. But alas! what is the relation of all wars, but the relation of our fallen state. From whence come wars and fightings, but of our lusts which war in our members! Sodom, the land of plenty, becomes now the land of desolation. The battle of the king's involves Lot, Abram's kinsman, in the evil. The patriarch hearing of it, hastens to his rescue, and delivers both him and his household from captivity. In this enterprise Abram meets Melchizedec, king of Salem and Priest of the Most High GOD; is refreshed by him after the battle and blessed.

REFLECTIONS

How very awful is it to contemplate the bloodshed, ravages, and desolation made by war among the inhabitants of the earth! See Reader, what hath sin done, and what a train of evils originate from that one fatal source! The HOLY GHOST here opens to our view in this chapter, the first display of war. Calculate, if it be possible, since that period, the dreadful amount of the vast volume in this history alone, by which the peace of private life and public bodies hath been destroyed. O! Who shall speak the groans, the heart-aches, and the sorrows, which like a flood have broken in upon the world, and desolated every part of it. Blessed JESUS! hasten that glorious period promised to thy Church, when *nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

But my soul! while in the mention of the adorable name of JESUS, leave, I charge thee, every other consideration as trifling and unimportant, to attend to what is related in this chapter concerning this Melchisedek, *priest of the Most High GOD.* Surely I behold in

him, JESUS the Son of GOD, who was indeed set up as the Covenant-head from everlasting, in the Eternal Councils and *whose delights were with the sons of men, before he made the earth or the highest part of the dust of the world*. He was indeed, in the truest sense of the word, *without father*, as Man, and *without mother* as GOD; having neither beginning of days nor end of life: for he is JESUS CHRIST, *the same yesterday, today, and forever*. And is he not also *King of Righteousness*? Yes! even the LORD *our Righteousness*. And, blessings to his holy name, He hath wrought out, and brought in an everlasting Righteousness, which is *unto all and upon all that believe*. And he is no less *King of peace*; for he hath made our peace in the *blood of his cross*. Hail thou Great Almighty Melchisedek! Be thou a *priest upon thy throne* for me; since thou hast an *unchangeable priesthood*, and ever *livest to make intercession for sinners, and art able to save to the uttermost, all that come to GOD by thee*. SON of GOD! help me by thy HOLY SPIRIT, to go forth in the spiritual warfare, against all the enemies of my salvation, as Abram did to the slaughter of the kings. And do thou bring forth thy bread and thy wine, even thy precious body and blood, which is *meat indeed, and drink indeed*, and refresh my soul by the way. And since I have nothing, LORD, to offer thee but what is thine, accept of thine own, which thou hast given me. By thee, blessed LORD, would I desire grace, *to offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually*, the fruit both of my lips and of my heart, *giving thanks to thy name*.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

In the two former chapters, we find many tokens of GOD's gracious intention towards Abram. In this Chapter GOD confirms the same by the solemn treaty of a covenant. Abram had the most delightful assurances given to him by a faithful GOD; and all folded up within a covenant of promise. A bountiful GOD, not only pledged himself to give the Patriarch an extensive estate, but an extensive issue to enjoy it. And as these blessings of the promised seed and the

promised land, spiritually considered, were types of better things to come, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the seed of the woman, and the heavenly possession through him which Canaan represented; they serve to teach us, under the gospel state, the greater privilege of those who are blessed with faithful Abram.

REFLECTIONS

LET the visions of GOD with Abram have this effect upon all the true seed of Abram, earnestly to desire and as highly to prize, all the gracious manifestations of the divine love. May we esteem all the ordinances and means of grace, which tend to open a channel of communication between GOD and our souls. But yet more affectionately covet communion with the GOD of ordinances. Blessed JESUS! I would say, both for myself and for the Reader, Oh! do thou manifest thyself unto me otherwise than thou dost unto the world! May I know that thou art my portion, my shield, and my exceeding great reward.

Reader! behold the Patriarch Abram, and learn in his history the sweetness of exercised faith. Amidst all those precious promises of a faithful GOD, yet how long, how seemingly tedious and trying, the dispensation was appointed to be to his seed, before the fulfillment. Oh! for faith, that against hope, you and I may believe in hope; and in all our trials, *may we run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS the author and finisher of our faith.* And as the patriarch considered himself as sojourning in a strange country, and was looking beyond the tabernacles which he inhabited, for a *city which had foundations*, so may we never lose sight of that most certain truth, that *here we have no continuing city*, but may we be *seeking one to come*. And oh! thou Almighty giver of faith, increase our faith, and enable us to *walk by faith, and not by sight*, until we realize the divine presence in all the glories of eternity, and *receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

The private history of an event in the family of Abram forms the contents of this Chapter. But as no scripture is of private interpretation, it is probable, that the HOLY GHOST thought proper to introduce it to the knowledge of the Church, in order to manifest that the explanation of it is to be considered spiritually. And this is one, among the innumerable other proofs, in GOD's word, how much the right interpretation of scripture depends upon scripture. Paul the Apostle, was commissioned to explain this history, in his Epistle to the Church of Galatia. Galatians 4:22-25. The relation itself is simply this: A bond-woman called Hagar, is by Sarai given in marriage to Abram; the effects of this illicit marriage are related; the flight of Hagar into the wilderness, upon being hardly dealt with by her mistress; the mercy shown her by an Angel there; her return to her mistress, and her being delivered of a Son.

REFLECTIONS

What awful effects have been in all ages reduced by unlawful connections! See, how this illicit marriage, in defiance of the divine law, involved all the parties concerned in it in trouble! The unhallowed attempt to hasten the accomplishment of GOD's promise, in opposition to GOD's way, brought *Sarai* into distress, *Abram* into vexation, and *Hagar* into misery.

Let us again remark, how very sweet and refreshing to the soul are wilderness visits from JESUS, when for the exercise of faith and patience, his people are at any time brought there. Dearest LORD! do thou visit me when there, and then the wilderness will *rejoice and blossom as the rose*. Let me in every dispensation, and in every place, carry with me this memorial: *Thou GOD, my Saviour, seest me*; and the consciousness of thy presence, will comfort my heart in the most solitary desert.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

This Chapter is rendered the more memorable, in that it contains the substance of the Covenant of Grace, which, though here represented as made between GOD and Abram, yet in reality, forms the outline of that everlasting Covenant made with the LORD JESUS CHRIST, for all the spiritual seed of Abram. In this Chapter, GOD's appearance to Abram is taken notice of: the effect induced by it on the mind of the patriarch: the names of Abram and Sarai are changed; the rite of circumcision appointed as an outward visible sign or seal of the Covenant, and the Patriarch's obedience to the divine command.

REFLECTIONS

My Christian Brother! Are you included in this blessed Covenant? Have *you* the marks and characters of it? Can you say as Paul did, We are *the true circumcision, which worship GOD in spirit; rejoice in CHRIST JESUS; and have no confidence in the flesh.* Pause over the question! And oh! that a gracious GOD may grant you an answer of peace. If this be your portion, then need you nothing more to make you happy. For GOD saith to *you* as to the Patriarch; *I will give you the land wherein you are a stranger.* And where is that, but heaven? Dearest JESUS! hast thou not taken possession of it in the name of thy people? and hast thou not promised, that *thou wilt come again and receive them to thyself, that where thou art, there they shall be also.*

Poor timorous, doubting Believer! Did GOD say to Abraham that he would bless him, and in confirmation of it, reveal himself by this glorious name the Almighty GOD; beg of him then for grace to convert this promise into a prayer: and plead, that the same GOD may be to thee and thine, the GOD all-sufficient. And oh! that every gracious soul may find grace as the Patriarch did, to intreat GOD for the Ishmael's of his household, the unawakened and careless around him. And may the LORD's answer be as gracious. *I have heard thee.*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, we have the account of another revelation of the divine will, which GOD was pleased to make to Abraham. The subject of the conversation is also recorded, and the hospitable manner in which the Patriarch received the messengers. A renewal of the divine promise, concerning a son by Sarah, is now made, and the time fixed for its accomplishment. The purposes of GOD relating to the destruction of Sodom, are made known to Abraham; and the Patriarch's intercession for the salvation of the place, is also taken notice of in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

How sweet were those days of primitive simplicity, when men were in the habit of enjoying intercourse of friendship with Angels. And if (as there seems great reason to suppose), one of those celestial visitors which called on Abraham, was indeed the SON of GOD, in an human form; what a charming evidence doth it give of favor and condescension on the part of GOD, and of happiness on the part of man.

But stop, my soul! pause over the thought, and remark with suitable joy and thankfulness, the far happier state of the Church in the present hour, among those highly favoured saints unto whom the LORD JESUS manifests himself, *otherwise than he doth to the world*. Since those days of Abraham, the SON of GOD hath come down, not merely in the form, but really and truly man, and *dwelt among us*. And his gracious visits have been, not as in the earlier ages when his name was *secret*, but to everyone unto whom his blessed SPIRIT hath made him known, and they have *seen* his glory: *the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth*.

In beholding the patriarch *Abraham* drawing near and pleading with GOD for *Sodom*, who can forbear to call to mind that precious character of the LORD JESUS; or overlook that gracious Intercessor with GOD for his people, *whom the FATHER heareth alway*. My soul! never, I charge thee, forget thy JESUS, in this his High-Priestly office.

Only for thy comfort recollect, that though Abraham's mediation was not successful, such can never be the issue of the Redeemer's pleading. *He ever liveth to make intercession.* And oh! the blessedness of that assurance: *he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by him.*

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The Sacred Historian, prosecutes in this Chapter, the account of what was hinted at in the former; namely, the destruction of Sodom, Lot is delivered from the overthrow: he is constrained by the Angels to flee for his life; his wife becomes a monument of the divine displeasure for looking back: Lot retreats into Zoar: he removes to the mountain: he there falls into the horrid sins of drunkenness and incest.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! do not hastily turn thine eyes of reflection from this Chapter. Behold in it the graciousness of GOD's mercy in the midst of judgment, and connect with it this precious assurance, in all times of prevailing corruption like this, that *the LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of danger* as well as *temptation*. Who shall say in the present hour what nations, ripe for destruction by sin, are still preserved by the *Lots* which are dwelling among them? Who knows, or can calculate, the extent and efficacy of those prayers of the faithful, which being quickened by divine grace are heard in the divine mercy, for the suspension of the LORD's anger from breaking forth upon a guilty land! My soul! I counsel thee to seek earnestly a spirit of grace and supplication from above, that in lamenting before a throne of mercy those sins of our common nature in which I bear a part, my spirit may so earnestly wrestle with GOD in the Redeemer's name and righteousness, that I may find acceptance in the Beloved.

Reader! what various views of men and things, of mercy and judgment, of grace and nature, and the very different terminations

between the righteous and the wicked, doth this chapter furnish. Gracious GOD! let it be my mercy to be called out of Sodom; to disregard the reproaches of the ungodly, and resolutely, like Lot, to bear an open testimony against them. And when in tenderness to my lingering footsteps, thou layest thy gracious hand upon me, oh! for thy quickening power in my soul also, that I may hasten to the Zoar of safety, even to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who alone *delivereth from the wrath to come!*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The history of the patriarch Abram is reassumed. In his journey (for he is still in the pilgrimage state) he is going towards the South. In Gerar, where he sojourned, Abimelech, the King of the place, beholdeth the beauty of Sarah, Abraham's wife; and she is, in consequence thereof, taken into the King's house. GOD, by the ministry of a dream, restrains Abimelech from his evil designs. Abimelech is informed of the relationship between Abraham and Sarah; he reproves Abraham, for not informing him of it himself; and sends him away from him, with his wife, and all that he had. Upon Abraham's Prayer, GOD removes the affliction from Abimelech and his family.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let not the greatness of Abraham's character tempt you to overlook Abraham's infirmity. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments! Had not the Patriarch lost sight that JEHOVAH himself was *his shield and his exceeding great reward*, he need not have condescended to such a pitiful resource for the safety of his wife. GOD forbid, that this weakness of the Patriarch should ever be made a pretence for the sins of others, when we see how it displeased the LORD!

Surely the HOLY GHOST causeth the infirmities of the faithful to be recorded, in order to teach his people that most unquestionable truth; that *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not*; and to constrain the heart into the love of JESUS; whose perfect righteousness is the alone cause of justification before GOD. Dearest LORD! how increasingly sweet and interesting, in every renewed instance of human infirmity which I feel in myself, or meet with in others, is thy finished salvation to my view. Oh! Do thou establish my soul in it more and more. Give me to see, and know that I am thine in an everlasting Covenant, which *cannot be broken*: that from having committed my soul-concerns into thy hands; all my earthly interests I may safely leave at thy disposal; and that *the fear of man, as in the case of the Patriarch, may not bring a snare*.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The long-looked for blessing of a son to Abraham and Sarah, is at length bestowed; and Isaac, the child of promise, is born. This Chapter relates the auspicious event. The casting out of Ishmael, the Son of Hagar, the bond-woman, is also noticed, with the circumstances attending it. Some inferior matters, which occurred in Abraham's family, and a covenant of amity, which the Patriarch entered into with Abimelech; form the remainder of the particulars, related in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

THE long exercise of Abraham and Sarah's faith respecting this child of promise, and the happy issue of it, may serve to teach us how sure GOD's promises are; and the certainty, that those who, with faith and patience, wait the fulfillment of the divine promises, shall not be disappointed of their hope. It is exceedingly precious upon all occasions to remark, the LORD's gracious dealings with his people. Faithful men love to dwell upon the evidences of a faithful GOD.

My Brother! Look, I beseech you, beyond the subject of this promised Isaac, unto Him, of whom Isaac was but a type; even unto JESUS, in whom all the promises center, and in whom they are *all yea and amen*. And as Sarah rejoiced in her Isaac, may it be your mercy and mine, with all *the children of promise*, as Isaac was, to rejoice in infinitely higher strains of joy in our Redeemer; that *unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given: whose government is upon his shoulders, and whose name is Wonderful: Counsellor: the mighty GOD: the everlasting FATHER: the Prince of Peace*.

When the Reader hath duly contemplated his person, of whom Isaac became a striking type, and in whom all the promises center; I would beg of him to make earnest enquiry concerning his own personal interest in this divine Saviour, Paul tells the believing church of *Galatia*, that as *Sarah* was a figure of the church, so *Isaac* became a figure of the children of that church. *Now we, brethren*, (says he) *as Isaac was, are the children of promise*. My brother, is this *your* privilege? Are you of the seed of the bond-woman or of the free? Are you one of the descendants of *Hagar* or of *Sarah*? In other words, (according to the apostle's beautiful illustration of it), do you seek favor with GOD from a *covenant of works*, which gendereth to bondage; or are your hopes of salvation founded on a *covenant of grace*, which maketh free. Upon the decision of this grand question will depend your everlasting welfare.

May it be the happy portion, both of the Writer and Reader, to be found as Isaac was among *the children of promise*! The LORD in mercy grant, that we may not be looking for justification from a covenant of works, which never did, or ever will, be able to save the soul! The law is the ministration of death. It is the dispensation of terrors from Mount Sinai. For *Hagar* is Mount Sinai, which is in bondage with her children, a spiritual bondage to sin, and a legal bondage to wrath. But the gospel is the ministration of life: freeing the soul, by the blood and righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, from the guilt and condemnation of sin, and bringing it into that liberty, wherewith the children of grace are made free. Grant, O LORD! that this may be our mercy: that in the great day it may be found that we have not been *children of the bond-woman, but of the free*.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the account of that memorable instance of the trial of Abraham's faith, in respect to the proposed sacrifice of his son Isaac; the result of which hath handed down the Patriarch's character, with such honourable testimony in the church; and as deservedly hath procured him the name of the father of the faithful. GOD's command to Abraham to perform this service; the Patriarch's ready obedience; his journey to the place appointed, with Isaac his son; his resolute perseverance in the intended sacrifice; an angel from heaven staying his hand and, in the moment of doing it; the Substitution of a ram in the place of his son; GOD's gracious approbation; and the renewal of the promises of the covenant; these form the subject of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

When we behold the happy termination of the trial of Abraham's faith, who doth not see the certainty of that precious promise, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation!* Oh! the vast privilege of those whom the LORD enables to be faithful, and whom he supports in the trying hour. Gracious GOD! be it my portion, to be kept by thy grace in every conflict, then shall I be *more than conqueror; through Him that hath loved me.*

But while I derive this instruction, under grace, from the Patriarch's bright example of faith, teach me, LORD, to behold a more glorious object of contemplation, in which this scene so strikingly represents of divine mercy. Do I not see in Abraham, as a father, so readily offering up his son, the type of that unequalled love of GOD our FATHER, in giving his only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the salvation of his people? And in the free-will offering of Isaac, to his father's direction, is not JESUS' voluntary submission to the death of the cross strongly represented? Oh! matchless love of both! May it be my happiness always to connect, in the view of redemption, the love of both, as the united cause and source of all my hopes; and under the precious application of the FATHER's grace,

and the SON'S merits to my heart, by the merciful influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, may I live in the full enjoyment of this assurance, until I come to enter upon the possession of the realized felicity unto all eternity.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

The subject of this chapter is that common place subject which belongs to our nature universally, and forms a part in the history of all persons and families. Death (here we are told) makes an inroad into the house of Abraham, and takes away Sarah, the desire of his eyes, with a stroke. The Patriarch's concern for the purchase of a burying-ground is here related; his treaty for that purpose with the sons of Heth; his agreement with them: the place obtained: and the funeral of Sarah is observed with all due solemnity.

REFLECTIONS

I DETAIN the Reader but with *two* reflections on this Chapter. May the HOLY GHOST increase them largely, and profitably to his mind! The *one* is, that in the confirmation of GOD'S promises to Abraham, to give him Canaan for an everlasting possession, the first spot of it which he could truly call his own, was his burying-place. This was indeed possessing it, until the glorious morning of a resurrection. The *other* is, from hence the first sound of that sweet declaration was made, which *John* in after ages heard more distinctly: *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD. These all died in faith*, said the Apostle. They fell asleep in JESUS. LORD, grant me the same faith! May it be my portion that, wherever the *Machpelah* for my earthly house may be, JESUS may receive my soul: and may it be found in that hour that *I have a building with GOD, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

The subject still continues, of Abraham's history. Every circumstance relating to the Patriarch becomes important, and as such the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to transmit it to the church. In this Chapter we find the Patriarch engaged in making provision for the settlement of his son Isaac. Accordingly he sends his eldest servant to seek a wife for him among his own kindred: the departure of the servant on this embassy, and the success of it are here related. Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, consents to become the wife of Isaac, and the marriage is consummated.

REFLECTIONS

READER! If GOD, in his providence, hath called you to the anxious and important trust of a parent; and hath given you, in your own experience, to know the invaluable preciousness of divine grace; surely you will need no argument to teach you, how infinitely interesting it must be, to see that the connections which your children form in the marriage state, are gracious connections. It is a melancholy consideration, that even among truly serious persons too little attention is shown to this important article; and the after-consequences manifest, but too strikingly, the sad neglect. May the Patriarch's conduct in this particular, be followed by every truly gracious Parent of the Patriarch's spirit: and may GOD in his providence, direct the choice of every child of promise, like *Isaac*, to a true yoke-fellow in CHRIST JESUS; for there can be *no fellowship of righteousness with unrighteousness; neither communion of light with darkness. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty.*

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This Chapter closes the historical relation of Abraham's life. Having carried on the interesting account of the Patriarch, from his call of GOD, through all the several gracious manifestations, which, in a covenant-way, the same GOD made towards him: we are now arrived in this Chapter, to the period of his death. The particulars relating to the disposal of his effects to his children and family; and the interment of the Patriarch, by his sons, Isaac and Ishmael; are also related in this Chapter: and the sacred Historian, having done with the memoirs of Abraham, immediately takes up the narrative of Isaac, with whom the promise is lodged, and through whom the history is to go on in succession, until He comes, to whom the whole of the promise is referred: and in whom it is finished. Here is an account of Isaac's prosperity: Of his two sons, Esau and Jacob: Of their different characters: Of the birth-right sold by Esau to Jacob: and the consequence hinted at, in which that event differently interested the parties.

REFLECTIONS

It is hardly possible, to close our view of the life of Abraham, without blessing GOD for such an illustrious testimony as his history affords of the triumph of faith. LORD, I would say, give to me a double portion of the same spirit! But do we not behold in the Patriarch, some faint outlines of resemblance of Him, who according to the flesh, was in after ages, to be his seed! Was not Abraham, as the chosen of GOD and the covenant head and father of millions of redeemed souls, a lively type of that Almighty Saviour, who was set up as the Covenant head of his people; and the one chosen of the FATHER before all worlds, in whom all nations are blessed! It is said, that by faith the Patriarch, when he was called of GOD to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went! and do we not from hence call to mind, the obedience of the SON of GOD, who left the realms of bliss, and came down a stranger in this strange land, that all his

people might afterwards, through Him, receive the gift of an eternal inheritance? Blessed JESUS! May everything of a gracious nature in thy holy word, lead me to discover somewhat of thyself, that while I admire and learn to praise GOD for the exercise of the faith and grace which I behold among men, I may be looking up, with gratitude and thankfulness unto thee, who art both the Author and Giver of Faith, and of all our Mercies.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

The beginning of Isaac's spiritual warfare, like that of his father before him, affords large occasion for the exercise of faith. A famine prevails in Canaan: GOD directs the Patriarch what to do: Covenant promises are renewed: Isaac, through distrust and fear, denies that Rebekah is his wife, by calling her his sister: the consequence of this follows in a suitable punishment: after this Isaac prospers in worldly substance; GOD appears to him: his son Esau marries two Hittite women, which occasions great grief to Isaac and Rebekah. These are the principal things noticed in this chapter,

REFLECTIONS

Let no true believer in JESUS ever be discouraged by the trials he meets with, since the faithful in all ages have been so exercised. The Apostle makes this an evidence of the Christian character, that *no man should be moved by these afflictions, since* (saith he) *ye yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto*. Oh! it is sweet to see divine wisdom, and divine faithfulness, in all appointments concerning us; and to be able to say of every one of them, as *Paul* did, *I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through the supply of the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST*. But how very gracious is GOD amidst all the chequered circumstances of life, in famine, and in fullness, to renew to his people the unalterable assurances of his Covenant love in CHRIST JESUS! Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, to live upon this when all the supplies of creature cisterns be dried up; and

like *David*, rejoice in that GOD hath made with us *an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure*; and let this be *all our salvation, and all our desire, although he make it not to grow*.

I would have the Reader, methinks, (as I desire myself) to seek grace from the LORD, to profit by what this Chapter relates of the weakness of *Isaac's* faith, respecting the safety of his wife, and of his own life. Had he only considered, poor man, the faithfulness of that GOD who had promised him his assured favor and protection; there was nothing in the circumstances of his situation to have given him a real cause of fear. But consulting with flesh and blood, and not laying hold of GOD's promises, his trust in the LORD gave way, and he fell into temptation, sin, and unbelief. Reader! let you and I mark it down among the memorandums of our hearts, that such will be the sure result in every believer's experience, when not upheld by divine strength, but left to the weakness of his own mind. Let you and I therefore pray with the apostle, that *we may be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power*, who is the alone strength of his people; for then, and not otherwise, shall we be able to act faith upon GOD's promises, *unto all patience and longsuffering, with joyfulness*.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the history of Jacob's craftily obtaining the blessing of the birth-right from his father Isaac, and thereby supplanting his brother Esau: a circumstance, which unless read with a spiritual apprehension, will be to us, as it is always to the carnal, a stumblingstone and rock of offence. In this Chapter the HOLY GHOST also relates the sad conduct of the Patriarch Isaac, who, notwithstanding the open revelation GOD made to him before the birth of his two sons, Jacob and Esau, that the elder should serve the younger, in direct defiance of this will of GOD, sought to entail the covenant blessing on Esau. He gives directions to Esau! how to prepare for him venison, in order to receive this blessing;

Rebekah contrives by stratagem to obtain it for her son Jacob: the success of Jacob, and the disappointment of Esau, are both related in this Chapter. Esau determines to be revenged of Jacob: and Rebekah in order to prevent it, contrives to send Jacob to her brother's house by way of refuge.

REFLECTIONS

How sweet and precious is it, to behold dying believers anxious to give their last testimony, to the faith of JESUS! Though the pious parents of the present age, have not, like the Patriarchs, a *prophetical* benediction respecting the coming Saviour to give their children; yet have they a *parental* blessing at parting to deliver. And oh! how precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints, when life is closed with such an honourable testimony.

But ought not the improper, and frequently ill-bestowed, affection of parents, in the partiality among their children, to learn from this example of Isaac, how sinful it becomes in the divine eye? Reader! let us pray for grace, that nothing short of the *covenant* blessing, may satisfy the desires of our souls. The LORD put away far from us that awful spirit of a carnal state, which, like Esau, makes light of the covenant mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, and finds, like him, *no place for repentance, though it be sought even with tears.*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

No sooner are the people of GOD brought within the bond of the covenant, than persecution ariseth. Jacob having obtained the blessing, is obliged to flee to Padan-aram, to avoid the fury of his brother. The sacred historian relates in this Chapter, the memorable events of his journey. He is favoured with divine manifestations: GOD confirms to him the promised blessing: assures him of his gracious favor and protection: impressed with a deep sense of thankfulness for those visions of GOD, the Patriarch vows to have the LORD for his GOD, and to dedicate himself to his service for ever.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! may you and I learn, from this interesting account of Jacob's pilgrimage, that when the providences of our GOD seem most to frown, the gracious tendencies of GOD are perhaps most smiling. And let the truly awakened soul say, whether the sweetest seasons have not been those, when, like the Patriarch, tribulations from the world have been most powerful. But I must not close this Chapter of Jacob's mercies, when the visions of GOD began with him, without first requesting the Reader not to overlook the precious outlines which are here drawn by the HOLY GHOST of JESUS's manifestations to all his people. Is it not by him that a channel of communication is opened to our souls for access to GOD, when like Jacob, we have left our father's house, and are as wanderers on the earth? Is He not *the way, and the truth, and the life*, by which all mercies come down, and all praises and prayers go up, through his divine mediations. And is it not by him alone, that we humbly hope, when all the pilgrimage of this life is over, to come again to our FATHER's house which is in heaven: to which hope we are begotten by his glorious undertaking, and his accomplishment of our redemption? Precious, precious JESUS! be thou with me, and keep me in the way that I go; and give me food and raiment convenient for me: fill my soul with the bread of life, and clothe me with the garment of thy salvation; then wilt thou be indeed the LORD my GOD; and I shall be thine, in an everlasting covenant, not to be broken.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

As was before remarked of the faithful, every minute circumstance is recorded by the HOLY GHOST, which concerns the church: so is this Chapter; the domestic occurrences of Jacob's family, occupy more attention than the history of all the world beside, in that period. The sacred historian relates the journey of the Patriarch; his arrival at Haran; his reception by Laban; his

servitude; his marriage; his children; these form the principal contents of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! remark in this Chapter, how the LORD conducts the steps of his people, when he graciously brings them *into the bond of the covenant*. Though he leads them into the wilderness, he will not leave them there, but will speak comfortably to them; and as, in all their ways they desire to acknowledge him, he will direct their steps. What a simplicity marked the primitive ages! A few flocks and herds, and the produce of the field, constituted, for the most part, the riches of the Patriarchs. And even now, is not food and raiment with JESUS, all that the believer wants below! LORD! grant me the sure possession of JESUS, and keep my heart always with wise indifference to the things of time and sense; for having him, I shall in him possess all things.

I cannot pass over, in this place, what is said respecting the names of Jacob's children, without calling upon the Reader to observe with me, what a gracious practice it was, in the church of old, thus to minute down in the several providences they met with, the LORD'S gracious dealings with them. When godly parents perpetuate GOD'S mercies, in the names they give their children, every view of the child, and every renewed mention of the name, tends to refresh the recollection of those mercies. I venture to think, that the mother, or sister of *Moses* (though the name was given him by another, as the name signified *drawn out of the water*) yet never heard his name spoken of, but it brought again to mind his wonderful deliverance. And was not *Samuel's* name always refreshing to *Hannah*, when she herself gave it him, on this express account, in that it meant, what she too well knew ever to forget, that he was *asked of GOD*? Reader! pause over this, and let you and I enquire of our own hearts, how many Samuels we might name mercies by, if we were to number all that we have received, and which have been *asked of GOD*? Blessed LORD! revive in my forgetful heart continual remembrances of thy unnumbered mercies: and though I have neglected to mark them down by name, yet may the HOLY GHOST, who acts in the sweet character of Remembrancer

to his people, continually bring all things (and all mercies too) of my GOD and Saviour to my remembrance, whatsoever he hath shown me.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

The further relation of the events in Jacob's history, is contained in this Chapter. Of the increase of his family, his children; of the increase of his wealth and riches: until after fourteen years in the service of Laban, his father-in-law, he proposeth to return to his father Isaac; but is detained by Laban, who agreeth to certain conditions which, Jacob had offered for his further labours in Laban's service; Jacob adopts a singular method for the increase of his flock and succeedeth.

REFLECTIONS

It would be a far happier world than experience proves it now is, if that charming observation of the psalmist were more generally adopted, when he saith, *Lo! Children are an heritage of the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.* There is a blessedness pronounced upon the quiver that is full of them. And when a gracious parent beholds a rising generation of gracious children, to call the LORD blessed, when he is gathered to his fathers; the imagination can hardly form an idea of a subject more highly calculated to call forth thankfulness unto GOD. It is pleasing in the reflection to the upright in heart and mind, when like Jacob, in their dealings between man and man, they have the favor of the divine approbation. But what a double sweetness rests upon the possessions of the just, when every blessing is found to lead the soul *to* GOD, instead of drawing the heart *from* GOD. LORD, I would pray, that all thy mercies may be thus sanctified, and not one of them received but with thanksgiving and prayer; that coming from thy bounty, they may lead to thy praise, and all be doubly enjoyed in JESUS.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

After a servitude of many years, in the family of Laban, Jacob resolves to return to his own home. And to this measure he is prompted, not only by the unkind treatment of Laban and his sons, but still more by a divine direction. The circumstances of Jacob's departure, with his wives and all that belonged to him: the pursuit of Laban after him: the gracious interposition of GOD for Jacob's protection, by the ministry of a dream on the mind of Laban: their interview: their reconciliation; their covenant of amity; and their final separation; these form the principal contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

In the perusal of this Chapter, methinks I would not have the Reader overlook the gracious interposition of God, in behalf of his servant Jacob, when *Laban the Syrian* pursued him in such determined anger. Rather than the poor servant should be injured by his unkind, and unnatural master, the LORD overawes his mind by the effects of a dream. Just so, depend upon it, my brother, is the watchful care of God over his people now. Oh! could you and I but be brought acquainted with the thousand and ten thousand instances of the kind, which are daily going on in life, we should see how sweetly the Church's history is again, and again repeated: *he made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives*. Psalm 106:46. Reader! watch but the tokens of divine faithfulness towards you, in disposing the hearts of your enemies to be at peace with you, and, depend upon it, the evidences will fully appear. *In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*

But do not close the chapter until that you have remarked with me, how continually the Patriarch's history is leading us to the contemplation of the life of the blessed JESUS, of whom in numberless instances, Jacob was a type. Certainly the HOLY GHOST, in his divine ministry of glorifying JESUS, intended the records of this man's memoirs to direct us more immediately to CHRIST. How

was JESUS obliged to flee into Egypt to avoid the fury of those that sought his life! How was he afterwards led into the wilderness! What services did he sustain for the Church, both Jew and Gentile, which he betrothed to himself! And what persecutions did he go through, in those labours of love, for the souls of his people! Dearest LORD! may a sense of thine unequalled regard to our poor fallen nature, how base soever requited by the world, endear thee to my heart: and may it be my portion, with thy people, to have that testimony in my experience: *We love him because he first loved us!*

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

This Chapter relates some very extraordinary events, which occurred in the Patriarch Jacob's journey towards Canaan, after his separation from Laban. He is first met by an host of angels. He then sends messengers to his brother Esau, who dwelt in Seir, to enquire after his welfare, and to inform him of his own. The messengers return with an account that Esau is coming against him, and with him an army of 400 men: Jacob is greatly distressed with the intelligence, and hath recourse to God by prayer: he sends over the brook Jabbok all his family and household, and is left alone: an angel wrestles with him, until the breaking of the day: Jacob prevails, and obtains a blessing in consequence, the LORD puts a perpetual testimony of honour upon the Patriarch, in changing his name from Jacob to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! I charge you not to close your review of this lovely chapter, which under GOD's teachings hath refreshed the minds of thousands, and will continue so to do until time shall be no more, without first gathering to yourself some of the many sweet things it speaks of to the people of GOD. You see, in the Patriarch's instance, how those unto whom angels minister, and even unto whom JESUS himself is revealed, may, and will, be exercised with many sharp and

trying dispensations. Are you thus exercised in the spiritual warfare? Do *you* know what it is to have the ministry of angels meeting you in the way to *Canaan*? Do the seed of *Esau* come forth, to obstruct your path? And are you thereby constrained to seek aid from God? What nights of wrestlings in prayer have you counted? What days of sunshine have broken in upon your soul, to manifest divine communions? Can you call to mind the *brook*, the place, the time, when you have sent away the best and tenderest of all earthly endearments, that you might be left alone to enjoy the visits of God your Saviour.

Let these and the like questions arise in your minds, from the perusal of this chapter. And may the same gracious Covenant God and Saviour, (for he is the *same yesterday, today, and forever*;) grant both to you and to me, that in our going home to our Father's house, like the Patriarch, JESUS's host may meet us, and give us comfort: nay, may JESUS himself be there, in every step of the way; that Jordan's waves, and the valley of the shadow of death, that lie between, may not affright: for when he is near, his rod and staff shall comfort. So will *goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life, till we come to dwell in the house of our GOD for ever*.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

The Patriarch's history is still continued through this Chapter. Here is the account of Jacob's meeting his brother Esau, and the effect of the interview: the affection displayed between the brothers; their amicable separation: Esau returns to Mount Seir, and Jacob pursues his journey to Canaan.

REFLECTIONS

How sweetly doth grace induce all the finer affections of the heart, and constrain all our angry passions into love! LORD, let thy grace enable us to *put on, as the elect of GOD, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-*

suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as CHRIST hath forgiven us, so also may we. And in the reading of this chapter, I would beg of GOD to bestow, both upon him that reads, and on him that writes, the grace of having a wise choice between the fulness of this earth's blessing, and the appointment of whatever the LORD sees fit in a covenant way. Dearest JESUS! while the Esaus of the present hour, are sending out into the highways to enquire of every one they meet, who will show them any good; let but the light of thy countenance be lifted on my soul, and it will put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that corn and wine increase.

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

Hitherto the Patriarch Jacob had been exercised with many sharp and trying afflictions, as they arose out of the circumstances of his own life. In this chapter, the history of the Patriarch records the beginning of the afflictions with which he was exercised, as they arose out of the circumstances of his children. Dinah his daughter, and as it should seem his only daughter, prompted by vain curiosity, going forth to see the daughters of the hind, is ravished by Shechem prince of the Hivites. Jacob's soul is grieved at hearing of it. His sons determine to be revenged. Hamor the father of Shechem, in order to gratify his son's wishes, proposeth a treaty of marriage between his son and Jacob's daughter; the sons of Jacob appear to give consent, on condition of the Hivites being circumcised: but when this was done, Simeon and Levi come upon their city by surprise, destroy all the males, and take away their cattle.

REFLECTIONS

How dreadful the effect of unbridled passions! What sad events have been induced by their indulgence in all ages. And what is the whole history of mankind since the fall, but the same distressing

page of suffering and sorrow, by reason of iniquity and sin. Blessed JESUS! how endearing here again is the recollection of thy merciful character, in that thou earnest *to take away sin by the sacrifice* of thyself.

I think that this chapter affords a very interesting lesson to young women. Female modesty is so truly graceful and becoming, that too much care can never be taken of it. Like the fine bloom of the purple plumb it cannot be touched without injury. Had the daughter of Jacob been less exposed, her chastity would not have been violated. Hence among the precepts of the apostle to young women, which he gives in charge to his beloved *Titus*, to teach the church, he particularly dwells on this, that they be *chaste and keepers at home*: as if wandering abroad tended, most likely, to the loss of their chastity.

And while this lesson is read to *daughters*, and especially to the daughters of gracious parents, from this chapter; let not an exercised soul among *parents* that are gracious, forget to derive this instruction also from it, that a godly father may have ungodly children. Grace is not by descent. It runs not in the blood. *Jacob* was dear to his GOD: but *Jacob's* children were very often a source of sorrow to him. Many afflicting providences were in his family. *David* also, though *the man after GOD's own heart*, yet concerning his children he might well cry out, as he did in one of his Psalms, LORD, *remember David*

and all his afflictions! Reader! if GOD in his providence should have called *you* to the interesting character of a parent, and in his wisdom should see fit to exercise you with such distresses, where will you find resources to bear you up under the heavy pressure? There is but one that can give relief, and that one the holy men of old possessed. And that is a comfortable and well-grounded assurance of an interest in the covenant righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This acts like an anchor to the soul in a dark and stormy night. *David* fled to this, in his troubles, and found that he rid by it safely through the tempest. *Although my house* (says he) *be not so with GOD, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

In the opening of this Chapter, Jacob's history seems to brighten in the renewal of divine visits to him. But, in the progress of the Chapter, we have the sad news of death in his family. Such is the mixed state of the happiest pilgrimage. The Patriarch by the LORD'S direction, removes from Shechem to Bethel. Arriving there, he builds an altar unto the LORD: Deborah, his mother's nurse, dies in Bethel, and is buried there: GOD again visits Jacob, and renews the assurance of his favor: Jacob sets up a pillar in token of it: he prosecutes his journey: by the way new calamities befall him, for his beloved Rachel dies in child-bed of Benjamin: he perpetuates her memory by erecting a pillar: still pursuing his rout towards Isaac his father's house afresh instance of grief occurs; for Reuben his eldest son, commits incest with his father's concubine. Jacob's sons are mentioned: he arrives at his father Isaac's, at Mamre. Isaac dies in a good old age, and is buried by the joint affection of Jacob and Esau.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! while we pass over this Chapter to admire and adore the divine goodness manifested in so many sweet and repeated visits of his love to the Patriarch Jacob; let us examine our own hearts for the like tokens of such *Bethel* enjoyments. Will you look within, and ask your own heart; (for I desire continually to put the same questions to mine); when did the visions of GOD begin with my soul? When did JESUS, (according to his most sure promise to his people), manifest himself to me otherwise than he doth to the world? When did I experience the renewings of the HOLY GHOST? Reader! do not dismiss these questions unanswered?

In the sorrows of the Patriarch's household, let us seriously contemplate the lot of a fallen state. *Sin hath indeed entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passeth upon all men because all have sinned.* But my soul, look with an eye of faith beyond the grave. What though thy friends, children, servants, die; nay, thou

thyself art hastening after them? yet JESUS, *thy* JESUS liveth. And am I not his in an everlasting covenant, and is he not mine? And shall I mourn then with such bright prospects in view? Dearest LORD! when all friends leave me, and when *my heart and strength fail, be thou the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*

One look more at *Isaac* before we dose the Chapter, and drop the Patriarch's history. I delight in every person and in everything, which receives in scripture the particular notice of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to trace somewhat which may lead my heart to JESUS. And is there nothing striking to this amount in Isaac's life? Was not the Redeemer long promised, long looked for, with a devout earnestness by all the church, and at length born into the world in a method contrary to the established course of natural causes; similar, but infinitely beyond the example of Isaac's birth? And were there not *Ishmaels* to mock the LORD JESUS in the long and trying persecutions he sustained, like the son of *Hagar the Egyptian*, despising *Isaac*? In the cheerful acquiescence which Isaac made to his father's will for sacrifice; carrying the wood; being bound upon the altar; and not offering a repining word when Abraham took the knife to slay his son; can I not, as a type, trace somewhat of thine unequalled love; oh! thou Lamb of GOD, who voluntarily didst undertake, by the sacrifice of thyself, the redemption of thy people; when fainting beneath thy cross, thou wast led *as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so openedst not thou thy mouth!* Oh! may my soul live in the constant, daily, hourly meditation of thy love! May everything tend to lead my heart unto thee! And may thy love at length awaken mine, and induce all those precious effects of loving thee *who hast so loved me, as to have given thyself for me.*

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a digression from the main subject of Jacob's history, but becomes so far interesting from its connection with it, as it records the fulfillment of the divine promises concerning the

posterity of Esau. When Rebekah was pregnant with Jacob and Esau, the LORD informed her that two nations were in her womb; and that two manner of people should be separated from her bowels. In confirmation of this, the distinct race of Esau for several generations is recorded in this Chapter: their decided hatred to the seed of Jacob is thereby more clearly left for discernment, as it occurred in the after ages of the Church.

REFLECTIONS

There is much spiritual improvement to be drawn from the perusal of this Chapter by every gracious soul, when GOD the HOLY GHOST awakens the heart to the observation. *Jacob's* seed, no doubt, while they were bond-slaves in *Egypt* felt their misery the more, while calling to mind the splendour of Esau's race in *Edom*. But how mistaken are our views of things, and what false calculations do we make in our estimation of happiness. Esau's children were great indeed among men. But the seed of Jacob were beloved in the sight of GOD. JESUS hath made them *kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, and they shall reign with him for ever*. Dear LORD! give me that sweet promise and I ask no more. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne.* Revelation 3:21.

CHAPTER 37

SUMMARY

The interesting history of the Patriarch Joseph, the son of Israel, begins at this Chapter. And as he is in many instances a most striking type of the LORD JESUS, it merits our attention the more. Here therefore I beg the Reader to call to mind the motto with which I opened our comment on this book of Genesis: Moses wrote of CHRIST. This Chapter hath for its contents the commencement of Joseph's history at the 17th year of his age: the partiality of his father for him: the envy of his brethren: their conspiracy against him: their selling him for a slave: and the distress of Jacob in consequence of the loss of Joseph

REFLECTIONS

Reader! there are many practical reflections for the suppression of anger in its first appearance; and many useful improvements for the discountenancing partiality to children, which may be gathered from this Chapter, and which under grace you will do well to regard. But I turn aside from every other consideration, as of less moment, in order to follow up the evident intention of the HOLY GHOST in this Chapter, to behold *him*, whom the Patriarch Joseph plainly shadowed out in several striking circumstances of his character.

And did not GOD the FATHER send his beloved Son from the realms of bliss into this our world, to see if it were well with us, and how we fared? But though he came full of love and mercy, yet when he came *unto his own, his own received him not*. Did they not conspire against him? nay, why do I say did *they* not, have we not *all* by sin and by rebellion conspired against him, sold him into the hands of the Gentiles, and *by wicked hands have crucified and slain him*? Was he not stripped of his raiment, cast into the pit, and *his grave made with the wicked in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit found in his mouth*! Oh! thou Almighty Joseph of thy brethren! give me grace to see that though thou hast been *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*; and I have, (like those unnatural brethren), *hid as it were my face from thee*; yet by the sovereignty of thy grace help me to see, that thou wert sent by GOD the FATHER, to look after and provide for my everlasting welfare. Thou art sent indeed before thy people, and *to save their lives by a great deliverance*. Hail, thou dear Redeemer! henceforth may the language of my heart be, *blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD*.

CHAPTER 38

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a digression from the subject of Joseph's history, but it becomes a very interesting one, because it records the race of

Judah, *another of Jacob's sons. And as our LORD sprang out of Judah, according to the flesh, (Hebrews 7:14.) it is indeed highly important to trace the descent of Judah, until we find it terminate in CHRIST. The contents of this Chapter are, Judah's marriage and issue: the death of his two eldest sons for rebellion against GOD; Judah's incestuous commerce with his daughter-in-law, and the effects of it.*

REFLECTIONS

What hath sin wrought in all ages! What a dreadful bias to evil is naturally in the mind of every man! What awful examples doth the LORD sometimes proclaim, in punishments, of his utter displeasure of sin! But, my soul! while thou art seeking grace from GOD, to avoid every appearance of sin, let that state of humbleness, that astonishing and unequalled state of humbleness, to which JESUS submitted, when he came to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself, endear the Redeemer yet more and more to thy heart, and form him there *the only hope of glory*. Was it not enough, dearest LORD, when thou condescendest to take flesh and blood for the purposes of salvation, that thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb, but didst even appoint thine ancestors, after the flesh, to be such as were more particularly marked with unworthiness? Gracious Redeemer! may it serve to teach my heart those sweet *lessons*, that thou wert pleased to be made in all things like as we are, yet without sin: and although thou wert made in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, yet thou didst partake of none of the corruptions of flesh; and that in thy tender alliance with our nature, thou dost not refuse that alliance even with the vilest of our nature; but *where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD*. Romans 5:20, 21.

CHAPTER 39

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Sacred Writer reassumes the history of Joseph The account is related of Joseph's being carried down into Egypt; and of the reception he met with there. He is sold to Potiphar, a captain under Pharaoh king of Egypt: Joseph is so blessed of the LORD, that his master commits unto him the care of all his substance: Joseph, on account of the comeliness of his person, becomes an object of desire to his mistress. She attempts to seduce him; but by the grace of GOD being preserved from the temptation, her lust is changed into hatred. She accuses Joseph to her lord, who, unheard, throws him into prison. The LORD manifests his favor to his servant, so that he inclines the heart of the keeper of the prison to be kind to Joseph These are the contents of this Chapter, to which as there is much in type and figure of the LORD JESUS, we shall do well to be very attentive in the perusal.

REFLECTIONS

Who doth not feel pity in the review of Joseph's unjust and cruel treatment! Behold the Patriarch a little before the object of his father's love. And now look at him as a bond slave and a prisoner in a strange land! To what a reverse of circumstances are even good men exposed, in this waste and howling wilderness. But, Reader! never forget that JESUS is with his people always, and *in all their affliction he is afflicted*. Suitable, seasonable grace shall be given them as they stand in need. And *as their day is, so shall their strength be*.

But is there nothing in this Chapter which prompts the heart to discover some faint sketches of him of whom Joseph was a type? Oh yes! certainly a greater than Joseph is here. How was the Son of GOD when upon earth sold and tempted, and led into prison and unto death! If we look at Joseph suffering by unjust imputation, can we forget for a moment him to whom our sins are imputed; though he did *no sin, and in whose mouth there was found no guile*. Did he not

bear our sins in his own body on the tree when he died, *the just for the unjust to bring us to GOD*. LORD, grant that as in so much mercy, thou didst condescend to be *sin for us who knew no sin, we may be made the righteousness of GOD in thee*.

CHAPTER 40

SUMMARY

The sacred historian prosecutes the interesting history of Joseph through this Chapter. The events of the prison, which by their tendency had a relation to Joseph and his future prospects in life, are here related. The chief butler and the chief baker, servants in Pharaoh's household, are for some offence brought into the same prison with Joseph. They each of them dream, and their dreams Joseph interprets: their correspondence with what Joseph predicted proves his ability: Joseph acquaints them with the unjust cause of his being imprisoned: and as he foresaw the speedy restoration of the chief butler to his office before Pharaoh, he entreated him to use his interest with the king to bring him out of the prison. But though he had such claims upon his gratitude, he forgot him.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! mark this down in the memorandums of your life, that whether in a prison or a palace, the faithful have GOD for their portion. And what a sweet thought is it, that, as no walls can confine the souls of GOD's people; so neither can bolts or bars shut the LORD out. If you are the LORD's prisoner, this is preferable to being the world's freeman. And when we recollect how precious the enjoyments some have found in those seasons, very evident it is that the Comforter is with them, and that to bless them. But even here in Joseph's history, let me not lose sight of the LORD JESUS, who *was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation?* Blessed LORD! let me never forget the afflictions of my spiritual and almighty Joseph, nor the cause of them; but in all

events of life as well prosperous as distressing, cease not to remember thee!

CHAPTER 41

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we behold the workings of GOD's providence concerning Joseph and his household, more plainly opened to our view, and the great events leading to his own welfare, and the preservation of his Father's family, beginning to unfold themselves, as the leading cause, for which the LORD permitted his being sold as a dare, and carried down into Egypt. The ability which Joseph had displayed, in the interpretation of dreams, in the instance of the chief butler and chief baker, raised his reputation in the court of Pharaoh; king of Egypt; and a case soon after occurring, which the LORD in his providence had so ordered that Pharaoh himself should be exercised with a dream, which none of the wise men of his court could interpret: Joseph is sent for; he explains to Pharaoh the dream; the event is found to correspond; and in consequence, Joseph is advanced to the highest dignity in the kingdom, next to Pharaoh: Joseph's marriage, and children, are also noticed in this Chapter, together with the equity and wisdom of his administration under Pharaoh, which endears him to the Egyptians.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! two or three things in a way of *Providence* ought to affect your heart in reading this Chapter. See how safe their interests are, however long they may seem to be forgotten, whose concerns are in the divine hands! And how much therefrom, it ought to be the study of the faithful to attend to the workings of the LORD in all events of their life; convinced of this, that they who humbly watch and trust a merciful GOD, for the fulfillment of all his covenant promises, will never want a faithful GOD to watch over and take care of them.

But with those *providential* views only, let not the Reader close his meditation of this Chapter. A view of grace also is at hand. And if from Joseph's exaltation to the right hand of Pharaoh, our eyes are directed by the SPIRIT of GOD to the LORD JESUS at the right hand of power, into whose Almighty hands the sovereignty of grace is committed; here we shall see indeed, a true *Zaphnath-paaneah*: a wonderful counsellor! before whom all nations shall bow, *whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whose dominion endureth throughout all ages*. Oh! thou great provider for all thy people's need, incline our hearts by thy grace to come to thee for food. And forasmuch as there is none but thou who hast the words of eternal life, *none so discreet and wise as thou art*: be thou our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Thou shalt be our lord and governor, and *according unto thy word so let our souls be ruled*. Ever would we desire to bow the knee before thee; and may not only ours, but every tongue confess, that *thou art* JESUS CHRIST the LORD, *to the glory of* GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 42

SUMMARY

A gracious GOD in his over-ruling providence, having caused a famine of bread to prevail in Canaan, compels thereby the sons of Jacob to go down into Egypt to seek sustenance for themselves and their household. And this brings about the leading design which the LORD had in view, (as the HOLY GHOST informs the Church, Psalm 105:16, 17.) in sending Joseph before his family into Egypt. The contents of this Chapter, are: the departure of the sons of Jacob from Canaan: their arrival at Egypt: their appearance before Joseph: their unconsciousness of him: his knowledge of them: their humbling themselves before him: his treatment of them: he supplies them with corn, but detains Simeon; their return to Canaan: and the distress of their father in finding that they had left Simeon behind.

REFLECTIONS

Learn, my soul, that gracious lesson to live above ordinances while favoured in the use of them; that when the means fail, the LORD of the means, who never faileth, may be thy portion forever. And if at any time *thy* JESUS should seem to make himself strange to thee, and by his dispensations to speak roughly unto thee, never doubt but that faithful are the wounds of thy friend: he is still a brother *born for adversity*.

Hail thou spiritual Joseph! thou almighty governor, and no less our brother, in whose hands are all *the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. To thee we come for food. Before thy sacred presence would we bow the knee. We are indeed verily guilty before thee; for, like the unnatural brethren, we have sold thee by our sins, and hid our faces from the anguish of thy soul by our iniquities. But GOD hath sent thee before us to preserve us a posterity in the earth, and to save our lives by a great deliverance. Nourish us, dearest LORD, how unworthy soever thy favor; and feed us with that living bread which came down from heaven; so will we praise thy mercy, and adore thy name.

CHAPTER 43

SUMMARY

The patriarchal history is continued throughout this Chapter. The pressing claims of hunger compel Jacob, however reluctantly, to send his children again into Egypt for more food: and Benjamin must go with them: their arrival is particularly noticed, and the reception which Joseph gave them: he is apparently much kinder to them than before; they are brought into his house, which though the idea at first alarmed them, yet as Simeon is brought, out to them, and they are told that Joseph means to entertain them at his table, their fears subside, and they begin to be merry.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I turn from the table of Joseph amidst his brethren, while they are thus merry and happy with him, to consider the spiritual interest which we have in these things.

The world which we dwell in, like that of Canaan to the Patriarch's family, is a world of famine in bread for the soul. And if you know what spiritual hunger means, you will know also that this heavenly corn for ourselves and our household, can nowhere else be had but of the lord of the country, even from the LORD JESUS; of whom Joseph was the type. Shall we not arise and go to him? We will not, like Jacob's sons, take a present in our hand, for he is too rich to be benefited by our favors: and his blessings are too great to come within the price of purchase. But like Jacob, let us pray that GOD Almighty may give us mercy before the *man*, even the GOD-MAN CHRIST JESUS.

Dearest LORD, behold us now before thee! Oh! say to thy stewards the ministers of thy table as Joseph did to his: *bring these men home and make ready, for these men shall dine with me at noon.* And oh! the wonderful condescension, JESUS indeed *receiveth sinners and eateth with them.* We see thy face. We behold thy glory. We hear thy voice. We rejoice and are merry like the brethren of Joseph, while our brother JESUS saith, *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* And dearest Redeemer! we would pray do thou make our meeting gracious in drawing nigh to us by thy HOLY SPIRIT, in opening to our minds the Holy Scriptures, and in making thyself known to us in breaking of bread and in prayer. Then shall we fully understand and have our souls refreshed indeed in the experience, that *thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood drink indeed.*

CHAPTER 44

SUMMARY

The interesting narrative of the Patriarchal history is still prosecuted through this Chapter. The brethren of Joseph having

purchased corn and laden their cattle, take their leave of Joseph to return to their father. But Joseph, wishing to detain them, having ordered his steward secretly to put their money in the mouth of their sacks, and his silver cup in the bag of Benjamin; soon after their departure from the city sends his steward after them to charge them with this breach of honesty. Their sacks are examined, and the cup being found, they all return to Egypt in the greatest sorrow and distress imaginable. In this state when brought before Joseph, Judah becomes the mouth of the rest; and unconscious before whom he spoke, he feelingly represents the history of his family in the several incidents of it: describes the supposed death of Joseph: the distress of his father which was now again renewed in parting with Benjamin; offers himself as a bond-slave forever, rather than that Benjamin should be detained; and concludes with praying Joseph for mercy, that the grey hairs of his father may not be brought down with sorrow to the grave.

REFLECTIONS

This Chapter opens to our view *very* profitable reflections. How soon was the joy of the children of Israel turned into mourning. And yet in the midst of both, their covenant GOD was carrying on one and the same plan of mercy towards them. Learn, my soul, in all the checquered circumstances of life to remember this, and both in prosperity and adversity to live upon an unchangeable GOD.

But chiefly let this Chapter, with all the events of it, lead me to JESUS. Whatever tends to detain me, or to bring me back to him, may I esteem a mercy! Dearest LORD! put thou the cup of salvation in my lot, and may it be my portion to be thy servant forever. I would cry unto thee as one of old; *Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims shine forth. Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up that strength, and come, and save us. Turn us again, O GOD, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

CHAPTER 45

SUMMARY

Nature was wound up to the highest pitch in the bosom of Joseph, by the address of Judah in the foregoing Chapter, and could no longer contain. In the opening of this Chapter it gave vent, in Joseph declaring: who he was, and by following the information with expressions of the utmost tenderness to his brethren. The effect of this discovery is related. And after the first emotions of surprise and joy, mingled with shame and reproach in the breasts of Joseph's brethren, are subsided, they converse together. Pharaoh king of Egypt is informed of the event, and he and his people rejoice at it. Joseph dismisseth his brethren to his father with the intelligence; invites him to come unto him and sends waggons for his convoy. The heart of Jacob misgives him at the first account; but when he had received fuller evidences of the truth of Joseph's being alive; Israel resolves to go and see his son before his death.

REFLECTIONS

How grateful, after afflictions, are the renewals of joy! How refreshing the manifestations of JESUS after long, and dark seasons of his absence to the soul? Reader! let the perusal of this Chapter be sure to lead thy heart to the examination, whether JESUS hath made himself known to thee otherwise than he doth to the world. For without this the chief and best improvement from it will be lost. Oh! it is sweet to look at him whom by sin and disobedience we have sold for a slave! It is precious, indeed, to behold him who was wounded for our sins and bruised for our iniquities; now risen and exalted at the right hand of power; and though changed in state, yet still retaining the same nature, and still not ashamed to call his people Brethren.

Dearest JESUS send the waggons of thine ordinances to bring us to thyself. Into the Egypt of even death and the grave would we follow thee, to behold thy glory. And as the good of all the land is before us, and in the heaven into which thou art entered, thou art only gone before as our fore-runner to take possession in our name;

thither may thy good SPIRIT bring us, as to our eternal home: where we hope to see thee *face to face, and to know even as we are known.*

CHAPTER 46

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the particulars of Israel's journey to Egypt. And never surely was there a journey undertaken with more clear and leading views of the divine Providence. Constrained by famine, invited by his son, and encouraged and directed by his GOD, the hoary Patriarch sets forward to embrace a long lost child. He takes all his family with him, arrives at the place of meeting, and beholds his son: an account of their interview.

REFLECTIONS

While, as a subject of particular providence, we read this Chapter to remark, how the LORD graciously arrangeth and ordereth the circumstances of his people so as to fulfil that promise, that *all things work together for good to them that love GOD*; let us more closely observe the spiritual instructions contained in it. Reader! this Chapter concerns us. Doth not our Almighty Joseph call us down as Israel was of old, into the Egypt of darkness, even the shadow of death: and doth he not say as to him, fear not to go down, I will go with thee: and will assuredly bring thee up again. Yes! he is and will be, *the resurrection and the life*. And therefore may you and I be enabled to say as David did, *when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me*. Blessed GOD! give to him that writes and to him that reads an happy meeting of our Spiritual Joseph, that like Jacob we may be content to die when that sight is accomplished, and cry out with the same full assurance as holy *Simeon*, in the taking the LORD'S CHRIST into our arms; LORD *let thy servant now depart in peace, according unto thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

CHAPTER 47

SUMMARY

The Patriarchal history is continued, mixed with an account of Joseph's wise administration concerning the affairs of Egypt. Joseph having informed Pharaoh king of Egypt of his father's arrival, and having introduced first some of his brethren, and then his father, to Pharaoh; the king ordered the best of the land for their accommodation. The famine still continuing, the Egyptians again apply to Joseph for bread, whose prudent conduct in the distribution of the same, endears him yet more and more to Pharaoh and all his people. After seventeen years residence in Egypt the Patriarch Jacob finding symptoms of his end approaching, sends for Joseph, and gives him charge concerning his burial.

REFLECTIONS

What sweet lessons do the lives of the Patriarchs Jacob and Joseph afford, of endearing ties of parental and filial affection? Would we learn the influence of grace refining nature's feelings, let us read over those sacred records.

Reader! do not forget to spiritualize the Egyptian monarch's question to the hoary Patriarch, and ask the same of your own heart. How old are you in grace? What years, what days can you number since you were *new* born? Few and evil no doubt are the best of our days in the best of our pilgrimage. But do not forget that the spiritual arithmetic is not counted by natural calculations' *for the child of grace shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner still remaining in an unconverted, unrenewed state, being an hundred years old shall be accursed.*

From the tender affection of Joseph to his dying father, in the promise he made him, let me turn my eyes and contemplate Joseph's LORD and Saviour in the promise he troth left to all his people. He saith to all the true spiritual seed of Israel now, as to the Patriarch himself; *Fear not to go down to the grave, I will be with thee.* And this thought is a sweet thought: the covenant holds good in death as in life. The grave cannot dissolve it. When *we live, we live unto the*

LORD: *and when we die, we die unto the Lord: so that living or dying we are the LORD's. O thou that hast the keys of hell and death; sweetest Saviour! be thou my GOD, my guide and my companion, both in life and in death: then to live will be CHRIST, and to die will be gain.*

CHAPTER 48

SUMMARY

The time of Jacob's death drawing near, Joseph hastens to visit him: and the dying Patriarch takes occasion in this interesting interview, to recount to Joseph GOD's gracious dealings with him from his youth. Joseph's two sons being brought before Jacob he blesseth them. And in the sure confidence that GOD would confirm his promise of bringing his seed again to Canaan, Jacob gives a particular spot of land there to his son Joseph. These are the contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I would pass by many very sweet and interesting reflections which arise out of this Chapter, to fix my mind upon one most eminently striking, and as important as it is striking: namely, how triumphant must be that glorious principle of faith which animated the Patriarch's mind at such a distant period before the coming of JESUS; and which enabled him to sing such a song of praise *to the GOD which had fed him all his life long, and to the angel which redeemed him from all evil.* Oh, my soul! if these all died in faith in a *coming* Saviour; shall not I, now I have seen him *come*; having *finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and sealed up the vision*: shall not I find grace to be *the follower of them, who now through faith and patience inherit the promises*? Blessed LORD! give me this precious gift of faith. Enable me to see GOD'S CHRIST in this great salvation; and by an ardent lively faith to know my right of appropriation in it. Then

shall I be assured, even as Jacob was in a dying hour, that *this* GOD is my GOD for ever and ever, and he will be my guide even unto death.

CHAPTER 49

SUMMARY

At length we arrive to that point which forms the period of all things here below: and we are brought to the conclusion of the Patriarch Jacob's history. This Chapter relates the memorable circumstances of his dying moments. He convenes his children all around him, and under the spirit of prophecy declares to them, as the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, what would distinguish their families in the last days. Having finished his prophecy and blessed them, and given commandment concerning his burial, the dying Patriarch gathers up his feet into the bed, and yields up the ghost.

REFLECTIONS

MARK *the perfect man and behold the upright*, (saith the Psalmist), *for the end of that man is peace*. Reader! think what an important thing it is to die well. What is to be performed but once should be well performed. For if we err here there is no repentance in the grave. LORD, grant, if it be thy holy will, that like the Patriarch I may be waiting while *living* for thy salvation: that when *dying* like him I may rejoice in the possession of it.

Let us take a parting look at the Patriarch Jacob while closing his history, and once more in him behold a lively type of the blessed JESUS. Before his birth, like the Patriarch, was he not chosen to be the father of many nations? Did he not in a yet more striking manner struggle in the womb with the elder Adam; and by fulfilling the covenant which he had broken, recover the birth-right for his people? In the great work of redemption, how was he driven from his father's house, exposed to all the horrors of the wilderness, and made the subject of temptations? For the love he bore his Church, what a series of servitude did he not endure? Never, surely, could it

be said of Israel, as of Israel's GOD, with equal strength of reason, *that which was torn of beasts was required of my hand; in the day I was consumed by drought, and of the frost by night.* Blessed JESUS! *in all things it behoveth thee that thou shouldst have the pre-eminence.* May it be my portion to have thy person and gracious offices always in view, until *in the dispensation of the fulness of times thou shalt gather together in one all things in thyself, both which are in heaven and which are on earth:* and the whole multitude of thy people shall be *gathered round thy throne in everlasting glory.*

CHAPTER 50

SUMMARY

This Chapter which concludes the book of Genesis, concludes with it the account of the last tokens of respect shown to the Patriarch Jacob's remains. He is embalmed by the physicians of Egypt; and after the days of mourning were expired, Joseph obtains permission from Pharaoh to carry up his father's remains for interment into Canaan. The funeral ceremony is here related: their return to Egypt: Joseph and his brethren's affectionate regard for each other is again mentioned: the years which Joseph lived after his father: Joseph's death and age.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! it would be wrong to close our review of the life of the Patriarch Joseph, without once more looking at so illustrious a character, both as he is in himself, and as he is a type of the ever blessed JESUS. As he is in himself, how truly lovely doth he appear in every relation and character of life. As a son, as a brother, as the wise governor in Egypt, raised up by the LORD for the preservation of his own house and family, and the whole kingdom of Egypt. And as a father, as a man, when a servant, and when a Lord! But how lovely is it to see the HOLY GHOST graciously shadowing out the features of JESUS, in the prominent parts of Joseph's life. From the first

departure he made from his father's house, through the whole of his eventful life, from the prison to the throne, we see the outlines of the great Redeemer's history sketched out. And from Joseph we are immediately directed to JESUS, and as we bow the knee before him, we cannot help crying out; Hail! thou glorious Almighty Governor of thy kingdom! Thou art indeed the true *Zapnath-paaneah*. Thou art He whom thy brethren shall praise, and all thy church adore. To thee every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that thou art CHRIST, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

Before we shut this book of Genesis let us take one thought more. The close of it may lead our minds to the improving thought of the close of our own. It serves to enforce upon the mind that solemn conclusion of the sacred writer; so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Reader! what a vast change hath been wrought in the circumstances of mankind, from the opening of the history of creation through the several periods of it. There we began the wonderful relation of GOD's goodness to our race, in the formation of man after his own image. And here we behold him become the prey and food of worms! And whence all this but because sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned. And what shall bring relief to the mind under this discouraging prospect, but the contemplation of his love and faithfulness, who is the unchangeable covenant GOD, *the same yesterday and today and forever*. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, to live upon this great and unchangeable GOD, as he is revealed to his people in a three-fold character of persons. And under this assurance that blessing will be our portion: *the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee*.

EXODUS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IN opening this second book of Moses, I would desire the Reader to call to mind the observation which was made at the opening of the first; namely, that as Moses wrote of CHRIST, we might be careful not to lose sight of him through every chapter, but to be searching for him in this field of scripture as for hidden treasure. And indeed as it appears from the many references which are made by the other sacred writers of both the Testaments to this book of GOD, that there are more types and shadows of the LORD JESUS in Exodus, than perhaps in any other of the writings of the Old Testament a more awakened attention, therefore, should be called forth, accompanied with earnest prayer to GOD the SPIRIT, that we may find him, *of whom Moses and the prophets did write, JESUS of Nazareth.*

The principal things contained in *Exodus*, are the accomplishment of GOD's promises made to Abraham concerning the increase of his seed; the rigorous treatment the Israelites suffered in Egypt; the LORD's emancipating them from bondage; and the ordinances of worship appointed in the wilderness. And as from several of the New Testament writers, we have authority to consider the deliverance from Egypt, as typical of a far more important deliverance of the church from the bondage of Sin and Satan; it should seem to follow, that nothing can more merit our attention than this sacred Book of GOD.

One general observation more I would beg to offer, before we enter upon the perusal of this part of the Holy Volume: and that is, that though Exodus as a book is not in point of bulk much less than that of Genesis; yet in point of time, its contents are very inconsiderable compared to it. The Book of Genesis comprised no

less a space in history than 2369 years; whereas the whole of Exodus includes no more than 145 years. May a gracious GOD accompany the Reader's attention to it with the teaching of his HOLY SPIRIT: and now *the vail which in reading the Old Testament blinded the Jews, is done away in CHRIST; may we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the LORD, be changed into time same image from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD!*

CHAPTER 1

Summary

This first chapter opens with an account of the increase of the children of Israel: the jealousy of the king of Egypt, in consequence thereof: the cruel policy which he and his people adopted to decrease the growing number of the Israelites; and the LORD'S gracious interposition to counteract their design.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a decided character is here drawn between the men of the world and the saints of GOD. And what an everlasting enmity we perceive running through all ages, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Gracious GOD! Be it my portion rather *to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.* My soul! Learn from this chapter a lesson of grace and patience. How slow soever the promises of GOD appear to his people in fulfilling, it is but in *appearance*, for they are *all yea and amen in CHRIST JESUS.* Though the seed of Abraham did not seem to increase immediately after the promise given, equal to what the haste of natural desires might expect, yet *the LORD is not slack as some men count slackness.* The *vision is for an appointed time; it shall come, it will not tarry.* May all faithful believers learn from hence how certain GOD'S purposes are! *Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

CHAPTER 2

Summary

This Chapter is rendered remarkable in that it is the beginning of the history of Moses, the writer of the Book of Exodus, and one of the most illustrious types of the LORD JESUS, as the great deliverer and lawgiver of his people; and as a mediator. The Contents of this Chapter are, the birth of Moses: his immediate danger at his birth, in being exposed to perish for want of sustenance, or from the ravages of destruction on the banks of the Nile: his preservation by Pharaoh's daughter :her adoption of him: his education under her: and his leaving the court of Egypt for his attachment to his brethren of the Hebrews: his flight to Midian: his marriage: and the event of it in the birth of a son. The close of the Chapter gives a further account of the oppressions exercised on the Israelites: their groans by reason of them, and GOD's merciful notice thereof.

REFLECTIONS

How often do the very plans of bad men counteract their own designs! How frequently hath it been known, that the schemes of the ungodly to oppress the righteous have ultimately proved their very means of deliverance? Little did the tyrant of Egypt think when he issued the cruel edict for the murder of his harmless subjects, that his own daughter should be made the unconscious instrument of rescuing the very one whom the LORD would raise up to destroy his empire. Little did the Jews in ages after this event, imagine, that when they had nailed the LORD JESUS to the cross, that *that* very cross should become the means of accomplishing the reverse of all that they intended.

My soul! learn from such astonishing instances, in which *the wrath of man is made to praise the LORD*, by fulfilling the sacred purposes of his will, to commit all thy concerns with implicit confidence into the LORD's hand. If thou art his, (this is the grand point to be interested about), depend upon it he will take care of his own. And let this be an everlasting maxim, for the truth is unquestionable, that the man who by grace is led to watch the

LORD's providences, will never want for the LORD of providences to watch him.

Reader! dismiss not this interesting Chapter before you have once again remarked, how the cries and groans of the LORD's people called forth the LORD's attention unto them. Men may cry under trouble and groan under oppression. But in all this there is no concern for sin which is the cause of it, and consequently no cry to GOD to be delivered from it. *Job* describes such in lively characters. *By reason* (says he) *of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry, they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is GOD my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?* Job 35:9-10. Reader, how stands the case with *you*? Are your cries the cries for sin? Do your troubles lead the heart to GOD? And is the language of your soul, where is GOD my FATHER, my Saviour, who knows my sorrow, and to whom alone I look for deliverance? Pause over the subject, and may the HOLY GHOST be your teacher!

CHAPTER 3

Summary

The last account of the LORD's personal and particular manifestation of himself, which we met with before the one related in this Chapter, was that to the Patriarch Jacob. Genesis 46:2-4. A period of more than two hundred years before. Here we read of the LORD's appearing to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush. The LORD begins in this method his manifestations to Moses' calls to him by name out of the midst of the bush: proclaims his own glorious and incommunicable name: declares himself to be the covenant GOD of Israel: assures him that he hath seen Israel's sorrow, and heard their groans; that he will deliver his people and bring them up out of Egypt: appoints Moses as their deliverer: prepares him to expect difficulties, but assures him of an happy issue. These are among the principal things contained in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Enquire, O my soul, when did the visions of GOD begin in thy experience! And when did the LORD JESUS call to thee, as to Moses, by name; and make himself known to thee otherwise than he doth to the world? Oh! for special, distinguishing tokens of the divine love and faithfulness.

Reader! learn from that part of the life of Moses which hath been already brought before you in this and the foregoing chapter, how much more suited a life of retirement is for the enjoyment of communion with GOD, than a life of bustle. Moses saw and learnt more of GOD at the back part of a desert, than all the forty years before, in which he had been educated in a court.

But principally in this Chapter, let neither the writer or reader overlook the typical representation here made, of the LORD JESUS coming down from heaven to redeem his people. Dearest Saviour! thou hast surely seen, and heard, and known the afflictions of thy people, which are in spiritual Egypt. Oh! thou great, thou Almighty I AM, that art *the same yesterday, and today, and forever*; give me to rejoice in the firmness and unchangeableness of all covenant mercies: in the FATHER'S gift, the Saviour's purchase, and the blessed SPIRIT'S application! How precious is it to reflect, that when by reason of the bondage and oppression of sin, our souls are bowed down and we are tempted to cry out, *our strength and our hope are perished from the LORD*; thou rememberest us in our low estate, *for thy mercy endureth for ever*. Be thou still the great I AM to me, and with me, and for me. May I have the grace for ever to know, to live upon, and to rejoice in, this great I AM, in all covenant relations that being brought up out of the Egyptian bondage of sin and death, I may, at length, through the same Almighty grace, be brought into the glorious Canaan of everlasting rest.

CHAPTER 4

Summary

In this Chapter we have the objections which Moses advanced against executing the commission the LORD appointed him to, of undertaking the deliverance of Israel from Egypt; in the people's unbelief to receive him under this character; and his own incompetency of standing before, Pharaoh. Here are contained also the LORD's gracious answers for silencing those objections: in imparting to Moses a power of working miracles, assuring, him of his presence to accompany him, and appointing an help-mate in his brother Aaron to act with him. This Chapter relates also the departure of Moses from his father-in-law, to return into Egypt: he meets Aaron in the way: they confer together on the important subject: on their arrival at Egypt, they communicate to the elders of Israel the LORD's gracious designs towards them: the people in token of holy joy at the report, bow their heads before the LORD and worship.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! while you and I behold with concern the conduct of one of the most faithful servants of the LORD, in the repugnance which he manifested to an immediate obedience to the LORD's commands; let us consider in him a renewed evidence of the universal taint of our fallen nature, and derive from the view this sweet improvement, that none but our adored Redeemer call be endeared to the heart as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. And did Moses need one miracle upon another to gain him over to the interests and services of his GOD; how many miracles of grace have you and I required, and yet in the present moment the remains of unbelief still lurk within! Well may we both cry out, not only in beholding the obduracy of the avowed enemies of GOD like that of Pharaoh, but even in the rebellion and unbelief of his friends like that of Moses; *from hardness of heart and contempt of thy word and commandment, good LORD deliver us.*

One word more on this Chapter. We see that GOD's people though persecuted, we're not forsaken; though cast down by men, were not cast off by their GOD. They were still the LORD's people, and therefore the LORD's care. Now let you and I seek for grace to remember this amidst all our dark and trying dispensations. There is *a time to favour Zion*, and that time must come. In the covenant *all things are ordered and sure*. The season for sending trials, the season for removing trials, and one continued stream of love is running through all. Blessed GOD! give me grace like Israel to believe that the LORD is looking upon my afflictions, and like them in token of submission and thankfulness to *bow the head and worship*.

CHAPTER 5

Summary

In this Chapter we have a relation of GOD's ambassadors, Moses and Aaron., appearing before Pharaoh to demand, in GOD's name, permission for Israel to hold a feast unto the LORD in the wilderness. Pharaoh's answer, in which he despiseth GOD, is also recorded. The ambassadors urge the necessity of the measure, lest GOD should punish the Israelites with sickness or the sword. And Pharaoh to manifest his defiance of GOD's power; lays upon the people of Israel greater burthens of slavery. In consequence the children of Israel are more rigorously treated: they make complaints to Pharaoh: which are received with inattention: they complain of Moses and Aaron they murmur, at GOD's dispensation: and Moses himself is tainted with the dissatisfaction, and returns to expostulate with GOD.

REFLECTIONS

To what a daring height of profaneness and impiety is the human heart capable of arriving, unrestrained by Almighty grace! LORD, keep me from that awful desperately wicked state which is here

described in the character of this wretch, who from *not liking to retain GOD in his knowledge was given over to a reprobate mind.*

Reader! observe with me how mysterious according to our view of things, the LORD's dealings are with his people. So hath it been with the church of GOD in all ages. We *look for judgment but there is none: for salvation, but it is far off from us.* Such was the complaint of the faithful. And such was, and is, and will be their complaints until grace shall be no longer in a state of exercise, but be consummated in glory. *In the world ye shall have tribulation,* this is the inscription on JESUS' standard. But what a precious thought is it that not an hour, no not a moment beyond the LORD's time of trial, shall man's power be exercised over his people! Reader! beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to write this sweet Scripture in your heart, and grant you grace to live in the believing assurance of it *for the LORD shall judge his people and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* Deuteronomy 32:36.

CHAPTER 6

Summary

This becomes an interesting Chapter, in that a gracious GOD, in answer to the complaints of Moses and the people, takes occasion therefrom to assure them of the reality of his delivering them from the oppressions of Egypt, by proclaiming his glorious incommunicable name of JEHOVAH, the promise-making, and promise-performing GOD. Moses is again commanded to repair to the court of Pharaoh: and by the way to assure the people that the LORD their GOD had heard their cries, and that he would deliver them. Moses expresseth his reluctance and desires to be excused going again before Pharaoh; but the LORD's commands are absolute. The HOLY GHOST hath thought proper in this place to introduce the ancestry of Moses and Aaron in the tribe of Levi, together with that of the tribes of Simeon and Reuben.

REFLECTIONS

Nothing can be more refreshing to the soul under all the discouragements and trials of the faithful, than the firm assurance that we are brought into covenant with a GOD whose promises and performances are sure to correspond. Our fathers in the church of old knew GOD under this glorious character, and now it is confirmed to us and sealed in the blood of JESUS, how earnest is every appeal made to the heart to believe the record which GOD hath given of his SON.

Reader! pause once more over the view this Chapter affords of the timidity of Moses and the unbelief of the Israelites. Alas! what is any man in his highest attainments unsupported by divine strength. My Brother! may we learn this lesson from it, and it will be profitable to place no confidence in ourselves; but may all our sufficiency be in the LORD. We can never trust ourselves too little, nor our GOD too much. I can do nothing by myself, (said one of old), but I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me.

CHAPTER 7

Summary

The LORD having now by his grace over-ruled all the objections of Moses, the man of GOD with Aaron his brother proceeds without further delay in the execution of their commission. This Chapter relates to us the event of Moses' second embassy unto Pharaoh. Moses demands, in the LORD'S name, the freedom of Israel for the purpose of divine worship. Pharaoh again refuses. Moses, at the command of GOD, works a miracle by way of confirmation of the authority by which he acted. This proving ineffectual to subdue the heart of Pharaoh, Moses at GOD'S command begins to chasten Egypt with plagues. He turns the waters of the river into blood, which is the first of the ten plagues with which the LORD visited Egypt, before the Israelites: deliverance is accomplished.

Reflections

Pause my soul over the perusal of this Chapter, and behold, in the history of the Egyptian monarch, the awful state of an hardened heart. And what were the calls of his magicians to counteract the sovereignty of GOD, but similar instances of the obduracy of the wicked in all ages, who aim to strengthen themselves against the Almighty, and run upon the thick bosses of his buckler!

Reader: do not overlook one sweet instruction in this Chapter. What will not the LORD do for his people? Rather than Israel shall be any longer oppressed, Egypt shall be destroyed, and the noblest of rivers turned into blood. Oh! may you and I be found among those who have the LORD for their portion, and then we shall have no cause to fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills carried into the midst of the sea. Dearest JESUS! undertake for me, for thou alone canst answer for me, O, LORD my GOD.

CHAPTER 8

Summary

Moses the minister of GOD is represented in this Chapter, as prosecuting his great commission in the chastisement of the King of Egypt and his servants, for the deliverance of Israel from bondage. Under the command and by the authority of GOD, Moses calls for three successive plagues, in the swarms of frogs, and lice, and flies, which cover the land of Egypt. But the result of these visitations, like the former, is, as the LORD had said; though at the voice of Moses the plagues are severally removed, yet the heart of Pharaoh remains hardened.

REFLECTIONS

My soul; I charge it upon you as you value the divine favour, pause over this chapter, and take a careful survey of the LORD's sovereignty, in his justice toward his enemies, and his grace and mercy toward his people. And while a deep sense of sin impresseth

the mind with a conviction, that all the difference *between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth GOD and him that serveth him not*, ariseth out of divine grace, not human merit; oh! that such views of heavenly mercy may serve to endear GOD in his covenant relationship to the heart; and direct the soul into the participation and enjoyment of the FATHER'S love, the Redeemer's grace, and the SPIRIT'S unremitting mercy.

Learn, my soul, the vast and infinite importance of having thy GOD and Saviour for thy friend at all times, and upon all occasions. If such small and inconsiderable instruments as *frogs, flies*, and vermin, may become so formidable to distress, when commissioned by the divine power; how needful is it to live always under the smiles of his favour, who alone can make thy blessings to become blessings indeed; or can at a moment convert thy very food into poison. If GOD be for us who can be against us. If he be our enemy it matters not who is our friend. Dearest and ever-blessed JESUS! thou who art the peace of thy people, be thou at peace with me, and then all thy creatures will be at peace with me also. For thou hast said, *on that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The interesting record of the Egyptian punishments for the deliverance of Israel, is still pursued and carried on through the whole of this Chapter. To the three fore-mentioned plagues of the frogs, lice and flies, succeed three more. One of a murrain among the Egyptian cattle: another of boils breaking out both upon man and upon beast: and a third in that of a mighty storm of thunder, hail and rain, which destroys all that was in the field. But although

during the continuance of those visitations Pharaoh seemed to relent: yet on their removal his former hardness of heart returns, and he refuses to let Israel go.

Reflections

Reader! may it be your happiness and mine to follow up the design of the HOLY GHOST in dwelling so particularly on this interesting history, and not take our leave of the solemn instructions contained in it, until by divine teaching it hath ministered to this end, to *make us wise unto salvation through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. How very awful are GOD'S judgments! How very comforting the review of his mercies! Never my soul, never may I lose sight of those distinguishing marks of the LORD'S love to his people in times of peril. He that severed between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt still separates between the precious and the vile. It is a sweet relief to a poor afflicted soul in a trying hour, that the LORD *knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation*. JESUS is still the *hiding place from the storm, and the covert from the tempest*. And when the LORD hides his saints, he shows himself. Precious is that scripture, which the LORD hath left on record for his church: *I the LORD do keep it, I will water it every moment lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day*. Isaiah 27:3.

CHAPTER 10

Summary

The history still proceeds through this Chapter. Pharaoh's heart remaining in the same obduracy, Moses is commissioned by the LORD to inflict the eighth and ninth plagues in the punishment of Egypt; the locusts infest his coast, and darkness of three days continuance beclouds his land. At length after several ineffectual remonstrances on the part of Moses, and entreaties on the part of Pharaoh: Moses is driven from his presence with the threatening of the loss of life, if ever he appeared again before him

REFLECTIONS

There is not a more important reflection to be kept alive in the human mind, than that both the creation and government of the whole world of intellectual and spiritual beings is for the divine glory. The praise ascribed to JEHOVAH in heaven, corresponds to what all things teach us here on earth. *Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Blessed GOD! let it be my happiness to record thy praises, and to speak of all the signs and wonders which thou hast wrought in a way of redeeming my soul, and the souls of all thy people, from the house of spiritual bondage, in the accomplishment of which *thou hast subdued Egypt and destroyed it, and scattered thine enemies abroad with a mighty hand.* Oh! may it be written upon my heart with the pencil of the living GOD, that it is *not by might, nor by power in ourselves, that thou hast brought us out; but by thy right hand, thine arm, and the light of thy countenance. Salvation belongeth unto the LORD, and thy blessing is upon thy people.*

CHAPTER 11

Summary

Matters are now coming to a crisis, and a dreadful crisis it is in this eventful history and it will soon be seen to whom the sovereign power belongs. This chapter prepares the way for the account of the tenth and last plague of Egypt in the destruction of the first-born. Moses denounceth this punishment, and all the conference between him and Pharaoh is ended forever.

REFLECTIONS

Before I leave this Chapter to enter upon the sequel of the wonderful history which follows, and behold the arm of GOD executing his threatenings upon the incurable obstinacy of Pharaoh and his subjects; I would pause once more over what I have read, to

admire and adore the distinguishing grace of GOD to my soul. Oh! thou dear Redeemer, thou *that art the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof, how is it, why is it, that thou hast manifested thyself to me, and not unto the world?* Ponder, my soul, I charge thee, the wondrous distinguishing love which passeth knowledge. Reader! in the contemplation of Pharaoh's character, learn the cause also why many now like him reject *the counsel of GOD against their own souls*; slight the gospel of JESUS, and refuse both *him that spake on earth, and him that now speaks from heaven*. LORD! write by thy blessed SPIRIT that solemn question on every heart, and accompany the word by thy power, *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter becomes exceedingly interesting to the Christian Reader, in that it contains an account of the institution of the Jewish passover. And whoever considers what Paul the apostle hath said of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom he expressly calls our Passover, will be very earnest to observe every minute circumstance recorded of the Jewish passover, whose great and leading object was to point to CHRIST. Here, therefore, I would again particularly desire the Reader to keep in view the motto which was placed over the writings of Moses in our first entrance upon them: I mean what the LORD JESUS himself said, Moses wrote of me. And in this Chapter I would beg the Reader to search, as for hidden treasure, through every part of it, until he hath found JESUS. The most prominent parts of this Chapter are the institution of the passover: the feast of unleavened bread: the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt: the distress and terror of the Egyptians at the event: the pressing importunity of Pharaoh and his people for the departure of Israel, the Israelites baring Egypt by night, being urged to it by the Egyptians: and an account of a mixed multitude going up out of Egypt with them.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! you and I can hardly enough contemplate the LORD's goodness to Israel as recorded in this chapter; and never can we sufficiently adore the divine mercy, when we consider our interest in it. Oh! what a night of deliverance did the LORD work for them after the rigorous bondage of four hundred years! What a series of troubles he had supported them under, and brought them through, in defiance of all the oppressions of the enemy! And with what an high hand did he at length carry everything before them, when the moment of his salvation was come. Truly might their leader say, "*It is a night much to be observed unto the LORD of all the children of Israel in their generations for ever. This month shall be to you the beginning of months, the first month of the year.*" It is indeed a new month, a new year, new life, new privileges, new enjoyments. And well may every one that reads the wonderful narration exclaim, *What hath GOD wrought?*

But, my Brother! while beholding Israel's emancipation from Egypt, let us seek grace to contemplate a still far greater deliverance, of which this was but the type; even the recovery of our poor fallen nature from under hellish bondage, by the glorious redemption of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This is the night indeed, ever to be remembered by us, even the night of sin and death, in which we lay, when JESUS our Almighty Passover passed over the houses of his people, and carried ruin and destruction amidst all the enemies which held our souls in vassalage and in misery, Surely, we may well cry out with the Psalmist, *O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD all the earth. Sing unto the LORD and praise his name: be telling of his salvation from day to day.*

Dearest and ever blessed JESUS! since thou hast condescended to be our Passover, help us by the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT to keep the feast, *not in the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* And oh! let the blood of the everlasting covenant be sprinkled upon our hearts, that it may be our security from the condemning sentence of the law, and from all the dreadful evils of destruction consequent thereupon. Enable me by precious faith to

feed upon thy precious body: and make it to be meat indeed, and thy blood drink indeed, to support and nourish me in my spiritual life. And grant that, like the believing Israelite, I may eat it with my loins girded about with truth, and my feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And like him also, with my staff in my hand ready to be gone and in haste to depart, that when thou shalt come, whether at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning, I may be found waiting thy approach, and go up with a high hand out of the spiritual Egypt of sin and death, to the possession of the everlasting *Canaan* of promise.

CHAPTER 13

Summary

The sacred historian continues the interesting, history of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The LORD commands that all the first born of Israel shall be sanctified to him from the womb, that it may be a standing monument in the church throughout all ages of the LORD's delivering his people from this bondage. The ordination of the feast of unleavened bread: the transmission of these great things to be in the instruction of their children; the first fruits of their cattle are appointed as a token of tribute to the LORD: and in cases of redemption, how to be redeemed. These points being settled, the relation of Israel's journey is reassumed. The LORD points out their way, and guides them by a pillar of cloud going before them. The children of Israel carry up the bones of Joseph with them as they had promised.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! Let all thy distinguishing mercies, (like those which were granted to Israel,) by which thou dost manifest thy love to my soul, be so deeply impressed upon my unthinking and forgetful heart, that by thy power they may live in my constant remembrance. And I would yet further pray concerning them, that the more distinguishing thy tokens of love in them are, the more sweetly they

may be held in my esteem. Will my GOD also grant me grace, to be not eating my morsel alone; and while commemorating his mercies in redemption to my soul, hide the knowledge of it from those around me. But LORD make me communicative, in imparting the glad tidings to others. Chiefly may I remember thy precept, and teach my children, and my children's children, how by strength of hand, the LORD hath brought me out of worse than Egyptian bondage, even of sin and death. And since, LORD, thou hast been so gracious, as to bring me out, and art bringing me through the wilderness, I know that thou wilt bring me in to see that good land, which is the glory of all lands, even the goodly mountain and *Lebanon*. Dearest JESUS! during this wilderness state, and while exercised with wilderness dispensations, ever give me to see, that however rough and thorny the way, still it is *the right way*, to the city of habitation. Be thou my *pillar of cloud* by day, going before me in grace and wisdom, to direct: and be thou my *pillar of fire* by night, to surround me, and screen me from all danger. LORD, I would humbly cast myself upon thy care, for, like Israel, hitherto thou hast borne me as upon eagle's wings. LORD bring me home at length safely unto *Canaan*, that where thou art I may come, to behold thy glory, and to dwell before thee forever.

CHAPTER 14

Summary

As the foundation of the Church was in miracles, so every after-stage in the building is carried on with increasing wonder until the top stone is brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace, unto it. Israel being brought into the wilderness, on the south east side of Egypt, Pharaoh, as the LORD had forewarned Moses, pursues them with a powerful army. This Chapter relates the interesting account of this pursuit. The Israelites are shut in on every side, and, according to human calculation, there is no way left to escape. The LORD opens a new way for them. Israel is delivered; the Egyptians

are destroyed; and the effect wrought on the mind of the Israelites is strikingly expressive of thankfulness.

REFLECTIONS

Who would have thought, that after the many humbling lessons, Pharaoh had been taught, that folly should again so far have blinded his eyes, as to have come out against the LORD's people. My soul! Think seriously, in the view of this awful instance, to what a desperate state of wickedness the heart of man is capable of attaining when given up to a reprobate mind.

Who would have thought, that after the LORD had so wonderfully interposed in bringing Israel out of Egypt, and while guiding them by a *pillar of cloud*, and protecting them by a *pillar of fire*; that any further trouble should have arisen to harass and afflict them. My soul! remember the straits of Israel, in all the lesser trials of your faith: and do not forget, that as but for those difficulties which the people of GOD sustained, they never would have known the preciousness of divine interposition, in this miracle of mercy to themselves, and destruction to their enemies: so neither would you know the numberless instances of the LORD's opening ways of deliverance to you, and a thousand proofs of grace helping you on in the path, if there was not an hedge of thorns thrown up against you, and that frequently, thereby *divine strength is made perfect in human weakness*.

Reader! before we leave this precious chapter, look at it once again. Have you seen *Israel* in that critical moment, when, according to all human appearance, destruction was inevitable; an enemy behind, mountains on each side, and destruction before, and did GOD then manifest the lighting down of his glorious arm in the very moment of danger? And is it not so with the sinner, in his perilous state, unawakened by grace, and exposed to everlasting ruin. The enemy hastening on; sin encompassing all around; and every step he takes only leading nearer to the borders of eternity. LORD! open to the Reader (if haply his eyes have never yet seen his danger) a sense of this state! put a cry like Israel's in his heart to the LORD; and when, under divine teaching, he hath learnt, that every door of escape in himself is shut, and that there is no way to escape by

human power; then do thou, as to Israel, open that *new and living way* in CHRIST's blood; give him to *see*, that *there is salvation in no other*; and let the language of one of old, be the language of his heart; *I will go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD, and will make mention of thy righteousness even of thine only. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and thy salvation, for I know not the number thereof.*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

This is a very memorable chapter, for it contains not only the most ancient of all holy songs, but that which, considered spiritually and with an eye to JESUS, is to be the most lasting. The HOLY GHOST causeth the sacred writers of the Old Testament frequently to refer to it: and to leave the impression of it in strong characters on the minds of New Testament believers, it is again spoken of in the close of the canon of scripture as the Song of Solomon of Moses and the Lamb, sung in glory: Revelation 15:3. In this chapter we have the words of this song, and the joy of Israel in singing of it. Beside these: here is an account of Moses conducting Israel into the wilderness of Shur: their arrival at Marah: and at Elim.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! In the contemplation of this deliverance to Israel, shall not you and I, while we consider it as a type of a far greater deliverance from sill and everlasting death, call upon our souls to join in the celebration of GOD's mercies? I would say to the drowsy faculties of my heart, *Awake, awake, utter a song.* Did the LORD bring his people out of Egyptian bondage, and did Israel sing his mercies at the Red sea, and shall not I, whom he hath brought out of nature's darkness, and out of the bondage of sin and Satan, shout alike the Salvation of the LORD! Oh! thou blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings, and LORD of LORD'S: thou infinite and eternal JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST: fain would my

awakened soul look up to thee, under each and all of those glorious distinctions of person, and power, and praise thee with unfeigned lips. Thou hast indeed, as thou didst to Israel of old, brought me out of the iron furnace, out of *the horrible pit, the mire, and the clay, and hast set my feet upon a rock and established my goings: hast put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our GOD: so that many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.*

But blessed LORD! Oh grant me faith, and grace, in full exercise, that in all the after stages of a wilderness dispensation, whether in the sweet enjoyment of Palm trees at *Elim*, or the bitter waters of affliction at *Marah*, I may still by living upon thee and thy fulness, be never cast down in unbelief, and repining in the emptiness, or unsatisfying nature, of all creature enjoyments. Oh! lead me on to *Canaan*: and till the happy hour shall come when I shall have done with all things here below, enable me by faith, amidst all changing providences, to live upon an unchangeable GOD. Let faith give me a present enjoyment of the good things to come. Let me see JESUS in everything; and his wisdom, and love, and faithfulness, mingled with every dispensation. And let my experience resemble his of old, who thus expressed himself: *For this cause we faint not: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

Israel, having left the Red sea, journeyeth into the wilderness, and from Elim arrives at Sin. The people murmur for want of bread. GOD supplies them miraculously, in a method till then unknown. Manna is rained from heaven, and quails cover the camp. The people are taught how to gather their daily provisions; and a pot of manna is, at the command of GOD, laid up for a memorial. These are the contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! learn in Israel's history what the Israel of GOD, more or less, hath been, in all ages. We left them in the former chapter sitting under their palm trees, and blessing GOD in their fruitful wells of water. But, when brought for a moment only into a wilderness state, a little disappointment soon produceth murmuring, Oh, my GOD! pardon thy servant in this also. How often have I repined, and dared to think hardly of GOD, when like Israel he had only been leading me into the wilderness, to speak comfortably to me there; when difficulties have been induced, perhaps with no other view than but to afford the better opportunity to magnify the LORD'S graciousness. LORD! grant that past experiences may afford strength for grace in full exercise, to rely upon thy future assurances. And wherever most straitened, and shut up in creature confidence, may divine faithfulness be then sweetest to my heart. Thou hast promised, and that's enough: *Bread shall be given, water shall be sure: and my defense shall be the munition of rocks.*

But chiefly in this chapter, in the view of Israel's food, and the manna sent them from heaven, LORD give me grace to behold thee, thou heavenly manna, thou true bread of life, which art thy FATHER'S gift to the famished souls of poor sinners. LORD, in direct defiance of all my murmuring and sinful thoughts, oh! do thou descend, as thou art in thyself pure, holy, and precious, new and renewing me every morning. And while the HOLY SPIRIT is unfolding thee to my view as the FATHER'S gracious gift, and exciting an increasing appetite after thee to be filled, do thou grant that I may so feed on thy body broken, and thy blood shed, that I may live by thee. Let not my portion be like some of the unbelieving Israelites, who tempted CHRIST, and with whom he was not pleased: but may it be my happiness to know by an heart-felt experience, that thou art the bread of life which came down from heaven, of which, whosoever eateth shall live for ever. LORD, *evermore give me this bread!*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

This is a most interesting Chapter, and when explained to us by the gospel as it is in the outlines of it by one of the apostles, serves to show how much redemption work occupied the divine mind, when in so many ages before its accomplishment, CHRIST was held forth to the Church in type and figure. Here therefore, let the Reader particularly keep in view, that Moses wrote of JESUS. The children of Israel in their journeying through the wilderness, depart from Sin and arrive at Rephidim. Murmurings again break forth in the camp from the want of water. Moses cries to GOD. GOD causeth water to issue from the rock. After this the host of Amalek comes forth to obstruct Israel; but is defeated. GOD commands Moses to record this event in a book. These are the contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! while you and I pause over the relation of Israel's unaccountable conduct, and from the part we bear in this wonderful history, feeling the same sources of unbelief, disobedience and murmuring, in ourselves, as we behold in them, which are the sad consequences of a fallen nature; may we seek grace to avoid their sin, that we may not come under their reproaches. But as we have authority to conclude that *all these things happened unto them for our example*, may a gracious GOD afford us these improvements from them, lest while we think *we stand we are found to fall*.

But above all other improvements from the perusal of this chapter, oh! let me leave everything to contemplate the view it gives me of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. In the smitten rock, may my soul lose sight of everything but JESUS. May my eye gaze with wonder and delight on what I there discover, until the ever-flowing, over-flowing stream fills my ravished heart. Dearest and ever-blessed JESUS! do thou both supply me now, and follow me through the whole of this wilderness state, as thou didst the church of old; making glad the city of our GOD in all ages. May I behold thee as the stone smitten by the rod of Moses, answering all the demands of GOD's righteous

laws for me, and flowing both in atoning and regenerating supplies for all the wants of my soul. And oh! do thou, who alone canst smite the rocky heart of sinners, and convert the flinty stone into a fountain of waters, subdue all the stubbornness of my nature. Conquer and subdue *in* me and *for* me all the *Amalekites* of my salvation. Work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure, until grace comes to be consummated in glory, and my poor faculties are all brought into a state suited to the everlasting employment, of singing praises to GOD and the LAMB.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

The relation of an event in the family affairs of Moses, is introduced in this Chapter. The Reader will recollect, that when Moses with his wife Zipporah and his two sons were at the inn in their way to Egypt, as related in the fourth Chapter, it is said that the LORD met him. It is probable at this time it was that Moses sent back his wife and children to her father: while he proceeded to execute the commission he had received from the LORD. Here therefore in this Chapter, that part of the subject concerning Moses' household is revived. Jethro, his father-in-law, brings into the wilderness to Moses, his wife and children: their mutual pleasure at meeting: and some other circumstances of their conduct and conversation are related.

REFLECTIONS

While so much is said in this Chapter of the LORD's watching over his people, may neither the writer nor the reader of this Commentary, want grace to watch over the LORD's dealings towards us. Doubtless there is enough in every man's life, who with an eye of faith is enabled to trace the wonderful history, to look back and see the path we have come thickly strewn with mercies: in which GOD hath not left himself without witness of his faithfulness and truth.

In all our enjoyments of friendly intercourse with one another, like those of Moses with his father-in-law, let us be very careful to see to it, that it be a friendship formed in JESUS; cemented by his blood, and kept up by his grace. Then we shall find it indeed to be a sanctified friendship, there will be no going back from one another, or at least, if absent in body we shall be present in spirit. And being knit together in the sweet fellowship of the saints, it will outlive all the short and dying connections of this world, and form an everlasting union which cannot be broken in the realms of endless life.

Reader! may you and I learn from the conversation between Moses and his father-in-law, how sweet and edifying that converse is, which hath the LORD and his mercies for the chief topic of discourse! And surely, if the heart of a *Midianite* could find subject of holy joy in the relation of GOD's goodness to Israel, well may we find cause to bless a GOD in CHRIST for what he hath done for our souls.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the record of that memorable event to which all the subsequent acts of the Church have reference; the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, amidst the glorious manifestation of the Divine Presence. Israel, being now arrived at the holy mount, after a journey of between forty and fifty days, from their departure from Egypt, are gathered together to receive the law of GOD. The preparations for this, together with the awful signs which accompanied it, are related in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, my soul, over the perusal of this Chapter, and while duly meditating the vast and infinite importance of GOD's righteous law, delivered with such awful solemnity on Mount Sinai; learn herefrom to contemplate with increasing joy and thankfulness, that precious,

blessed, holy, law-fulfilling, law-satisfying surety; the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath answered all its demands, and is thereby become *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. And under all the deep convictions of the mind, which wound in the recollection of the manifold transgressions committed by thought, and word, and deed, against the law of GOD; learn to bless GOD with increasing praise, at every renewed view of him, *who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*. And oh! thou dear Redeemer, do thou by the sweet influences of thy grace in my heart, teach me to prize those inestimable privileges which, by thy great undertaking, both in *doing* and in *dying*, thou hast procured me, of always drawing nigh to my GOD and FATHER, in thy blood and righteousness. Blessed be GOD, the boundary which kept back the people, is removed. Our GOD manifests no longer his presence in the awful signs of *the sound of the trumpet and the voice of words*. We are not come to *the mount which burned with fire: nor to blackness, and darkness, and tempest*. But we are come to JESUS, even our JESUS, *the Mediator of the new covenant*; and to his *precious blood of sprinkling*. Oh! for the constant leadings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that we may have a constant, stated, daily, hourly, drawing nigh, in this new and living way, until we shall arrive at the fountain head of mercies, to the throne of GOD and the LAMB, to serve him in his temple night and day.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The former Chapter was preparatory to this. In that, we saw the very solemn and awful manner in which JEHOVAH was pleased to manifest the tokens of his presence, on Mount Sinai. And in this, we have the declarations he made, in the delivery of the Ten Commandments to the people. The effect this discourse, accompanied with the awful signs, had upon the people. Their request to Moses, to act as their Mediator upon this occasion; and

the will of GOD communicated unto them by Moses, are also related in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED GOD! do thou enable me to reverence thine holy law, and never to lose sight of that solemn truth, that rather than one jot, or tittle, of thy law should fail; thou hast given that glorious, all-sufficient Surety, to be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.

And Oh! thou adored Redeemer, may every renewed view, and every repeated hearing of thy FATHER'S law, still serve to endear thee the more to my heart. May I be led therefrom to behold thee as becoming one with our nature, for the express purpose of fulfilling the whole will and law of GOD, for us, and for our salvation. And as thou didst undertake so hast thou graciously answered the demand, both in obedience and suffering, of all that was owing to divine justice. Yes ! thou clearest Jesus, thou didst take the whole debt upon thyself, and when we had nothing to pay, either in doing or in suffering, then it was thou didst say, *I will be surety for them: at mine hand, FATHER, thou shalt require it.* LORD, help me, by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, to accept thy sacred person, under this complete character, as my Justifier before GOD. Do thou blessed SPIRIT of all truth, guide my soul to JESUS, and never suffer me to have more than *an altar of earth*, or to *lift up a tool of my own*, to pollute the sweet sacrifice of JESUS' blood and righteousness. Never let me go about to establish mine own righteousness, but most thankfully bless GOD for the covenant righteousness of GOD my Savior; blessing and praising the divine mercy, that when by sin I had destroyed myself, and the terrors of a broken law stood forth against me, JESUS was made of GOD to my soul, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that all my glorying might be in the LORD.*

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

For the better apprehension of the moral law before given in the second table of it, Moses enlargeth in this Chapter upon the particular precepts, in relation to the duty to be shown to servants, and the regulation of conduct, in many circumstances of social life.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a holy, pure, and undefiled religion is that which carries with it evidences of its divine origin and authority, in attending to the most minute circumstances of what is right and just. And what a gracious, merciful, compassionate, and ever-attentive GOD to the happiness of his creation, must the LORD our GOD be, who thus enjoins a system of laws, the very observance of which promotes universal welfare. Oh! my GOD, dispose my heart by thy grace to works of love and tenderness, both to man and beast. Do thou enable me to put on, as the elect of GOD, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. And may the peace of GOD so rule in my heart, that I may follow peace with all men.

Reader! let us not close the Chapter, without first asking grace and wisdom to discern the outlines of the LORD JESUS in it, as the voluntary servant of his FATHER, who, for the love he bore to him, and to us his captive wife and children, cheerfully consented to have his ears opened and would not go out free, until he had accomplished all the work to which he was called, and what he had graciously undertaken. Oh! thou precious GOD of my salvation, thou who, though rich, yet for my sake didst become poor; and though in the form of GOD, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with GOD, yet didst make thyself of no reputation, and didst take upon thee the form of a servant; mercifully grant, that the same mind may be in me which was so strikingly displayed by thyself: may it be the language of my soul, 'I love my LORD, I love my Master, I love his service, in it I would dwell: I will not go out free, but I will abide in it forever.'

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

The same subject as in the former Chapter is pursued through this. Here is a further explanation of the social duties and obligations, as comprised in the second table of the law, given on Mount Sinai: of thefts, of trespasses, of borrowing, of fornication, of witchcrafts, and idolatry, and various other commandments.

REFLECTIONS

Let the perusal of those scriptures lead my soul to those devout reflections, that if the grace of GOD hath indeed appeared unto me, then hath it taught me, and by divine aid enabled me so to conduct myself by its holy power, that *denying ungodliness and all worldly lusts, I should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* And if the grace of GOD hath indeed appeared unto me, then hath it taught me, that as the LORD is my portion, there is enough in him to satisfy all the desires of my soul. Dearest, and ever blessed JESUS, be thou all in all to my soul! Do thou keep me from all covetous and inordinate desires, bring every thought into the obedience of thyself, that, with simplicity and godly sincerity, I may have my conversation in the world, and in all things behave myself as becometh thy blessed Gospel.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

This Chapter, like the two before it, contains an explanation in detail of the law given on Mount Sinai. The precepts against false witness, and false judgment, are enlarged upon: those relating to the regulation of conduct towards enemies and strangers are explained. Some observations, in respect to the observance of the Sabbath, are also added; and the renewal of GOD'S promises to be with his

people through the wilderness, and conduct them safe to Canaan, are subjoined.

REFLECTIONS

Though, through the merciful bounty of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, I dare not seek justification before GOD, by the deeds of the law, yet as the grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, hath taught me to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, may that grace enable me, to *live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world!* And may all my life, and conversation prove, that though I work not *for* life, yet by his grace enabling me I am *working from* life, even the hidden life which is *with* CHRIST in GOD, *that when* CHRIST *who is my life shall appear, I may also appear with him in glory.*

Reader! I would charge it upon your conscience, as upon my own, to be frequently examining the heart concerning these things. Oh! let us be very jealous, with a godly jealousy over those springs of action, and *keep the heart with all diligence*, and more especially beg of GOD to keep it for us, who alone can keep it, *for out of it are the issues of life.*

Dearest JESUS! let the view presented to me of thy presence going before thy people, however short and transient the view, revive in my heart everything that is tender and affectionate, humble and obedient, to the remembrance of thee, and of thy dear name. LORD! may I never lose sight of thee under this glorious character of the Angel of the Covenant going before me. May I rejoice in that sweet assurance that GOD my FATHER'S name is in thee; that thou wilt, by little, and little, drive out the corruptions of my heart before thee; that thou wilt subdue the whole of them at length by the conquests of thy grace; that thou wilt safely conduct me through the whole of this wilderness state, and I shall at last, under thy power, arrive at the heavenly Canaan, to see thy face, and dwell with thee forever. Oh! when will the shadows of the night pass, and the day break from my beloved!

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

This Chapter relates the interview between Moses and the people, when in his descent from the mount he delivered to them the law which he had received. Moses is again called up to the mount, where he continues forty days and forty nights.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I learn, from the perusal of this Chapter, to prize the invaluable privileges to which we are called, in having our Almighty Mediator, even the LORD JESUS, to go in before the divine presence for us at all times, and upon all occasions. Blessed be that merciful dispensation, which brings us near in his blood and righteousness: so that we can, and do, behold him *as the brightness of his FATHER'S glory, and the express image of his person*. And may we never lose sight of that unspeakable mercy by which we have confidence, that the LORD JESUS having accomplished the redemption of his people, is now ascended up on high, hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea saith the HOLY GHOST, (as if we ought to take particular notice of that) *even for the rebellious that the LORD GOD might dwell among them*. Blessed LORD! while I read of Moses, in this interview, let thy grace direct me to behold thee, and by thy power enable me to keep it ever in view, that thou art gone up unto the mount to thy FATHER, and our FATHER; and there let my soul, by faith, continually ascend, and dwell until that hour shall arrive, when thou wilt return to take thy people to thyself, that where thou art, there they may be also.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This Chapter relates to us the commands of GOD to Moses in the Mount, for the service of the sanctuary in the wilderness. The people

are to present their offerings. The plan of the building of the tabernacle, the whole of which is to be formed according to the pattern showed him in the mount.

REFLECTIONS

GRACIOUS GOD! help me by thy divine teachings, to behold the wondrous things of thy law, and to admire and adore thy gracious condescension in the appointment of the *sanctuary*, and the *tabernacle*, and the *mercy seat*, and the *ark of the testimony*, and the *table*, and the *show-bread*. Precious JESUS! may it be my happiness, like *Paul*, while beholding these *shadows* of the good things that were then to come, to see that the *substance and the body* is CHRIST. Do angels desire to look into those mysteries of the kingdom? LORD, make me earnest to know more and more of thee, and of *that love of GOD which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fullness of GOD*. And oh! do thou come and frequently commune with me from off thy mercy-seat! There do thou meet me, and speak comfortably to me. Let JESUS be everything to me, the *mercy-seat* of propitiation, the ark of the divine presence to bless me, the table and bread of life to feast my soul, at which I may sit down here below in sweet communion, until I come to sit down with him forever at the table which is above. Be this my portion, dearest LORD, that I may be *abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thine house, and drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life.*

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

This Chapter is but the continuation of the former. Moses receiveth further directions, concerning the furniture of the tabernacle. Particular mention is made of the vail, or hanging, which separated the outer part of the sanctuary from the most Holy Place.

REFLECTIONS

May it be my happiness never to read or hear of this Jewish tabernacle, without always being enabled by the HOLY GHOST, to connect with it and to keep in view that precious consideration, *that we have such an high priest*, (as the apostle speaks), *who is a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched and not man*. Blessed JESUS! May I behold in thee everything realized. Thou art indeed the tabernacle, the mercy-seat, the ark, the covering, the door, the curtains, the all in all. How richly furnished, how full and satisfying, how completely suited to all my wants in this wilderness state! LORD help me by the sweet and constraining influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, to be continually coming to thee for the supply of all my need. And now the vail is broken down, and true believers have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS, oh! may it be my portion to draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith. May I live *upon* thee, and *to* thee, and *by* thee: and may thy blood and righteousness from which I derive pardon, and mercy, and peace, and wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, be so completely mine in this live, that it may form my everlasting source of consolation and rejoicing to all eternity in another.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

The interesting subject of the Jewish tabernacle is still carried on in this Chapter. Here are directions given to Moses concerning the altar, the court of the tabernacle, and the oil for burning in the lamps of the candlestick.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! what do I behold in this view of the Jewish church? Is it not as the apostle said, these are *a shadow of good things, but the body is CHRIST*. Blessed be GOD! we have an altar, and a tabernacle,

and a court, to enter into with praise. But what are all these if JESUS be not in them, and the sum and substance of all. Oh! may I, dearest LORD, accept thee as mine altar, that sanctifieth the gift, the sacrifice of atonement, and the high, priest to offer. And oh! may GOD the HOLY GHOST in all his sweet influences, be the enlightening purifying oil, to illumine the darkness of my mind, and enable me to see JESUS in every one. Lead me, HOLY SPIRIT, to flee for refuge to the horns of this altar, even to the crucified body and atoning blood of him that suffered thereon. And by him do thou enable me *to offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continuing, even the fruit of my lips, giving thanks to his name.*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

In the prosecution of the same important subject, the LORD gives Moses direction in this Chapter for the priests. Having prepared the hallowed spot for his worship, he here appoints the servants who are to minister in it before him. Aaron's dress, as the high-priest, is particularly described; and that of his sons in the priesthood is also mentioned.

REFLECTIONS

Look up, my soul, and see that great high priest of thy profession, that Almighty Aaron of the New Testament dispensation, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, going in, clothed in his holy garments of everlasting glory and of eternal beauty, before GOD and the FATHER; and still wearing on his precious person as a lamb that had been slain, the marks of thy redemption. And oh for grace in full exercise, to come trader the all-powerful, all-prevailing, all-atoning, all-sufficient merits and righteousness of his person an offering! Oh! do thou bear me on thine heart and on thine arm, when thou presentest thy memorial before the throne. Behold, thou blessed JESUS, what my wants are, and do thou supply them all. Let every case and every circumstance of my soul, and the souls of thy people, come in for a

part in thy remembrance. And when thou bringest me near my FATHER'S footstool, to receive the grace to help in every time of need, do thou put on, by thy blessed SPIRIT, those robes of thy righteousness and garments of thy salvation, that I may be accepted in thee, the beloved. For it is thy province to do all this, both to provide, and to put on, both to furnish and to make meet, thy people for thy salvation. I humbly pray for grace, into thy dear hands to commit all my concerns, for time and for eternity. Thou hast purchased our eternal redemption, and it is thine to bestow it, to preserve it, to carry it on, and to perfect it in us, unto the day of thy coining. Oh! *do thou keep that which I have committed unto thee against that day.*

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

The same interesting subject is continued through this chapter. Here are four more particular objects taken notice of. The first, of the consecration of the Priests. The second, is that of the consecration of the altar. The third, of the daily sacrifice: and the fourth, GOD'S promise that his presence and his blessing should be with the people, in their tabernacle service.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us not think, in the perusal of this Chapter, that we are in the midst of shadows still; but bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, who enables us to look through the shadow, and see clearly the substance, to which the whole ministered. Do we not in Aaron see our Almighty Aaron, and in his sons those who are the sons and daughters of the LORD GOD Almighty, whom JESUS hath made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER? Was Aaron thus washed, and arrayed, and anointed to the sacred service? and was not JESUS, our great high priest, consecrated to the work, when in the infinite purity of his nature he offered himself in all the glories of his person and his character, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people?

Dearest and ever blessed LORD! do thou go in before me, in all the parts of this precious character. Be thou my morning and my evening propitiation! Sanctify my soul with the continued pourings forth of all the graces, and gifts, and rich anointings, of thine HOLY SPIRIT. And may that first and unspeakable mercy be my portion, that being reconciled to GOD, even the FATHER, in thy blood and righteousness, he may according to his most sweet promise dwell in me, and be in me and with me; that he may be my GOD, and that I may be among the number of his people.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

The communion between the LORD and his servant Moses, is not yet finished, concerning the ordination of the tabernacle furniture, and service; but is continued through this Chapter. Instructions are here given respecting the altar of incense, and of the ransom money: of the laver for the priests to wash in: of making the oil for anointing; and of the spices to be burnt on the golden altar.

REFLECTIONS

Come, my soul, look at the Jewish ordinances, and with an eye of faith behold thy Redeemer shadowed out in every one. He is indeed the golden altar, the ransom money, the true laver, or fountain for sin and for uncleanness; the sweet spices, the holy oil in the graces of his HOLY SPIRIT; and the sum and substance of all divine ordinances. Dearest and ever-blessed JESUS! on thee may I be enabled, as the altar of offering, to bring all my oblations: in thy all-sufficient merits, and death, to rest every hope of acceptance in the well-grounded assurance, that GOD my FATHER hath found in thee a ransom, and hath said concerning my soul, *Deliver him from going down into the pit*. May GOD the SPIRIT anoint me with the holy oil of his manifold gifts and graces; and may JESUS, my great high Priest, in his perpetual advocacy, present me in the sweet and all-prevailing incense of his merits, that being washed in his blood, and accepted

in his righteousness, I may at all times come boldly to a throne of grace, and find grace to help in every time of need.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

The same interesting interview between GOD and his servant is continued, and the account of it is recorded in this Chapter. The LORD tells Moses who shall be appointed for the workmen in the tabernacle; the LORD again enjoins the holy observance of the Sabbath, and delivers to Moses the two tables of testimony which he had written.

REFLECTIONS

It is a comfortable consideration, suited to all ranks and orders of men, that what the LORD calls any man *to*, he graciously fits him *for*. If *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* be appointed to the curious construction of the tabernacle building, the HOLY GHOST will make them fit for the employment. And when JESUS called his poor fishermen of Galilee to be fishers of men, how soon were they qualified for the arduous work. My GOD! send me where, and how, and for what purpose thou art pleased; be thou but with me, and I shall soon demonstrate how thy strength is made perfect in human weakness.

But let me not close the chapter until, in the view of the qualified workmen for the tabernacle, I behold thee, thou first and last, thou Author and finisher of our faith, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched and not man. Hail, Holy JESUS! thou who art the foundation stone of the spiritual building; who hast reared up an everlasting tabernacle of redemption in thy blood and righteousness, and finished the work the FATHER gave thee to do. LORD, finish the work in my soul also, and make me as a fit stone for thy temple, now than hast, I trust, hewn me out of the rough quarry of nature; that, being built upon thee as the chief corner stone, and fitly framed together, I may be found an habitation for GOD through the SPIRIT.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

This is a most interesting Chapter, but no less distressing to read. We have therein related to us, that GOD, by his divine foreknowledge, having seen, that in consequence of Moses being with him longer in the Mount than the people below in the camp expected, they fell away to idolatry: the LORD commands Moses to go down to the people: the LORD informs his servant what had taken place during his absence; Moses intercedes for the people: Moses descends from the Mount; arrives at the Camp: beholds the idol of the people: his anger is so great that he casts the Tables of Testimony, which the LORD had given him, out of his hands, and they are broken; the conference between Moses and the people, and Moses returns unto the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

In perusing this account of Israel's shameful apostacy from the LORD GOD of their salvation, alter the many mercies which they had received, both in their deliverance from Egypt, and especially the tokens of his divine presence on Mount Sinai, what do we read in it but the same melancholy account of our poor, sinful, fallen nature, ever prone to depart from GOD, and making to itself idols of its own corrupt fancy. Oh! LORD, may it be mine and the Reader's mercy to know, that in ourselves we are not better than they, but of the same stock and root, of whom it is truly said, that *there is none good no, not one.*

But chiefly in the perusal of this chapter may I behold him of whom Moses was a type, standing up in the glorious character of our intercessor, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. Yes! thou dear Redeemer, thou art he whom the man of GOD here represented: thou didst, indeed, take the whole weight of our guilt upon thyself, when, in the eye of GOD's righteous law, thou didst undertake our salvation, by consenting to become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee. Oh! bring me, by the sweet influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, under thy shelter; and

since thou hast done away sin by the sacrifice of thyself, may my soul rejoice in thy great salvation, and triumph in the name of the LORD my GOD.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

Moses receives a command from the LORD to deliver to the people a message that he will not go with them; but he will not wholly leave them without a witness of his mercy, for he will send an angel before them. This chapter relates to us this message, and the effect it wrought on the minds of the people. Preventing grace opens a renewal of communion between the LORD and the people; and Moses obtains a promise of GOD's presence with his people, and a special token of the LORD's favour to himself.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! think, seriously think, in the view of the LORD's withdrawing the symbols of his divine presence from Israel, how truly awful must that state of the soul be, from whom the LORD hides his face, and taketh away the influences of his HOLY SPIRIT. How will the heart grow hardened, and the conscience become stupid and secure, through the deceitfulness of sin, if GOD restrains his grace, and remits the awakening calls of his love. Blessed GOD! I would say with thy servant of old, Take not, O take not, thine HOLY SPIRIT from me! Whatever beside thou art pleased to recall, (for all thy mercies are but lent, not absolutely given), though thou takest my strength, my health, my property, my children, nay all my comforts, take not, O take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from me!

Teach me, LORD, also, in this history of thy church before me, to see the sweet effects of returning grace. Here I behold how GOD inclines the hearts of his people to pray: and how preventing mercy even outruns their petitions. Thus, LORD, let thy grace descend upon me. Carry me not up hence, not even from a wilderness, to *Canaan*, except thy presence go with me. Dearest JESUS! every place is

Canaan with thee; and without thee heaven itself would be no heaven to my soul. Place me in the clefts of the rock, even in thy wounded side, dearest Redeemer; and in thee, and thy complete salvation, shall I behold thy glory, even all the goodness of my God passing before me.

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

The LORD having in his great mercy received Israel again into favour, commenceth the treaty afresh, which had been interrupted by their idolatry. Moses is commanded to prepare two tables of stone, and to come up to GOD into the mount: there the LORD proclaims himself a gracious GOD, in covenant with his people. GOD renews his promise of Canaan: appoints certain offerings, which the people are to offer: in the return of Moses to the people, the skin of his face shone. These are the contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

What a precious scripture is that, and what a full explanation doth it afford, to this whole Chapter: *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by JESUS CHRIST.* LORD I would pray, write thy laws upon my heart, and while, by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, I am made both able and willing to run the way of thy commandments, now thou hast set my heart at liberty, may my soul be constantly strengthened and established in that precious assurance, that CHRIST *is the end of the law for righteousness* to me, and to every one that believeth.

Blessed GOD! may the perusal of thy servant's privilege and enjoyment in the holy mount of communion with thee, make my soul long after such sweet and reviving manifestations of thy glory, in covenant mercies, that I may know what it is to enjoy fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST. Oh! let the continual actings of faith, and the exercises of grace, be going forth by the SPIRIT'S work, in my heart, on each of the persons of the

GODHEAD. And may the frequent communications of JESUS' love have this blessed effect on my heart, that, as the face of Moses shone, so the conversation of my lips may denote with whom I have been most in communion. Grant, blessed GOD, this may be my mercy, *that from beholding with open face as in a glass the glory of the LORD, I may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD.*

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with Moses' commission, concerning the tabernacle, and its furniture, agreeably to the instructions he had received of the LORD in the Mount. After pointing out to the people again the ordinance of the Sabbath, he calls their attention to the order of the LORD for erecting a tabernacle, for the due observance of the religious duties of the Sabbath: mention is made of the contributions of the people towards the building: their readiness in the offering: and workmen are appointed to execute the building.

REFLECTIONS

Who can meditate on the grace of GOD, in thus furnishing his servants for the work of the sanctuary, and giving the congregation such a willing mind to make contributions to the building, without being struck with the conviction, that in the spiritual building it must be the same Almighty GOD that can alone work in us, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure. Gracious GOD! ever dispose my heart to thy service, and give me grace to consecrate all I have to thee; my time, my gifts, my life; for all is of thee, and in the dedication of the whole, it is but returning thee thine own. Accept them, dear LORD, in CHRIST JESUS, and pardon the unworthiness both of the gift and giver.

Let me not close this Chapter in the review of the preparation for the tabernacle, and the furniture of it, without eyeing afresh that blessed minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which

the LORD pitched, and not man. Dearest JESUS! it is thou that art the true tabernacle of thy people. Upon the foundation of thy FATHER's everlasting love, thy salvation is built for them: and in thy righteousness and blood, the spiritual temple rests for ever: LORD grant, that as thy mercy is built up forever, the top stone for my soul may be brought forth with shoutings of "Grace, grace," unto it.

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the relation of the progress of the work, in the building of the tabernacle: the liberality of the people is so great, that Moses desires them, to refrain. Here is the account of the fine curtains of the tabernacle being finished, the boards, and bars, and partition vail, and the vail for the hanging at the door.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! dost thou behold the readiness of the people to bring their offerings unto the LORD, even while approaching GOD in a tabernacle state: and wilt thou not seek grace to bring all thou hast to his service, since JESUS hath come down and tabernacled in thy nature, to bring thee nigh by his blood and righteousness? Oh! thou precious GOD and Saviour! the tabernacle of my soul, and my hiding place; may I live in thee, and be built upon thee. Thou art indeed the true tabernacle, the gold that perisheth not, the pearl of great price; be thou to me all I stand in need of, in this tabernacle state, until thou shalt bring me home to thy temple, which is above, where the gates are one pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold: but where infinitely above all these, the LORD GOD Almighty, and the LAMB are the temple of it. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, be thou my GOD, and my guide, even unto death.

CHAPTER 37

SUMMARY

The relation of the work is still carried on through this Chapter; the principal things mentioned in it are, the ark, and mercy-seat; the table of show-bread with its vessels; the candlestick, with its lamps; the altar of incense, the holy oil, and the incense.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! do not hastily pass over this Chapter, but pause, as you read, and remark as you go, how very precious ought he to be in his Church, and among his people, whom GOD the HOLY GHOST was pleased to shadow forth by such a variety of representations. Oh! blessed SPIRIT, thou that art the glorifier of CHRIST JESUS, since thou hast been pleased to represent the Redeemer to thy Church by such a diversity of imagery, do thou unfold him to my heart as he is, and give me to look through the shadows to him who is the substance of all. Enable me to be looking at him, as my mercy-seat, my propitiation, my table of living bread, my altar of incense, my all: and so to live upon his fullness, and depend upon his righteousness, that I may be growing, up in him an holy temple to the LORD.

CHAPTER 38

SUMMARY

The account of the building is continued through this Chapter. Here is given the particulars of framing the altar of burnt offering: the laver of brass: of the pillars and hangings for the court of the tabernacle; and a account of the sum which the people willingly offered.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! still keep your eye steadily fixed on the LORD JESUS, all the way through, while looking over the furniture of the tabernacle. And as Moses wrote of CHRIST, may it be your happiness and mine, in every part of his writings, to behold him. Here, would I say to my soul, while looking at the altar of the burnt offering, here I see JESUS, the altar of all my offerings, represented. In him, and his sacred person, righteousness, and salvation, do I find all that can be needed, as an offering for sin. In the laver of regeneration, by his HOLY SPIRIT, let me wash and be clean. And as the people offered willingly, in the Jewish tabernacle, so LORD JESUS, having found thee, and thy righteousness, I would willingly part with everything beside, and desire to count all but dung and dross, that I may win CHRIST.

CHAPTER 39

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have the account of the work of the tabernacle being finished. The last things in order among the tabernacle furniture, are the forming the holy garments for the priests: the ephod, the breast-plate, the robe of the ephod; the coats, bonnets, and girdle, and the plate of the holy crown. Moses examines, and gives his approbation of the whole.

REFLECTIONS

In the review of the finishing the Jewish tabernacle, let every Reader of the account call to mind the glorious work of redemption our great High Priest hath finished by his complete atonement. How costly the work! how great the undertaking! how precious thy building, thou dear Redeemer, when the temple of thy body, being according to the Jewish cruelty, supposed to be destroyed, thou didst raise it again in three days. LORD JESUS! raise up thy power in my soul. Consecrate all I have to thy service. And may I know the

power of thy resurrection, and the fellowship of thy sufferings, being made conformable to thy death!

CHAPTER 40

SUMMARY

The tabernacle being all finished, is now, at the command of GOD, to be set up in its place: then consecrated: Aaron and his sons to be sanctified. The command is executed. And the LORD gives the symbol of his taking possession of it by the token of a cloud covering it. These are the contents of this Chapter, with which the Book of Exodus concludes.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! before we take our leave of this precious book of *Exodus*, pause once more, and remark with me in what a multitude of instances *Moses wrote of CHRIST*. Blessed book of GOD I would say, mayest thou be my constant guide under the teachings of the HOLY GHOST, to lead my soul unto JESUS: and do thou, Almighty Teacher, be frequently taking of the things of JESUS that are in it to show unto me.

In this tabernacle let me behold a type of my adored Redeemer, founded in the eternal counsels and purposes of GOD my FATHER, and reared up in his glorious work of redemption, for the everlasting salvation of his people. In him all the holy furniture, the altar, ark, mercy-seat, show-bread, anointing oil, and incense, have their completion, for in him it hath pleased the FATHER that all fulness should dwell. And may I not consider this sanctuary opened for divine worship, as a resemblance also of the gospel tabernacle, the church of the living GOD, which he hath pitched among men. Here may my soul be frequently found waiting at the throne, and seeking for communion by means of his blood and righteousness, which are the laver, light, and purification of all gospel worship. And here, LORD, may I find my solace, and my joy, rejoicing in the manifestations of thy presence and favour, until I have forever done

with the worship of my GOD and Saviour in the shadow of ordinances, and am sat down at the fountain head of divine and everlasting realities, in the temple that is above. Hasten LORD in thine own time these felicities, that the enjoyment of JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of persons, may be my portion, with all the church of the firstborn forever, and ever. Amen.

LEVITICUS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

I MUST not forget to remind the Reader, that he place over this *third* Book of Moses, as in the *two* former, the same Motto, *Moses wrote of CHRIST*. For here, in every part of this Volume, in a very eminent degree, under types, and figures, may be discovered the most striking allusions, to the Person, and Offices, and Character, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The Book itself, is called *Leviticus*, because it contains, the laws and ordinances of the Levitical Priesthood: in which department, the tribe of *Levi* particularly ministered. Here are contained, all the special rites and ceremonies relating to purification, which belonged to the Tabernacle service. And, as the Apostle, under the gospel dispensation, had it in express authority from the *HOLY GHOST*, to tell the Church, that these were *the shadow of good things to come, but the body was CHRIST*; it may serve to teach us, with what awakened attention, and earnestness, accompanied with prayer to the *LORD*, to be directed in our perusal of it, we ought to read this holy Book. Colossians 2:16, 17. Hebrews 7:11. 10:1.

It will be readily acknowledged, by every lover of this precious Book of *Leviticus*, that to an unenlightened, carnal Reader, there will appear, many things in it, dry and uninteresting. But to a soul truly taught of GOD the *HOLY GHOST*, whose blessed office it is, *to take of the things of JESUS, to show unto his people*, he will find so many delightful sketches of the great Redeemer, marked here and there through the whole Book, in type and shadow, as will abundantly refresh the mind, in the contemplation of Him *who is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. Reader! look steadily at the character of Aaron, as he is represented in this Book of GOD: consider him, as peculiarly *called* of GOD, to be an high Priest:

anointed to the service: *going in* before the people, in this great office, in all his ministrations: behold him and his offerings accepted; and divine blessings following: and then turn to the Gospel, and trace him, whom Aaron represented; and I venture to believe, that if the *HOLY GHOST*, be your teacher, you will discover, such a striking resemblance as will overpower your mind, with the most absolute conviction, that in all *Aaron's* ministration, it was the *LORD JESUS* in his priestly office, whom he typified, and represented.

It will be proper, to inform the Reader, before he enters upon the perusal of this book, that as it is a book of laws and ordinances, he must not expect to find anything relating to the history of the Church in it. Indeed, there is nothing of the kind in it, excepting a short account, in the 8th, 9th, and 10th Chapters, and also in the 24th Chapter, which can be considered as historical. The Reader, will recollect therefore, that as the Church's history, to the close of Exodus, brought on the era of Creation, to the year 2514, that is about 1490 years before the coming of *CHRIST*; the beginning and close of Leviticus leaves it just the same.

I will detain the Reader no longer, from entering upon the perusal of *Leviticus*, than just to observe to him, that if, as he goes along, he finds his mind exercised, as well he may, in beholding the long, tedious, and painful train of sacrifices, of the law, which as the apostle saith, was *a yoke, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*; (Acts 15:10) I pray *GOD* to give him grace, at the same time, both to behold in it, *GOD's* unalterable displeasure at sin, which those sacrifices manifested; and to feel his heart drawn out, yet more and more in every review of them, in love to him, who alone could *do away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, and who hath by that sacrifice of himself once offered, *for ever perfected them that are sanctified*. Hail! thou holy *LAMB* of *GOD*! thou great High Priest, the altar, and sacrifice, for thy people!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The book of Leviticus, opens with the subject of sacrifices, and particularly of that which is among the first of them, burnt-offerings; from what herd the sacrifice is to be taken from among beasts; or from what bird among the fowls.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE my soul, over the perusal of these shadowy representations, and under a most perfect conviction, that neither the blood of beasts, nor of birds, can take away sin, behold in them the most lively types, of the ever blessed *JESUS*! He was brought, indeed, to the Altar, a *willing* sacrifice. He was led, *as a lamb to the slaughter*. Upon his sacred head, by faith, his people now lay their hands; and confess over him those sins, which merit the punishment he suffered. His soul and body were indeed divided, for the moment of death, but soon united together, to see no corruption. And when he had made his soul an offering for sin, he ascended in the offering made by fire, of his own merits and death, as a sweet smelling savour of propitiation, for his people before GOD. Oh! thou holy, immaculate, precious LAMB of GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world; may it be my portion to have an everlasting interest in all the merits of thy sacrifice. And since I am poor, and wretched, in all pretensions to divine favor, may my offering, at the door of the tabernacle, be this, to bring *JESUS*, in the arms of my faith, that in him, and his precious redemption, I may find favor with GOD. Oh! may thy blood, be sprinkled, upon my guilty conscience, and my whole soul be washed in the laver of regeneration; and that the LORD the *HOLY GHOST* may enable me to present my body, *a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is my reasonable service.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter, in prosecuting the law of ordinances, relates the appointments respecting of the meat-offerings; which consisted of flour, with oil, and incense: the method to be used, in the preparation of the offerings, is also here pointed out; and some regulations noticed, respecting the of the first fruits in the ear of corn.

REFLECTIONS

READER! In every offering, oblation, and sacrifice, seek for JESUS. Whether among the fruits of the earth, in the fine flour, the oil, and frankincense, or among the daily lamb of the Israelite: all pointed to him, and in him had their object completed. And while you pray, for the *HOLY GHOST*, thus to enlighten the eyes of your understanding, in the knowledge of him, pray no less for grace also, that in all your offerings to GOD by faith in him, no leaven may be mingled with the all-perfect oblation of JESUS. Seek nothing, bring nothing, depend upon nothing, know nothing, in a way of acceptance with GOD, but *JESUS CHRIST*, and him crucified. And while this grand and only means of salvation, is made the security of your soul, beg of the LORD also, that all your sacrifices, be salted with the salt of the covenant of your GOD. Oh! for the *LORD JESUS*, to preserve, by his purifying salt of spiritual grace, both your soul, and my soul, that we may have *this salt in ourselves, and peace one with another.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In pursuing the order of appointments, under the Levitical dispensation, this Chapter contains the account of the institution of

peace-offerings; which are to be taken from the herd, a bullock or an heifer; or from the flock, either a lamb, or a goat.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! I would charge it upon thee to behold in these scriptures, how great stress is continually laid upon the priest's putting his hands upon the head of the beast offered in sacrifice. As if, that it might be suitably impressed upon the minds of the people, the pleasure *JEHOVAH* had in this shadowy transfer of sin, from his people to the sacrifice. Oh! most holy blessed *GOD* and *FATHER*, how gracious was it in thee thus to silence all the fears and apprehensions of thy people, of the right and justice of the thing itself, by thus repeatedly manifesting that it was from thine own appointment. Yes, blessed *GOD*! though it be not in the power of any man to transfer his sin to another, yet it is not beyond thy right and prerogative as *GOD*. And since the glory of thy holy law, by the obedience and sacrifice of thy dear *SON*, is so abundantly secured and glorified; now may every poor sinner take comfort in the assurance, that *GOD can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in JESUS*.

How sweet is it to behold, in every ordinance, and under every sacrifice, the leading features of him, who in his *one sacrifice, once offered, hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified*! Blessed *JESUS*! be thou my peace-offering for thou hast made my peace in the blood of thy cross. Oh! grant me grace to rest my soul, as the priest rested his hand on the devoted sacrifice, on thy precious merits, blood, and righteousness. And may my soul be so thoroughly satisfied with this complete redemption of thine, that I may seek no other. May I know, by heartfelt experience, under the teaching, and application of *GOD the HOLY GHOST*, that *there is salvation in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved*.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The interesting subject of the law of ordinances, is continued through this Chapter. Here are instructions, concerning sins of ignorance; and the offering to be made in consequence thereof. Moses is taught, by the LORD himself to instruct the Children of Israel, how to prepare, and offer those sacrifices; and of the difference in the ordinance, when it concerns a ruler or private person.

REFLECTIONS

How beautiful is it to behold the *LORD JESUS* thus set forth by the *HOLY GHOST* to the view of the church, under that grand and important part of his divine character our great high priest. But how equally beautiful is it to observe at the same time, what an everlasting distinction the blessed *SPIRIT* hath drawn between *JESUS* and all his types, in his servants. Here under the law, as an apostle truly saith, we see men that have infirmity, made high priests: but under the gospel, the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the *SON* who is consecrated for evermore.

Here Reader! let you and I pause over those solemn representations. Here let us behold the great evil of sin, which alike in priest, and in people, among the rulers and the poor, exposes all without distinction, to the just and merited punishment of Almighty *GOD*. Is your heart, like my heart, under a deep sense of sin, and the consciousness of deserved wrath, prompted to ask with him of old, *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High GOD? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, or give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* Oh! how infinitely precious, to every truly awakened heart that is asking the way of salvation, in those anxious enquiries, is that soul-reviving answer; *Behold the LAMB of GOD which taketh away the sins of the world*. Dearest *JESUS*! may I know by the sweet application of the *HOLY GHOST*'s work in my heart, that thou hast taken away my sin, and art become *the LORD my righteousness*.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

In continuation of the same subject, of ordinances, this Chapter relates the rite concerning the trespass-offering. The cases are particularized to which this religious ordinance had reference, and the offering itself stated; whether of a lamb, or kid; or in poorer circumstances, two; or if very poor, an omer of flour.

REFLECTIONS

SEE Reader! how ruined a state our whole nature is considered in by reason of sin. Oh! what a mass of uncleanness must man as man appear in before GOD! Truly as the prophet hath marked it, *from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores!*

Look up, my soul, and behold the gracious provision the covenant of redemption hath made for sins of all descriptions both of omission and commission; both of willful and unintentional guilt. Blessed GOD! how are we surrounded with mercies in the blood and righteousness of thy dear SON. Let me never lose sight of that sweet scripture, nor want faith to depend upon the precious record; *all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.* Teach me, HOLY SPIRIT of all truth, to depend upon this saving truth, and may my mind be constantly directed into a full enjoyment of the FATHER'S love, the Saviour's merits, and thy pardoning grace, that *my heart may rejoice, and my joy no man take from me.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Part of this Chapter is but a continuation of the former, concerning the trespass-offering: to this are added, laws concerning burnt offerings, and meat offerings; the law of the consecration of the priest, and of the sin offering.

REFLECTIONS

IN the perusal of this Chapter, still seeking grace to be forever keeping my eye steadily fixed on him, who is the only true, and real sacrifice for sin, and *the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth*; I would desire to feel also, the full sense of the baleful malignity of sin, as it must appear in the eye of GOD; whose justice could not remit the penal effects of it, with a less sacrifice than the blood of his dear SON. LORD! *keep thy servant from presumptuous sins*; and in the common transactions, between man and man, in life, may I be enabled, like him of old, whom the LORD JESUS converted, and called from the customs of this world, to be his follower, in the regeneration; may I say, *If I have done any wrong to any man I restore fourfold*. But while doing restitution, to the utmost of my power, may I have grace never to seek justification by the deeds of the law, but by the alone blood, and righteousness of GOD my Saviour.

Reader! let us not close the Chapter before that we have bent the knee in praise and thanksgiving to our gracious GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, for the wonderful provision he hath made both for sins of ignorance and presumption; and indeed the whole mass of evil, by that one glorious offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST once offered, by which he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified. Precious JESUS! may our whole souls be everlastingly looking unto thee, and taking consolation from thee; *for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood*.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The same subject is continued through this chapter of the law of offerings. Here are appointments respecting the peace-offering, and the free-will offering; together with some further directions concerning the meat-offering. This chapter concludes the subject of those ordinances.

REFLECTIONS

STILL, my soul, keep thine eye steadily looking unto JESUS, and pray for the precious teachings of *GOD the HOLY GHOST*, whose office it is, to glorify the *LORD JESUS*, that he may enable thee to behold the Redeemer typified through the several parts of this Chapter. And as JESUS was and is the minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, may my heart rejoice, and participate with him, in all the sweet things of his altar. May it be my portion, LORD, to feed *on* thee, to live *to* thee, to rejoice *in* thee! Never may I presume to bring anything of my own to mingle with the all-sufficient sacrifice of the *LORD JESUS*; but desire to come, or rather to be led, by the *HOLY GHOST* to GOD and my FATHER, *in the new and living way of JESUS's blood, and make mention of his righteousness, even of his only*. But Oh! thou LAMB of GOD! how blessed is it to see thee both the Sacrifice and the Priest. Thou hast made all thy people kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. And as thou art our great Peace-offering: so art thou our glorious Paschal Lamb. On thee we feed. By thee we live. Through thee we are nourished and sustained, and made partakers of an everlasting life. Precious LORD! give us so to eat of thy flesh, and drink of thy blood, that we may have eternal life abiding in us! Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This is an interesting chapter, in that it relates to its the solemn consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood; the congregation of Israel are present; an account of the ceremony; the washing and anointing observed upon the occasion; their sin-offering; their burnt-offerings; and a ram of consecration; the holy solemnity continues seven days.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not close the sacred book after the perusal of this chapter, until that you have again and again besought the *HOLY GHOST* to be your teacher, concerning the many precious things signified in it. If the consecration of the *LORD JESUS* to the priesthood, be here all along represented, think how important was that office. Set apart as the blessed *JESUS* was from everlasting; *called to be an high priest*; not as the priests under the law made without an oath; but *with an oath, by him that swore and will not repent*, when he said unto him, *thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck*; anointed to the work by the *HOLY GHOST*, and to whom *the SPIRIT was not given by measure*; *holy* in himself; *harmless* to all others; *undefiled* with the least shadow of guile; *separate from sinners*; though bearing their sins, yet untouched with the pollution of them; and *made higher than the heavens*. Oh, for the work of *GOD the HOLY GHOST* to be powerful in the Reader's heart, to *consider this apostle and high priest of our profession CHRIST JESUS*.

And while we pray for grace to be always in lively exercise, by faith, on the person and priesthood of the *SON of GOD*, in all the circumstances in which that precious office relates to his people, may it be our happiness also, as the tabernacle of old, and the ordinances of worship were included in the consecration, to partake, as the members of his mystical body, of the same holy anointing. And while they who minister in holy things may learn from this chapter, how very solemn and sacred a service they are called to, and with what sanctity of life and conversation they are more particularly expected to go in and out before the people; may every renewed soul recollect also that *JESUS* by his great undertaking, and by virtue of his blood and righteousness, hath made them kings and priests to *GOD* and the *FATHER*. *LORD!* (I would pray for myself and reader), may our souls and bodies be sprinkled with the blood of sprinkling, and may we be enabled by the *HOLY GHOST* to present them a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to *GOD* which is our reasonable service; that by being dead unto sin, and living abstracted from all the carnal lusts and pursuits of this world, *we may have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

Aaron and his sons having in the preceding chapter been solemnly ordained and set apart to the ministry, are in this chapter introduced as entering upon their holy office. Moses, at GOD's command, appoints an assembly both of the priests and elders, and enjoins them to bring their offerings before the LORD. This is done. Aaron first offers his sacrifice for himself, and then for the people. The glory of the LORD appears in the tabernacle. The divine approbation is manifested by consuming the burnt-offerings with fire. The holy joy of the people in consequence thereof. These are the principal things related in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

IN the perusal of this Chapter, may it be my happiness to look beyond the letter to the spirit of the sacred word; and here, I am sure, I shall see JESUS, my great High Priest, in everything signified. Was he not from all eternity set apart, consecrated, and ordained to be an Almighty High Priest in things pertaining unto man, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people? And did he not, in confirmation of it, in the fullness of time, offer himself unto GOD, a willing sacrifice, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? And is he not, as Aaron of old, now gone into the tabernacle not made with hands, even into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us? Hath he not again and again blessed his people, and afforded the most incontestable evidences of his unalterable love? Doth not his presence now, in the assemblies of the faithful, testify the FATHER'S approbation of all our spiritual services, however poor they are in themselves, yet truly valuable, in being accepted in and through him? And ought not the many love-tokens of his favor, which correspond to the glory manifested in the Jewish church, bring with them the surest evidences of his grace, and call forth our shouts of holy joy? Dearest JESUS! may we never, never lose sight of thee in all our approaches to the mercy-seat, but behold thee as our sacrifice, our altar, our high priest, our all. Hail! LAMB of GOD, thou

that takest away the sin of the world! Praises to thy name; thou needest not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for thine own sins, and then for the people; for by thy one offering, once offered, thou hast forever perfected them that are sanctified.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

A sad breach is made in the family of Aaron, in the death of Nadab and Abihu, his two eldest sons, who both are struck dead by fire from the LORD, for offering strange fire before the LORD. This chapter relates the awful event, as also the composure of Aaron's mind under this painful providence: the relation of the funeral: orders issued for the regulation of the priests' conduct in future: the law concerning the eating of holy things is also added, and the excuse of Aaron in the transgression of it.

REFLECTIONS

Who that reads this Chapter, and beholds the awful monuments here held forth to view, in the sons of Aaron struck dead before the LORD, but must feel himself constrained to cry out with the men of *Bethshemesh* upon another occasion, *Who is able to stand before this Holy LORD GOD!* 1 Samuel 6:20. Were these the very men whom the LORD admitted into the nearer view of himself in the holy Mount? Were these the same *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who went up by the *LORD'S* own command with Moses and Aaron to *Sinai*, and saw the GOD of Israel? Yes. Oh! learn, my soul, from hence, that the more highly favoured thou art from divine manifestations, the more humbly do thou walk with thy GOD. May the LORD in mercy grant, that neither gifts, nor graces, nor abilities, nor talents, nor station, nor character, may become snares to presumption. Dearest and ever-blessed *JESUS!* my eyes are up unto thee with an humble supplication, that no incense but thine, no fire but of thy kindling, may ever be found in my poor offerings. May all my approaches be under the blessed leadings of thine HOLY SPIRIT. Prevent it blessed

GOD, that ever I should kindle a fire or compass myself about with sparks. But may I come to thee, thou great High Priest of my profession! May the golden altar of thy nature, be the only hallowed sanctuary of my oblation; thy blood and righteousness the only sacrifice wherein I put my trust; thy precious offering of infinite and endless value, the only propitiation to justify my soul; and thy robe of salvation the only covering I desire to appear in before GOD. Thus clothed I shall not be found naked. And thus secured in thy righteousness, I shall neither approach nor make an offering presumptuously: but *receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, I shall have grace whereby I may serve GOD acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The sacred historian in this Chapter, enters upon the subject of clean and unclean beasts, and shows what may be eaten and what may not. As the Israelites were to be separated and distinguished from all nations of the earth; the LORD was pleased to mark them also respecting their diet, in the flesh of beasts, of fishes, of birds, and of creeping things.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST *JESUS*! enable me in every part of the law of ordinances to be looking through them unto thee. And while calling myself a member of thy mystical body, give me grace to be holy as thou art holy. Separate me, O my GOD, from all that is unclean. Let all filthiness and fornication, and uncleanness be driven far from me, and let it not be once named by me, or thy people, as becometh saints. And oh! do thou, by thy blessed SPIRIT, dwell in me and be in me. Make my body thy temple. Bring every thought into obedience to the captivity of CHRIST. And while walking *through* the world, LORD keep me from all the pollutions *of* the world. Be thou my ruler

and guide, that I may so use the world as not abusing it, because the fashion of it passeth away.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The foregoing Chapter having stated what the divine law concerning clean and unclean food is, in this proceeds to lay down the law concerning the uncleanness of a woman in child-bearing. The time prescribed for her continuing in the uncleanness of child-bearing, and her burnt offering, and sin offering are pointed out.

REFLECTIONS

TRULY was it said to the woman in the garden, *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception.* And thus from age to age the unalterable decree continues. But blessed be GOD since *JESUS* came, the sorrow is turned into joy. *JESUS* by his great undertaking hath *finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.*

Blessed GOD! help both reader and writer to praise thee for the deliverance from this yoke of ceremonial bondage, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. Praised be that mercy which saveth with *the circumcision made without hands.* And doubly praised be that grace which condescended to circumcision, and the fulfilling the whole law, and the death upon the cross, for the salvation of his people. Dearest LORD, grant that, *as in CHRIST JESUS, neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;* may it be my happiness and the happiness of all thy blood-bought children, to *walk according to this rule, that peace may be on us, and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD.*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The law concerning the uncleanness of the leprosy forms the subject of this Chapter. The method of discovery in ascertaining the existence of the disease, is very particularly pointed out. To which are added laws for the regulation of persons infected with the leprosy, and for due regard to their garments.

REFLECTIONS

How gracious was the *HOLY GHOST*, thus, in shadow and in figure, to teach the church the leprous state she stood in before *GOD*, by reason of sin. And how very precious is *JESUS* our Great High brought forward to our view, thus appointed by *GOD* our *FATHER*, to whom the convinced sinner might show himself and get freed from his leprosy. Teach me thou blessed teacher, in what a leprous state I was born by reason of sin. Give me to see that nothing but the fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness, in *JESUS'S* blood, can cleanse my soul. Lead me to Him by thy sweet influences, who alone can say, Fear not, for I am thy great Salvation. And when I am enabled to draw nigh his footstool, and to show myself before him, that he may search me, and try me; when under the deepest conviction of misery, I cry to the depth of divine mercy; *JESUS*, master; have mercy on me, oh? do thou hear, and answer, and cleanse me from my leprosy. And may I add, dearest *LORD*, this humble boon, and do thou in mercy grant it! that I may ever be found clothed in thy garments, and arrayed in thy covering. The *LORD* the *SPIRIT* give me strength to *put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the Spirit of my mind: and to put on the new man which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

As the former chapter pointed out the tokens whereby the disease of leprosy was to be discovered: so this is directed to the rites and ceremonies to be made use of in the cleansing of it. As the cure is wholly from the LORD, nothing is said in relation to the cure, but only the ceremonial part belonging to the priest's office, after the signs of recovery were perceived. This chapter, towards the end, contains the signs of the discovery of the leprosy in an house; and also some laws relative to the state of leprosy in general.

REFLECTIONS

PRAISES to the covenant GOD of all our mercies, that when our poor nature was leprous, and past all the power of recovery by human art and contrivance; GOD our FATHER pitied our lost and low estate, and sent his SON to heal us of our leprosy. Praises to that gracious and most merciful SON of GOD, who by taking our sins and carrying our sorrows, hath opened deliverance for us in his blood. And no less may we ascribe praises to the eternal SPIRIT, by whose gracious application of the Saviour's merits and righteousness, all the leprosy of our souls is healed.

Dearest, and ever blessed LORD! may it be my happiness now, in being dipped, like the living Bird, in the blood of the slain, to mount up on the wings of faith and love to meet thee, thou LORD of my best affections, in the heavens. Rejoicing in the deliverance wherewith my GOD, and Saviour hath made me free. Oh! may every thought, every desire, every wish of my poor heart be the burnt-offering, my high priest will present for me before GOD the FATHER, in token of my renewed life. And when it shall please my GOD, to take down altogether the earthly house of thy tabernacle, which I now dwell in, where the spots and defilements of the leprosy of sin still appear; oh grant me *that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The subject of this chapter refers to the laws concerning uncleanness, both as to men and women.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! while thou findest continual cause to bless GOD, that thou art not under the yoke of carnal ordinances; seek grace also, to be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of GOD. And oh! thou holy Saviour, since thou hast taught me by the sweet teachings of thy blessed SPIRIT, that none can bring a clean thing out of an unclean; let a deep sense of sin, and even of those involuntary issues of evil, which flow from me I know not how, lay me low in the dust of self-abasement, crying out, *unclean, unclean*. May these things become the stronger motives to bring my soul to thee. May everything tend to endear thee to my heart. And may *GOD the HOLY GHOST* be continually making a renewed application to my polluted soul of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, that when thou comest the second time, without sin unto salvation, I may be found, *without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,—holy and without blemish before thee in love.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter, take it altogether, is perhaps, as interesting and important as any, in the whole Levitical dispensation. And if explained to us, by the gospel, will be found worthy the most serious and close attention of all real believers in CHRIST. It contains the memorable account of the appointed ordinance, to be observed once only in every year, of the day of atonement. How the high priest is to enter, on this solemn day, into the holy place: the prohibition of his ever entering there but upon that day; the service he is to perform;

the manner of performing it; the sin-offering he is to bring, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of his people: these things are all here particularly set down and appointed. The ceremony to be observed also respecting the scape-goat, forms a part of this chapter; and the attention to be shown by the people, upon this memorable occasion is pointed out.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this precious chapter, and take another view of thy Great High Priest, in the type of him here presented on the day of atonement. Behold in Aaron the resemblance of him, who, in respect to his human nature, was taken from among men, solemnly called to the priesthood, and confirmed in the office by an oath. And do not forget, my soul, that it was the FATHER'S rich love, which both appointed and furnished thy JESUS, with every necessary gift and grace for the work, that his sacrifice might be of infinite value, and his person altogether competent to the arduous undertaking of bearing the sins of his people; an undertaking, the weight of which would have crushed the whole race of men and angels. Behold JESUS, fully qualified, entering upon the glorious service! See him as the great High Priest of thy profession, on the solemn day of atonement, going in before the mercy-seat. And fix thine eye, with steady faith, on this GOD-MAN *CHRIST JESUS*, while looking after him within the vail, because he entereth not with the blood of others, but with his own blood; and because he entereth not within the vail of an *earthly* sanctuary, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us. Hail, precious Saviour! all glory to thy name, now thou art gone before, and hast taken possession of the realms above in our name. Remember LORD, thy sweet promise, and may it be my portion, to feel the constraining influence of it in my heart. For thou didst say, before thy departure; and *I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me*. LORD draw my soul upward, heavenward, Christward and I will run after thee, for thou art the LORD my GOD!

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The substance of this chapter, respects the appointed method of making the offerings. The blood of all slain beasts, must be presented at the door of the tabernacle. The blood is not to be eaten, neither must the flesh of what dieth alone, or is torn by beasts, be taken for food.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! help me by the leadings and influences of thy good SPIRIT to be continually bringing all my offerings unto thee, and in thee, and through thee, may they be presented to GOD, even thy FATHER. Thou art the true tabernacle and the altar, and the sacrifice, and the offering, and the great high priest by whom alone they are accepted. Oh! may everything center in thee, as every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from thee. And while I find cause to bless the Author of all my mercies, that I am not under a covenant of works, but of grace; may I still have respect unto all thy commandments, when thou hast taught my soul thy statutes: never forgetting what thy servant the apostle hath said, that we are not without law to GOD, but under the law to CHRIST. Dearest LORD! how delightful is the thought, that *thou art the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains cautions against being seduced to the commission of heathenish practices. Particular laws are enjoined against various pollutions, such as unlawful marriages, unlawful lusts, and the like; and the ruin of the men of Canaan from the indulgence in those things, is mentioned as a means to deter others from the commission of them.

REFLECTIONS

READER! when you have perused this chapter, pause and contemplate with me, to what an awful state of sin and corruption is our nature fallen! Is it possible to consider these precepts as truly necessary to have been given, to consider our nature universally capable of perpetrating such horrid crimes and bestialities, without being smitten with a deep sense of our miserable state by reason of the fall. Is the hand that now writes, and the eye that now reads, equally full of the same malignity, unless restrained from these several corruptions by Almighty grace? Dearest and ever-blessed JESUS! how increasingly precious ought to be thy person and holiness in the conscious sense of sin to all thy people! Oh! may it be my happiness to be drawn the nearer to thee, from the conviction of my want of thee. LORD, enable me to mortify the deeds of the body by thy HOLY SPIRIT, that I may live! And while beholding, as I do, in the polluted sinful world around me, the many deplorable instances of sin and uncleanness among the ungodly; may I feel the sweetness of that blessed scripture, brought home personally to my heart, and speaking to my own experience: And such were some of you. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former. Here are many precepts of a moral and religious nature.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn hence thy noble privileges, in the contemplation of that gracious state, into which thou art brought by faith. Oh! for faith, in full exercise, from the SPIRIT's work in the heart, to live wholly upon JESUS'S fulness. And since thou, LORD, hast prohibited, by so many precepts, everything that hath a tendency to seduce the

soul from thyself, LORD, I beseech thee to put thy fear in my heart, that I may not depart from thee. Keep me, blessed SPIRIT of truth, and lead me into all truth; enable me to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and since he who hath called me is holy, may I be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the former, in a repetition of certain laws, with the addition of the threatened punishment to the breaches of them; and concluding with a more comprehensive demand of uniform holiness.

REFLECTIONS

As there is no part of scripture but what, under divine teaching, will become profitable, so here is opened to us much profit, much improvement, and a continual source for thanksgiving. My soul, I charge it upon thee, while reading the dreadful effects of sin, in the blinded ignorance of other nations, who sacrifice even their offspring to *Moloch*, that thou learn to esteem thy mighty privileges. Corrupt and fallen nature is the same in all; and but for the distinguishing mercy of a gracious GOD, thou mightest have been like them, sacrificing to devils, and not to GOD; or under the fears and misgivings of a wounded conscience, offering even to the GOD of heaven *the fruit of thy body for the sin of thy soul!* Oh! what everlasting praise do I owe to thee, Almighty GOD, FATHER, SON, and *HOLY GHOST*, in that thou hast both taught me the evil of sin, and the sure way of deliverance from it. LORD, grant that I may have grace *to adorn the doctrine of GOD my Saviour in all things;* and as I am graciously taught that *no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST and of GOD:* may I have *no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;* and be enabled *by the SPIRIT, so to mortify the deeds of the body, that I may*

present myself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD, which is my reasonable service.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

This Chapter hath a peculiar reference to the priesthood, and contains precepts by which they who ministered in holy things, were to be regulated in certain particulars. An ordinance is appointed, by which the priests that have blemishes are disqualified from the service of the sanctuary.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I pause over this chapter, and with an eye of faith, behold that great high priest of our profession sweetly pointed out. Let us not forget that this JESUS of ours, is, and hath been, our Priest forever; for he hath an unchangeable priesthood. And while, therefore, we read of these priests, taken from among men, who were not suffered to continue priests, by reason of death, thus prohibited from all ceremonial uncleanness; let you and I look beyond the letter of the law to him who is the Spirit of it, and contemplate his immaculate unspotted holiness, whose human nature united to the *GODHEAD*, forever separated him from all uncleanness. He could and did bear our sins, in his own body on the tree, and while borne down on the cross with the burden of sin, partook of none of its defilements. His church he betrothed to himself, as a chaste virgin: and all the mystical members of it, are now as chaste virgins presented unto CHRIST: without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; being brought before him as holy in his holiness, and without blemish, before him in love. Dearest JESUS! be thou my holiness, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. And since thou hast so loved all thy people, as not only to wash them from their sins in thine own blood, but hast made them kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER; Oh! give both to thy ministers and people, grace to separate themselves from the

pollutions of the world, and to come out from among them, touch no unclean thing. We would pray to be holy, as thou art holy, and that through thy righteousness and salvation, the gracious acceptance of our persons and our prayers, may come up before GOD; that that sweet promise may be our portion, in which the LORD hath said; *I will be a Father you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the LORD Almighty.*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

This chapter is but a continuation of the former. Here is the law for the observance of the priests, carried on in relation to themselves, and their household; together with a precept at the conclusion of it, respecting the unblemished nature of things offered in sacrifice.

REFLECTIONS

IN every typical representation under the law, earnestly would I pray, that *GOD the HOLY GHOST* would enlighten my understanding, that I may discover the allusion to JESUS. Surely in the sanctity required of thy priests, O LORD, I behold thee. And surely in the unblemished object of every sacrifice, thy spotless nature could only be implied. Oh! may it be my portion, in every approach to GOD, to bear in the arms of my faith none but JESUS. Gracious GOD! keep me from bringing any thing of my own, by way of acceptance: for all that is in me, or from me, is, as the prophet describes, *torn, and lame, and sick*. May I never thus sacrifice to the LORD a *corrupt thing*. But looking wholly to thee, thou LAMB of GOD, in thine infinite holiness, purity, and soul-cleansing oblation, may the LORD accept this one all-sufficient offering at my hand, and sanctify my soul by thy precious merits and death!

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

As the preceding chapters related to the solemn appointments of the LORD concerning places and persons; so in this, the same laws are carried on in relation to times and seasons for those services. The feasts of the LORD are here set down; the sabbath, the passover, the sheaf of first fruits, the feast of Pentecost, the feast of trumpets, the day of atonement, and the feast of tabernacles.

REFLECTIONS

READER! may it be your happiness and mine, while perusing this chapter, to experience the divine teachings of GOD the SPIRIT; whose office it is *to take of the things of JESUS to show unto us*: and may we find cause to bless GOD for so many sweet memorials of the ever blessed *JESUS*. And, dearest LORD, I would say, both for myself and Reader, let us but find CHRIST in every one of them, and discover his glorious person, and his finished righteousness, as the great end to which they all ministered, and we shall then have all that we can desire. It is JESUS that we want, both as our Sabbath, as our unleavened bread, as our first fruits, sheaf-offering, passover, pentecost mercy, trumpet season, expiation, and all-sufficient sacrifice! And while leaning on thee and thy fulness, like Israel of old, may we be ready to leave our dwellings and live in tabernacles, or without the camp, so that we do but live with thee. And dearest LORD, in all our rejoicings, and our feasts, be thou the sum and substance of all; and may we receive them, and enjoy them only so far as they include JESUS. For thus becoming pledges and tokens of thy love *here*, we shall then hope to rejoice in the complete ingathering of thy fruits which shall be *hereafter*.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

This chapter is a continuation of certain laws relating to the temple service, particularly of the order to be observed in the burning of the lamps, and supplying the show-bread. This Chapter is rendered the more remarkable, in that it hath introduced in the body of it, a short historical relation of Shelomith's son being convicted of blasphemy, who is in consequence thereof stoned.

REFLECTIONS

READER! may it be your happiness and mine, to have our souls kept alive by the quickening influences of *GOD the HOLY GHOST*. I would bring, O LORD, continually, as the Israelite of old, the pure oil for thy service. I would present myself, my soul and body, a living sacrifice, a reasonable service before GOD, through JESUS. But all I have is incompetent to serve; and everything too impure to offer. LORD, undertake for me, and let the lamp of thy grace in my soul be kept alive by thy power. Dear JESUS! be thou the show-bread to me, and in thee, and thy complete salvation, may I see a constant and never-ceasing supply to feed, not only *my* soul, but all thy church and people. May thy ministers, who serve in holy things, be enabled to bring forth things both new and old in thy sanctuary. LORD! give me grace, in reading the awful account of the blasphemer in this chapter, to drop an earnest prayer before the mercy-seat, that our GOD may turn the heart of blasphemers in this guilty land. Oh LORD! in judgment remember mercy. Turn thou us, and so shall we be turned.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This forms a most interesting chapter, even in its moral sense, but much more so in its spiritual. And as an enlightened eye will he

enabled to discern in it, that Moses spake of CHRIST, the attention ought to be the more awakened. Here is GOD's appointment of every seventh year to be a year of rest to the land, that the holy land of Canaan, which was the glory of all lands, should be distinguished from every other by a Sabbath year. Here is also GOD's appointment, for every seven times seventh year to be a year of jubilee, in which the captive and the bond-servant among the Hebrews should go out free. This chapter hath also some very gracious laws contained in it, for the treatment of the poor, and of debtors.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT motives of thanksgiving and praise pour in upon my soul from every quarter, in the perusal of this chapter, while I consider and compare my privileges and my happiness to those of the *LORD's* people of old. They had, it is true, their *seventh* year of Sabbaths to remind them of the Sabbaths in Paradise, which Adam's transgression deprived his children of; but I have in that second *Adam*, the *LORD* from heaven, (as the Apostle most properly stiles him) an everlasting Sabbath, in him and from him to enjoy. Oh! may the blessed *SPIRIT* give me by his sweet influences to rest in *JESUS*!

In this Jubilee season to the poor captive and bond-servant may I behold by faith, the lively emblem of that eternal jubilee in *JESUS*, wherewith he makes his people free. Oh! thou kinsman Redeemer, that hast caused thy gospel trumpet to be sounded, never may I lose sight of what I was by nature, and what I now am by grace. Thou didst find me, O *LORD*, a bond-servant, indeed, to Sin and Satan, serving divers lusts and pleasures; and even in love with my chains, and averse to freedom. Eternal praises to thy dear name, that thou hast both proclaimed liberty to the captive, and made me *willing to be redeemed in the day of thy power*. Oh! may it be my happiness to return, as the redeemed *Israelite*, to my *FATHER's* house, and now the mortgaged and sold inheritance is ransomed; *LORD* keep me from being ever again entangled *in the old yoke of bondage*. And while I behold so many all round me in nature's chains of sin, *LORD* give me grace, to adore the distinguishing mercy of my Deliverer.

Let it be wholly to *the praise of the glory of thy grace, wherein thou hast made me accepted in the beloved.*

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

This chapter seems to form a brief summary of the arguments, by which the laws contained in the foregoing chapters are enforced; in that it points out the blessings to obedience, and the curses which will follow upon disobedience. The conclusion of it is very remarkable, in that it ends with gracious promises, even to the most rebellious, when their heart is turned to seek the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

OH! what a gracious merciful GOD is the GOD with whom we have to do, of whom it may be truly said, *he punisheth us less than our sins deserve.* May it be my mercy, O LORD, through thy sovereign grace, to walk with thee in all thy statutes and in all thine ordinances, with a jealous eye to thy glory; that the LORD may give me all these blessings both in a temporal sense and in a spiritual; that my heaven may never be iron, nor my earth brass. But chiefly, while a bountiful GOD and Saviour gives me all things richly to enjoy, neither the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, nor the precious things put forth by the moon, may be half so precious to my soul as *the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.*

And, dearest LORD, in all thy rebukes, for the manifold departures of my soul from thee; oh, give me grace, that the most gentle of thy chastisements may call my heart home from its rebellions. LORD! evermore give me *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.* May it never be my case to seek comfort by hiding or lessening my transgression; but in *confessing and forsaking it:* and so to seek peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And blessed *JESUS*, let me add, may the precious teachings of thine HOLY SPIRIT continually lead me to this sure conclusion; that all my pardon and peace is obtained, not for anything that I have done or can do;

but from the covenant righteousness of GOD in *CHRIST*; what thou hast done and suffered; and what the FATHER of mercies hath engaged to perform, for his own sake, and for his righteousness sake, to whose holy name be all the glory!

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

This chapter seems to be added by way of appendix to the whole Book of Leviticus. For the preceding chapter summed up what had been enjoined in speaking of the rewards to the observance, and the penalties of punishments, to the neglect of the whole law. This chapter, however, is subjoined, and relates to the subject of vows, and the method to be observed, where the person vowing desires to redeem it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how delightful in lesser things, as well as in greater, is it to see the law still pointing to the gospel; and every sacrifice, even those of vows, and dedications of the most minute kind, referring to the redemption by JESUS. May the LORD give you and me to see this; and while we are enabled by grace, to give chearfully and readily of our substance to him, still may we never lose sight of this leading doctrine of our holy faith; that it is JESUS, and he only, which sanctifieth both gift and giver!

Let us not close this precious book of GOD without once more taking a general and comprehensive view of it; and while we consider as we ought the state of the church in the wilderness, thus veiled under what the apostle calls *the shadow of good things to come, which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation*; let us thankfully contemplate the happiness of GOD's people now, in being delivered from such a yoke of bondage, *which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.*

But while we find cause thus to bless GOD, that we are come to this better dispensation, *founded upon better promises*; let us never forget that in those types and shadows the gospel was preached unto them, as well as unto us. *CHRIST* then was, as well as he is now, *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*.

Dearest and ever-blessed JESUS! give me to see that all the ordinances in thy sacred book, and the numberless rites, both moral and ceremonial, there appointed, were *the shadows of good things to come, but the body was and is CHRIST*. Be thou the sanctuary, the altar, the mercy-seat, the sacrifice, the offering, the priest, the all in all of my poor oblations! And may this be my highest and most encouraging consideration in every approach to GOD my FATHER, that *having such an High Priest over the house of GOD, I may draw nigh, through thy blood and righteousness, with a true heart in full assurance of faith*. Amen and Amen.

NUMBERS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IN opening this *fourth* Book of the writings of Moses, I must again request the pious Reader to call to mind, that *Moses wrote of CHRIST*. And if the HOLY GHOST shall be graciously pleased *to take of the things of CHRIST*, and show them to the Reader, no doubt he will find here, as in the former books of Moses, that *he hath testified of JESUS*.

The book of Numbers, hath its name from the circumstance of its containing the numbering of the children of Israel. It forms a very interesting volume on that account; in that it carries with it in its bosom, an evidence of the fulfillment of GOD's promise. The LORD had assured Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, Genesis 15:5. And here we find the accomplishment.

In respect to the period of time the book of Numbers contains, it is somewhat about thirty-nine years. The history commences in the second month of the second year, after the Israelites left Egypt; and ends in the eleventh month of the fortieth year.

There is a mixture of laws and of history in this book, of which it is composed. The Reader will very easily distinguish the one from the other. But here, as in all other instances, in searching the sacred oracles, it must be GOD the HOLY GHOST, which can alone enable the Reader to discern spiritually, and convey his divine teaching to the mind, so as to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.

I only pray, that Holy and Eternal SPIRIT, under whose inspiration all scripture is written, that he will be both with Writer and Reader, while going through the sacred pages, that we may discover CHRIST to be the sum and substance of the whole law of

Moses, and the *end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This sacred volume opens in this Chapter, with the LORD's command to Moses, for the numbering the people: the persons appointed to this service; and exception of the Levites.

REFLECTIONS

Who can behold the LORD's attention to Israel, as recorded in this chapter, in commanding the people to be numbered and registered; without calling to mind the blessed and distinguishing privileges of the LORD's Israel in all ages. Oh! the happiness of that people and that person, whom the LORD marketh for his own, and of whom the LORD of hosts hath said, they shall be mine in that day, when I make up my jewels. Reader! I charge it upon thine heart and mine, that we both look well to that feature, by which the LORD's Israel are known: a separate, a chosen, a distinguished, a peculiar generation. *Lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*

Be not cast down, my poor afflicted brother, whosoever thou art, that through the temptations of the enemy, and the unbelief of thine own heart, art prompted to fear, as if there were but few which shall be found among the true Israelites. Read this chapter, and see how numerous they then were which were numbered: think what multitudes have been added since, from among the children which were then unborn; and though the *carcasses* of so many from that deadly sin of unbelief, *fell in the wilderness*, yet never forget that the LORD hath in all ages *a seed that shall serve him*. See how in the short period of a few years the people multiplied, and comfort thyself with this assurance, the LORD's promise must be fulfilled; the Redeemer must see *of the travail of his soul and be satisfied*. *Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of*

Israel! But chiefly may my soul be led to look unto thee, thou dear Redeemer, through whose gracious undertaking thy people, which were far off are brought nigh; and from whose complete and finished salvation alone, their names are recorded in thy book of life. Hail! precious JESUS! It is thou who hast purchased for me this glorious privilege: It is by thy blood and righteousness secured for me; It is confirmed both by the FATHER'S gift, and the HOLY SPIRIT'S seal: and shall I at length, not only read my name written there, but enter thereby into the joy of my LORD? Oh! may I rejoice more in this, than if *the devils were all subject to me through thy name*. For, by and by, I shall awake to the full enjoyment of the promised possession, and have a real, intimate, and soul-transforming communion, with all the persons of the GODHEAD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

As the former Chapter contained an account of the numbering of Israel; so in this, here is the divine appointment for the arranging the people into distinct and separate battalions, and tribes.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, thy GOD and Saviour is himself thy standard, ensign, and banner! Behold how he is lifted up to draw thee unto him! LORD give me grace and a discerning eye, to view thee in thy person character, and office as the standard of my Father's house! Let me behold thee in thy faithfulness, in thy love, and in everything that may tend to endear thee to my heart. Let me see thee set forth in type, in all the Old Testament shadows; and realized in all the New Testament substance. And, O my GOD, give me power in thy strength, to fight under thy banner, against sin, death, and Satan, and all the enemies of my salvation. And dearest JESUS! do thou go before me through all the warfare, that I may feel in my own experience, that glorious promise of my GOD and FATHER fulfilled,

wherein he saith, *Behold I have given him for a witness, a leader, and commander to the people.* Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

As the preceding Chapter related to the numbering Israel in tribes, and families; so the present hath reference, to the ordering the Levites, as the more immediate servants in the LORD'S ministry. The close of the Chapter, contains the order for the redemption of the firstborn.

REFLECTIONS

HERE again, blessed JESUS! while reading the separation of the Levites to the service of the sanctuary, here let me behold thee in thine unequalled office; consecrated, and set apart to thy Father's service, in the salvation of souls! With what earnestness didst thou enter upon the work; with what diligence and faithfulness perform it; with how much tenderness to us, didst thou take upon thee the form of a servant, when thou wast LORD of all, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with GOD: and with how much obedience to thy Father didst thou magnify the whole law, and make it honourable; never desisting from thy labour of love, until thou couldst say unto God the Father; *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.* Hail again and again, thou ever adored Redeemer! LORD, number me among the sons of Levi, and purge my soul as gold and silver, that I may offer to the LORD, an offering in righteousness. And while I behold my GOD and Saviour, though LORD of all, thus set apart, and becoming the servant of all; may my soul be so devoted to thy service, that with one of old, I may cry out as he did: *Truly, I am thy servant, I am thy servant and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.* Psalm 116:16.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The same subject as occupied the former chapter, is continued through this. The numbering and ordering the several branches of the Levites, *the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites; together with the number and particular service of each.*

REFLECTIONS

HERE my soul! pause and behold, how the Levitical service of the sons of Aaron shadowed forth thy Saviour in his gracious ministration. He it was, indeed, that alone could remove the face of that covering, by which, our nature was hid, and lost from all his people. Oh! that my eyes were more enlightened to behold this Great High Priest, in all his blessed offices, and characters! Thou art indeed the true tabernacle, dearest LORD, without a covering; for by thy precious undertaking, thou hast opened a new and living way for us in thy blood, and righteousness; thou hast opened, and none can shut: neither will the covering be any more upon it, but on all the glory shall be a defense. And oh! what a glory, what an inconceivable weight of glory, will break in upon the soul, when this earthly tabernacle of our's shall be taken down, and the pins, and the sockets, with their silver cords and instruments, be broken at the cistern: and JESUS shall again raise it up, a glorified body, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! What rapture will break in upon the soul, when our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body; and when those dear partners of affection, the soul and body shall again unite, never, never more to part; and never, never more to thwart each other, being both redeemed together by his great salvation! Dearest Saviour! be thou now by faith my joy, and then by sight, wilt thou be mine everlasting light, and my GOD, my glory.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This chapter contains an order for the removal of the unclean, from the Camp. Here is also a repetition of the law, concerning the restitution to be made in cases of trespass; and the mode of trial to be observed, in the instance of a wife suspected of adultery.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED GOD! here let me learn the sanctity, which ought to be preserved in those that approach thy church, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. LORD! do thou enable me to keep my foot when I go to the house of GOD; and do thou keep my heart from all defilement. Precious Redeemer! here again let me behold and rightly prize thy invaluable redemption; by which alone, my soul, which hath deserved to be banished without the camp, by reason of the uncleanness I have contracted; yet being cleansed from all sin by thy blood, is brought within the vail, and come within the holy place! Oh! GOD of my salvation, let me upon earth be forever singing the glories of the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed poor sinners to GOD by his blood; and by and by, I hope, through thy grace, most loudly to proclaim it, amidst the glorified inhabitants of heaven. And do thou, dearest LORD, who hast paid all the fine of trespasses *for* me, graciously rule, and so govern every affection of my heart, that there may be no allowed trespasses *in* me. To thee I look up, with the same awakened earnestness of prayer and supplication as one of old, and cry as he did: *Search me, O GOD, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

And blessed Redeemer, since thou last graciously condescended to make me thine, and hast betrothed me to thee forever. Oh! let nothing tempt me to go aside or wander from thee; no LORD not in thought, or word, or deed. But like the church of old, let it be my glory that I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine, and thy desire is toward me.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

As the preceding chapter contained the law respecting, unclean persons, in this we have the law concerning the Nazarites who were devoted to the LORD by their vows. The chapter is rendered interesting also, from another consideration, in that it closes with the blessing, wherewith the LORD enjoined the priests to bless in his name the people.

REFLECTIONS

HERE, my soul, let me stand and view, in the contemplation of the Nazarites, that holy Nazarite, that unequalled spotless SON of GOD, who for my sake separated himself from all that was corrupt in our nature, when in that nature he undertook and accomplished, the salvation of his people. Well is it for me that thou, blessed JESUS, hast fulfilled all righteousness on my behalf; for I groan daily, being burthened with the weight of corruption in my nature; and I feel that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. LORD, what power hath the remains of indwelling corruption in my nature over me! How little of the principles of the true Nazarite do I find in my heart! And yet, how earnestly do I desire to be dedicated unto GOD. Oh! precious JESUS! how sweet and endearing is it to my soul, that thou art here, as in every other instance, the LORD my righteousness.

Reader! let us not close the chapter, until that we have jointly bent the knee of prayer together, that our great High Priest and Saviour may pour upon us the precious blessing contained in it. Father of mercies! do thou bless us and keep us! Holy Saviour! cause thy face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us! Eternal Spirit! lift up thy countenance upon us, and we shall be whole. LORD give us peace, even that peace in the blood of the cross, which shall both in time and in eternity keep our hearts and souls, in and through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the account of the offerings of the princes of Israel, at the dedication of the tabernacle, and of the altar. It is rendered the more remarkable, in that it relates the gracious condescension of GOD, in speaking to Moses from the mercy seat.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! while I here behold the rich offerings of the princes, and thy gracious acceptance of them: and while I look into myself, and perceive that I have nothing to offer but my sins, and transgressions; how shall I venture to hope the finding favour with thee. But my soul be encouraged. The poor widow's offering was a costly gift in the sight of GOD; and a broken and contrite heart, the LORD hath said he wilt not despise. It is in JESUS alone all must be accepted. The rich have nothing truly valuable, but as they are rich in him; and the poor can need nothing while *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.*

In the contemplation of the LORD's speaking to his servant *Moses*, from between the cherubims; let me steadfastly behold thee, thou ever gracious Redeemer, speaking to thy people in all the tender tokens of thy love. It was thy love which led thee to engage as our surety; it was the same love which prompted thee to assume our nature; it was the same love carried thee on through all the interesting circumstances of redemption work; and it is by the effects of the same everlasting and unchanging love, that all the sweet tokens of communion with our FATHER are conducted now. Thou art GOD still, and still thou dwellest on the mercy seat, between the cherubims, to communicate blessings to thy people! Oh! then speak to me, and tell me thou art my great salvation. Dearest JESUS! be thou my portion now, and my glory forever.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

As the golden candlestick in the tabernacle consisted of seven lamps; this chapter contains directions for the lighting of them. Here is also the order for the consecration of the Levites, to their particular office, by the purifying of their bodies and garments: with some other circumstances of the like nature.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE my soul, while by faith thou walkest in the sanctuary of the Old Testament dispensation, and in viewing the golden candlestick with the lighted lamps, behold thy adored Redeemer, as divinely represented shining forth, in and through all his New Testament revelation, under the fulness of all the HOLY SPIRIT'S influence. Oh! how gloriously did *he* shine, of whom this golden candlestick with its seven lamps was but the faintest image, unto whom the Spirit was not *given by measure*. Hail! thou ever blessed, ever glorious JESUS! thou that art both the light, and the life of thy people. From thee and thy precious influence, do all the lights of the temple derive their lustre. By thee they shine; for thee they minister; and to thy glory they serve. LORD! communicate to my dark and benighted heart the rays of thy grace. Shine in precious JESUS, on my cold and lifeless soul, and warm my frozen affections; be thou my *everlasting light, and my GOD my glory*.

And while I thus look up to thee my GOD and Saviour, as the fountain and source of all that is truly glorious, may my soul behold in the dedication of these Levites to the temple service, how high a dignity those souls are called to, who, by the LORD'S appointment, minister in holy things. Let me offer a prayer before the mercy seat, for all of this description and character, who are the true Levites before GOD; I mean such as are of the HOLY GHOST'S commissioning, that He who hath called them may qualify for the work. Oh! LORD, consider their earthen vessels: pity and compassionate the weakness of their frame; and by the powerful influences of thy grace, do thou give in unto them that they may give out to thy people! may a

gracious GOD and Saviour make them faithful, to shine as lights in thy church here; and, by turning many to righteousness, may they shine as the stars in the church above, forever, and ever!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, we have a repetition of the law concerning the Passover. Here is also, a provision made for such of the people as, by reason of any ceremonial uncleanness, were prevented from the observance of it at the season appointed. The Chapter concludes with an account of the journeying of Israel through the wilderness.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! in the perusal of this chapter, let me chiefly discern by thy HOLY SPIRIT's teaching, Him who is the passover of his people; and may a gracious GOD enable me not only once a year, but every day, to keep the feast. May it be my desire, like those whose souls melted within them with an earnestness of longing, when at anytime kept back from rejoicing before my GOD in his ordinances, to seek those renewals of love; and may I esteem every pledge of a Redeemer's kindness in the several means of grace, and especially at his table and his supper, more than my necessary food. Oh! may my soul cry out under the enjoyment of those privileges; *blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee.*

Hail! thou glorious pillar of cloud! thou holy JESUS, who art both the light and the life of men: be thou my constant, uniform director, guiding me by day, and sheltering me by night. In every season of darkness, ignorance, corruption, and trouble, do thou manifest forth thy glory, and shine as the sun of righteousness, with healing in thy wings. Grant me grace by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT to follow thee wheresoever thou goest. Go before to guide me in the way, and cause me to rest wheresoever thou shalt be pleased to intimate thy will for any remaining. Never may I run unsent and

uncalled: and never may I loiter in the heavenly way when JESUS calls. Dearest LORD; may it be my portion to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth, until at length JESUS shall come and take me to himself, *that where he is, there I may be also*. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This is an interesting chapter. It treats of the form and uses of the silver trumpets for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the people. Herein is also contained, the account of the removal of the people from Mount Sinai to Paran: an affecting relation of Moses's entreaty of Hobab, not to leave him: and Moses blessing and prayer, at every removal or resting of the Ark.

REFLECTIONS

HERE, my soul, let me pause a little, and in the relation of the silver trumpet service, calling the LORD'S people to the assembly of his saints, ask my heart whether I have heard and known *the joyful sound*, which is proclaimed in the gospel, of JESUS' blood and righteousness! and am now walking in the light of the divine countenance? If I am thine, thou dearest JESUS, then do I know thy call, both for the assembling with thy people, and for my journeying with thee! LORD do thou go before me in my pilgrimage through life. Thy presence, whether in removing from *Sinai* to *Paran*, or from one border to another, (for every removal is but a wilderness state here below), will make everything to smile. Be thou but with me in every resting place, or setting forward, and all will be well, my delight will be found in JESUS, amidst his ordinances and people.

And no less do thou, ever blessed Spirit, excite in my soul an earnestness like thy servant Moses, to invite others to partake of the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS. Well satisfied as my soul is, of the inexhaustible fulness that there is in thee, for the many thousands of thy Israel, may it be the daily language of my heart to call upon the unawakened around me, *to come, and taste and see how gracious*

the LORD is. And oh! grant, LORD, this unspeakable mercy both to him that writes and him that reads, that from a conviction of the infinite importance of salvation by JESUS, we may gladly leave a world from which we are daily journeying, with all its perishing connections, and go forth by faith, like faithful Abraham, at the call of GOD, not knowing whither he went, to the sure possession of that city of foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains a melancholy relation of Israel's disobedience, and the LORD'S displeasure. The people murmur. Moses' meekness forsakes him; and in his fretfulness he ventures to expostulate with GOD. The lust of Israel is gratified, but the LORD'S judgment follows.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over this Chapter, and behold in Israel's murmuring and disobedience the picture of thine own heart. How often hast thou repined at thy GOD'S appointment, when matters have for a short space appeared a little thwarting to flesh and blood? Many a time since grace renewed thy heart hast thou looked back to the days of thine unregeneracy, and like Israel, to the flesh pots of Egypt, seemed to think, in an angry hour, it was better with thee then than now. LORD! give me grace to admire and adore, in the reviews of thy forbearance and long-suffering, how unchangeable thy love is to thy people. Well may it be said concerning the sovereignty of thy tender purposes, as thou didst to the church of old, *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.*

But my soul, chiefly in the view of this Chapter, do thou contemplate him in his everlasting priesthood, whom Moses personated when the people cried unto him in their distress, and he prayed unto the Lord. Yes! thou ever precious JESUS! thou wert made our great High Priest with an oath; and our GOD and FATHER hath in

the most solemn manner anointed thee to be our priest forever, *after the order of Melchisedec*. Help me then in all my afflictions and distresses by reason of sin, to be looking unto thee who art mighty to save. Help me also to be feeding on thee by faith, and never, never slight or despise this heavenly manna; nor covet the flesh pots of a carnal appetite. May a gracious GOD and FATHER take of his HOLY SPIRIT, and put upon me, as upon the seventy elders: and may this be my happiness under such gracious influence, to be living in the constant apprehension of the knowledge and enjoyment of *the mystery of GOD, and of the Father, and of CHRIST*.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the relation of the further exercises of Moses. Miriam and Aaron join in speaking against Moses. GOD himself takes up the business, and Miriam is smitten with a leprosy. Moses intercedes for her. She is restored to her former health, but punished by being shut out seven days from the camp.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT an interesting character is Moses, and in how charming a light doth he appear in this Chapter! To all the unprovoked unkindness of his brother Aaron, to whom he had been so friendly, we find he made no unkind return, but recompensed the cruelty both of Aaron and Miriam with his prayers. But here again, my soul, as in a thousand other instances, pass over the contemplation of creature-excellencies, to behold the unequalled loveliness of Creator-love, and mercy, manifested to thy ingratitude in the person of the LORD JESUS. Oh! thou holy Redeemer! how dost thou unceasingly intercede at the right hand of power, for me, and for all thy unworthy ungrateful people; who in the very moment that thy blood, and righteousness, is pleading for our salvation, are causing thee *to serve with our sins, and wearying thee with our iniquities*. SON of GOD! compassionate the leprosy of my soul, and shut me not out from thy

presence, but say to me, as thou didst to the poor creature in the gospel, who cried out, LORD! *if thou wilt; thou canst make me clean; I will be thou clean; and immediately my soul will be cleansed!*

Reader! do not close this Chapter without having an eye in the intercession of Moses for Aaron and Miriam, to the intercession of JESUS on the cross, for those who crucified him. Oh! what a volume is folded up in that one prayer of JESUS to comfort poor sinners, and to show the all-prevailing efficacy of JESUS'S advocacy. FATHER! forgive them for they know not what they do. Oh! LAMB of GOD! let this first cry of thine upon the cross, be the first and last of my soul-reviving consolations under all the discouragements by reason of my unworthiness and neglect of thee. Surely, dear LORD! when I sin against thee, I know not what do.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have recorded the account of Israel's plan, in prosecuting their journey. Being arrived, to the very borders of Canaan, Moses is commanded by GOD to send a man of every tribe of Israel, to spy out the land. The persons deputed to this office are here mentioned, and an account is given of their journey: after forty days search, they return, bringing with them some of the fruits of the land: but all, excepting two of them, report unfavorably of the ability of Israel to conquer the country.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in the sad picture this representation holds up to thy view of unbelieving, distrustful Israel, do thou behold a true image of thyself. Hath not my GOD and FATHER promised to bring all his people into the promised land? Is there not *a rest for the people of GOD*? Is not this at once both the gift of the FATHER'S love, and the purchase of the Redeemer's grace; and is not the HOLY GHOST most graciously engaged, by the conquests of his power, to drive out all my enemies before me, and to bring me in by his own sovereignty?

And yet, in the midst of all these positive assurances, am I not frequently questioning the reality of heaven's joys, the sufficiency of JESUS's redemption, and the suitableness of what that blessed Redeemer hath done and suffered, to answer my own personal wants therein? Dear LORD! how just would it have been to me, hadst thou dealt by me as I have richly deserved; and, if considered without reference to my interest in thy righteousness, to have given me up to an hardened, unbelieving mind. SON of GOD! I beseech thee cause my soul, through the softening influences of thy blessed Spirit, to be humbled upon all occasions for the weakness of my faith! And while I look back, by the HOLY GHOST's aid in that precious part of his character, as the Remembrancer, to bring to my recollection through what a series of mercies, like Israel from Egypt, to this wilderness of *Zin*, the Lord hath brought me; oh! may I hear thy gracious voice, in the tender expostulations of thy love, saying personally to my heart, as to his disciples of old, Oh! *thou of little faith wherefore dost thou doubt*. LORD! grant that the many tokens of thy love in quickening grace, reviving grace, confirming grace, may be to my soul in recollection, as the gapes of *Eshcol*: and may my GOD give me the spirit of *Caleb*, to know and believe that I shall at length overcome all the enemies of my salvation, and be more than conqueror through thy grace enabling me.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

This is a most interesting Chapter; and as an apostle had it in commission from the HOLY GHOST, to tell the church that the written account of Israel's history was intended for our example, that we come not into the same condemnation through unbelief; it demands our attention the more. Here are contained, the relation of the murmurs of the people at the evil report of the spies; the ineffectual attempts made by Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, to still the minds of the people; the LORD's interposing; his awful sentence: Moses interceding: the immediate death of all the spies excepting

Joshua and Caleb: the presumptuous attempt of some of the people, in going up without the LORD's command to the conquest of Amalek: and their discomfiture in consequence thereof, before the Amalekites and Canaanites.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD charge it upon my soul, while reading in this chapter the unhappy conduct of Israel, to seek continually for grace, lest I fall after the same example of unbelief. For am I better than they! No! in no wise. They sinned, it is said, *ten* times, in tempting GOD, and not hearkening to his voice. Whereas my rebellious and unbelieving heart, hath made it a life of disobedience to the voice and call of GOD all the way along. Oh, thou gracious GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS! how precious to my view is that endearing character in which thou art represented, as not executing the fierceness of thine anger, because thou art GOD and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thy people. And thou, no less ever precious, ever blessed JESUS, by whose unceasing merits, in the complete work of thy redemption, and thy perpetual pleadings, in which Moses as thy representative upon earth stood up for the people, thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners; how increasingly dear art thou in thy person, offices, and character, to my soul under all the renewed convictions I am continually receiving, of my unworthiness and unbelief before thee! LORD JESUS! undertake for me, and by the sweet constraining influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, guard my poor heart from all murmuring, lest being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, wilderness frames extend the continuance of wilderness dispensations, and even, when in the very view of the promised land, the Lord lead me back again, instead of carrying me up to immediate possession.

Oh, thou HOLY SPIRIT! thou comforter of thy people, and guide into all truth, grant me the same inestimable blessing as *Caleb* thy servant, that I may follow the Lord fully. And then, under thy divine influences I shall be enabled as he and Joshua did, to stand up for the cause of a faithful master, amidst the gainsaying and evil slander of ungodly and profane men. Oh! for this new heart and right spirit within me, which are both thy free unmerited gift. For then gracious

Lord shall I not come into condemnation with the ungodly and unbelieving world, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness; but through the FATHER'S gift, and the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, I shall surely be brought by thee, thou HOLY SPIRIT, into the good land, and attain that rest *which remaineth for all the people of GOD*. Amen.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

There seems to be a most gracious design in the HOLY GHOST's introducing the law for sacrifices, immediately after the melancholy relation of the rebellion of the people. And, inasmuch as all the sacrifices under the law were typical of JESUS, surely it ought to be a great relief to the mind of the sinner, to see the ever blessed JESUS thus again represented as set forth, a propitiation for sin by the sacrifice of himself. Here are contained—the order for the meat offering and the drink offering; provision for the stranger also in those offerings: together with the law respecting the heave offering: sacrifices appointed for sins of ignorance: and the punishment appointed for sins of presumption. A short history is introduced into this chapter relating to a sabbath breaker. The chapter concludes with the law respecting the fringes and borders of garments.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in the view of the many things appointed in this Chapter to the church of GOD, when they were to come to the promised land; let me contemplate the vast privileges of that better country, which theirs only typified; and by faith anticipate what offerings I shall have then to offer, what presentations there to make, and what heave offerings of acknowledgment, both for the stranger and the new born soul in JESUS redeemed by his blood, all the happy multitude will have continually to bring before the throne of GOD and the LAMB. Oh! the vast, the inconceivable glory which will then break in upon the soul when we come to receive the end of our faith.

Neither sins of ignorance nor sins of presumption, neither a corrupt world, a deceiving heart, nor all the powers of darkness will any longer interrupt or defile the soul: but one continued day in one uninterrupted enjoyment of felicity, will then employ the mind to all eternity. Blessed GOD! in the full prospect of these unspeakable joys given to thy people by the FATHER's everlasting love, purchased by the Redeemer's grace, and made ours by the precious application of the HOLY GHOST; may my soul live and my body die, until faith shall be swallowed up in fruition, and my GOD shall be openly revealed to all the sons of light. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This is a most interesting Chapter, not merely as an historical relation of man's rebellion and GOD'S awful judgments following, but principally as herein we behold as glorious a representation, typically considered, as perhaps the Old Testament scripture contains of JESUS, represented by Aaron exercising his priestly office of intercessor; and by his person and righteousness making atonement for the sins of his people. In the perusal of this Chapter throughout, let the Reader remember our motto, Moses wrote of JESUS. The Chapter contains the rebellion of Korah and his company, in contending for the priesthood: the awful inference of GOD: the dreadful visitation on the rebels, by the LORD'S doing a new thing and causing the earth to open her mouth and swallow up the insurgents; and by fire at the same time consuming those that had dared to take upon them the priestly office of burning incense. The Chapter further relates, that these judgments having tended to harden the minds of the rebels, and their ill-conduct breaking out afresh, the Lord smote them by pestilence. Aaron is commanded by Moses to offer incense for the people until the plague was stayed.

REFLECTIONS

HERE stand, my soul, and contemplate the melancholy effects of a fallen nature, manifesting itself in such astonishing instances of rebellions, and murmurings, and disobedience, and ingratitude. And when thou hast duly pondered over the awful subject in the dreadful example of Korah and his company, turn thine attention inward to thyself. Alas! are not the same seeds of sin there, and do they not continually break forth and bud, and bring forth the same deadly fruit; and what is the world around thee but evidences of the same? And what the examples of suffering and sorrow, but proofs to the same amount? Full of misery because full of sin.

Precious, precious JESUS! relieve my soul in the view of those things, in turning mine eyes to thee and thy great salvation. Oh! thou almighty Aaron, thou great high Priest and Saviour of thy people, may my soul never cease looking unto and upon thee! Thou camest indeed from thy throne of glory, and didst leave the regions of the blessed to visit our miserable world. The plague of sin and the horrid ingratitude of thy people, even the wrath of thy Father issuing forth in fiery indignation in the destruction of sinners, did not stop thy love in prosecuting the wonderful deliverance of thy chosen; but thou didst run in among the people, and didst put on the incense of thy merits, and both by thy blood and righteousness didst make an atonement for them. Thou stoodest then between the dead and the living, and now thou interposest still between dead sinners and the living; GOD; and wilt continue in thine unceasing everlasting priesthood until the plague of sin, hell, death, and the grave is stayed, and thou hast rescued all thy redeemed from everlasting misery. Lord, grant by thy Spirit's work in my heart, my soul may be made willing to come under the preserving influence of thy censer; and as the dying Israelites were sheltered by the ascending offering of Aaron's incense, so I may take refuge under the covering of thy blood and righteousness, from all my sin and the sin of this ungodly wicked world, and be found in thee to the praise of the glory of that grace wherein I am made accepted in thee the beloved.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

A further interference of divine authority is related in this Chapter, in which the Lord is pleased to manifest thereby, that Aaron was to be the high priest to minister in holy things. The Lord condescended, by way of testifying his pleasure in this business, to settle it by the budding of Aaron's rod, while the rods of all the other heads of families are dry and withered. The event is ordered to be recorded by laying up Aaron's rod as a testimony before the Lord.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, in the perusal of this chapter, and behold in how sweet a manner thy GOD and FATHER manifested to the church of old the everlasting priesthood of thy glorious intercessor! None but the rod of JESUS, nothing but his Almighty righteousness and sin-offering atonement can bring forth the blessed fruits of salvation for his people. As all our righteousness are filthy rags, so all our rods of created strength, however laid up before the testimony, will be found unfruitful, dead, and withered. But in the various manifestations of thy grace, in the buddings and blossoms and fruit-bearing excellencies of thy mercies, as our souls respectively stand in need, how graciously doth my GOD and Saviour show forth the rod of his strength, in convincing, converting, strengthening, refreshing, and establishing his people.

Dearest JESUS! may I find grace from thy HOLY SPIRIT, to rejoice in thee, as the rod of all gospel mercies laid up for me in time and to all eternity. And though thy glory was veiled from many when on earth, and thy priesthood is unacknowledged and unknown by thousands now thou art above, yet to me in all thy precious offices and characters, be thou ever blooming forth, in every suited grace, and every seasoned mercy, in all my time of need. Let murmurers now, if they dare, dispute the sovereignty of thy GODHEAD, and despise, because they know not, the preciousness of thy great salvation and priesthood; Lord, be thou to me and all thy children the never-failing almond tree of righteousness and peace, which

neither drought nor storm, nor all the wintry dispensations of my heart and the powers of darkness can destroy; but by the influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT being enabled to abide in thee, may I bring forth fruit to the praise of thy holy name; and as thou hast said, *because thou livest I shall live also.*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This chapter contains some interesting particulars relating to the priesthood, and the service of the Levites: together with the appointed portion for both.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou Almighty Aaron of our Gospel profession, thou dearest JESUS! who hast indeed, in thine own precious body on the tree, borne the burden of the sins, and of the most holy things, of thy people! In what I read in this chapter of Aaron and his sons, I behold thine unequalled person represented. It is thou, and thou alone, who hast sustained the dreadful pressure of sin and transgression. It is thou alone to whom the Lord JEHOVAH could say, Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and the iniquity of the priesthood: for when neither the blood of bulls nor of goats could take away sin; then did the Saviour cry, Lo! I come. Oh! do thou still bear for me, and all thy ministering servants, both our sins and sorrows: do thou bear, Lord, the care of all thy churches; do thou bear our names upon thine arm, and upon thine heart, when going in before the mercy-seat; and when thou hast borne all thy people safely through every temptation, do thou bear them home to thy throne of glory, that where thou art there they may be also. Amen.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

In this chapter is contained, the law concerning purification in the water of separation, made with great preparation from the ashes of a red heifer burnt with cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet wood. The best comment on which, we have in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. The method of use, and the office of the priest, in the performance of it, are here also appointed.

REFLECTIONS

ONCE more, my soul, contemplate the gracious condescension of thy GOD, in thus manifesting the infinite work of thy divine Redeemer, by shadowing forth the outlines of his great salvation in continued type and figure! everything I view in the Old Testament scripture, in relation to sacrifices and offerings, doth but the more point out the infinite love of the Father, in giving his Son; and the infinite love of the Son, in coming as a propitiation for the sin of his people. And oh! thou ever-blessed, ever-precious JESUS, thou, who like the red heifer, wert offered without spot or blemish to GOD, for the sins of thy people, and didst suffer without the gate, as the heifer was appointed; oh, enable me by the influences of thy blessed Spirit, to go forth unto thee without the camp, bearing thy reproach. Thanks be to GOD, that his people are now brought under that mild dispensation that though we are all in ourselves polluted, both by the death of our friends, and the dying state of ourselves, yet in the LORD JESUS, we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified, by the Spirit of our GOD. Lead me to see, O Lord, in consecrated ashes, the incorruptible and everlasting efficacy of the righteousness of God my Saviour; and in the running water, the preciousness of that all-cleansing grace of the HOLY GHOST, the streams of which river makes glad the city of our GOD. May it be my portion, thus, to be cleansed daily from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that I may perfect holiness in the fear of GOD.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This Chapter commenceth afresh the historical part of Israel's journey through the wilderness. From the end of the second year after the children of Israel's going forth from Egypt to the close of the thirty-ninth year, there is but little relation. But now, in the fortieth and last year which this chapter opens with, the history of the events which happened to them is more circumstantially related. Herein is contained the death of Miriam, and of Aaron: the people's murmurings for want of water: Moses's conduct on that occasion: the refusal of Edom to let Israel pass through his land: the succession of Eleazar to the priesthood after the death of Aaron, by the LORD's appointment.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST the dying scenes of a pilgrimage like Israel's, and amidst the dying circumstances of the present world around me, Lord let my soul be directed to thee, and to the contemplation and enjoyment of that salvation and eternal life which is in thee, who liveth and abideth forever!

Oh my soul! from the divine chastisements which this chapter exhibits, in the LORD'S correcting his people, learn to consider thy sins and the many provocations of thy multiplied transgressions. Ah! how many *Meribahs* hast thou passed through, and yet thy life hath been spared to thee: for the LORD'S mercy endureth forever!

Farewell, Aaron! thou great high priest of the Levitical Priesthood! thy death adds one confirmation more to the numerous evidences on every side, of the total incompetency of all ministrations under the law to bring the soul to GOD. Dearest, and ever-blessed JESUS, to thee I turn: thou almighty Aaron, thou great high priest of a better dispensation, established upon better promises. Thou alone art able to carry thy people in, and lodge them and secure them safe in an everlasting Canaan. Oh! grant, blessed JESUS, that like another *Eleazar*, my soul may be clad with the priestly garments of thy salvation, for thou hast made all thy people

spiritual kings, and priests to GOD and the Father. May my soul be clothed with thy robes of righteousness, and my whole person adorned with the vestments of thy salvation: that both here and hereafter it may form my glorious covering, and become my everlasting title before my GOD and FATHER, to all the blessings of eternity.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

In this chapter, as Israel is now approaching the frontiers of the promised land, here is related an account of the first campaign in the contest with Arad at Hormach. Interspersed with this history, is the relation of the people's murmuring afresh, and the LORD's chastisement of them, by sending among them fiery flying serpents; the account of the brazen serpent appointed by GOD for their recovery; several journeys are recited; and the account of Sihon king; of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan; with Israel's conquest over them, and taking possession of their land.

REFLECTIONS

IN the perusal of this chapter, I would charge it upon my soul, to fix her meditation more intensely, while paying due respect to all the other interesting circumstances of Israel's history, upon that beautiful and most gracious type of the LORD JESUS, as explained by himself, which I beheld in the brazen serpent. What a delightful view doth it afford of the complete salvation by JESUS? Who would have expected, in an age so remote from the days of JESUS's ministry, and so many generations before the SON of GOD became incarnate, who would have looked for such a striking display of his great redemption in a figure! But it was thou, Holy, and eternal Spirit of all to whose office it peculiarly belongs, to take of the things of JESUS and show unto the people! It was thou that thus wast pleased to instruct the church then, and to comfort thy people now, with such sacred and soul-comforting representations of JESUS! Blessed be

GOD the HOLY GHOST, for the mercy! And no less do thou, precious JESUS, who art still lifted up in thy gospel for the purposes of salvation, from the FATHER'S love, and by the Spirit's application of thy merits and blood to the souls of thy people, do thou ever more become the blessed object of my faith and hope, until faith is lost in the enjoyment of thee in glory. May my soul gaze on thee, and thee only, for all supplies of grace while here below, and for all the enjoyments of glory, when surrounding thy throne above. Yes, dearest JESUS, on thee would my soul fix her wondering eyes, amidst all the diseases of sin, and under all the venomous wounds of Satan, that great serpent, the devil. I would forever look unto thee, as thou hast graciously enjoined me, and be saved; for thou alone canst heal the fiery darts of the wicked: it is thy blood which is the true balm of Gilead. Oh grant by the sweet influences of thy Spirit, that my soul may be constrained to look stedfastly unto thee with the eye of faith, now thou art lifted up on the pole of the everlasting gospel: and may I so look, that, beholding thee in thy person and righteousness, and in all thy covenant characters, my soul may be saved with an everlasting salvation, until I awake up, after thy likeness, to be fully satisfied with it.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

This is a very remarkable chapter, and merits particular attention. It commenceth the wonderful history of Balaam and his ass. There is much to be discovered in it of the LORD'S gracious dealings with his people. The contents of it are the fright and the consequent wicked and foolish attempts of Balak, king of the Moabites, to prevent Israel from invading his borders. The impious endeavours of the king to gain over to his interest, a noted sorcerer of Mesopotamia: the impious attempts of this sorcerer, who knew better, yet for the sake of gain hired himself out to curse a people whom he knew the LORD had blessed: the history of these characters, and their conduct upon this occasion, together with the

miraculous interposition of GOD, in causing a dumb ass to speak with man's voice, to forbid the madness of the prophet, are related in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, and with horror contemplate the character of the graceless, even in their highest attainments of knowledge, as instanced in the case of wretched Balaam! What a wretched service must be the service of sin, when in spite of better knowledge, a man will hire himself out to work iniquity with all greediness; and for the sake of a little honour of this dying world, or the sordid gain of it, will go forth in the cause of the devil, against the LORD and against his CHRIST. Dearest JESUS! what everlasting cause have I to praise thee, that when I was pursuing the wages of sin, thou hast granted me the gift of GOD; and by thy precious blood and righteousness, thou hast made me free from sin that I might become the servant of GOD. LORD, make me very jealous over my own heart, that seeing, in so awful an example, to what lengths men may arrive in the knowledge of thee, and of thy ways, and yet come short of the grace of GOD, my soul may take up with nothing short of this, that CHRIST *is formed in my heart the only hope of glory.*

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

The subject through this chapter is a continuation of the former. The idolatrous prince, and the impious prophet, are both busily engaged, in seeking how to curse the LORD'S Israel, whom GOD hath blessed.

REFLECTIONS

Is it possible, my soul, in the perusal of this chapter in beholding the LORD'S tender care over his church and people, in making their very enemies the unwilling instruments to testify his watchfulness over them, is it possible any more to call in question the faithfulness

of our covenant GOD in CHRIST? And shall I any longer doubt, any longer suspend my implicit faith and confidence in his mercy? Shall I, like the timid disciple of old, expect the fleece to be moist, and then again to be dry, and through all my life be forever demanding new tokens, new evidences, increasing miracles of my GOD and Saviour's faithfulness towards me, when my whole life is but one continued miracle of all that is gracious, kind and merciful! Oh! for faith to believe the record which the LORD, the Father, hath given of his dear Son! Precious JESUS! pity and forgive the weakness and unworthiness of thy poor servant! Do thou, gracious Saviour, by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, incline my soul to depend more upon thee, and to trust thee, even where I cannot trace thee. Cause me to learn from what I read in this chapter, that as all hearts are in thy disposal, and like rivers of waters thou turnest them withersoever thou plearest, thou canst incline my heart if thou wilt, to believe in thee, and to depend upon thee, even as thou secretly didst constrain the mad prophet to bless, where he intended to curse. LORD! lead me to see, that thou usest even the foes of thy church and people as instruments for their good: that thou hast blessed thy people, and wilt bless them; and their very enemies shall be constrained to call them blessed. And do thou, dearest and ever-blessed JESUS, do thou cause all the opposition which my soul may meet with in the path of grace, from the foes of my salvation, to be overruled for good. Let it minister to endear thee still more and more to my heart; that my necessity *of* thee, my confidence *in* thee, and my dependence *upon* thee, as the LORD my righteousness, may be increasingly precious every hour, until thou shalt have subdued all the enemies of my salvation, and finally bruised Satan under my feet.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter, the continuation and conclusion of the history of Balak and Balaam. And never surely was there afforded a

more memorable evidence, than there is in it, of the LORD'S overruling the minds of men to his own glory, his people's joy, and his enemies' destruction. Balaam and Balak part in anger, and the former is constrained by the same power, under whose influence he had through the whole conference been guided, to inform the latter, what events, from the LORD and his people should befall him and Moab in the end.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not take a farewell review of the history of Balaam and Balak, without first imploring grace from GOD to take with you the several most interesting improvements which it holds forth. Learn first, what lengths bad men will proceed to, like Balak, in order to accomplish their devices against the righteous. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent are, and ever must be, hostile to each other. But oh! for grace to be as much alive in the cause of GOD and CHRIST, as the foes of JESUS are in their fruitless attempts to overcome the Israel of GOD. Learn next, Reader, from the character of Balaam, what a miserable state must those be in, who minister in divine things with a mere head knowledge, void of heart influence. It is precious indeed to see, that our gracious head of his church is always superintending the government of it. And he can and will arrange and order even the ministry of bad men, so as to promote, in defiance of their wishes and inclinations, his own glory, and his people's welfare. But what must be the end of those men, and what can the wages of unrighteousness be but death, even spiritual and eternal death. And lastly, and above all, let the history of Moab's vain attempt to crush Israel, and the wonderful interposition of their covenant GOD, as is here most delightfully related, teach the Reader, (and may the instruction be impressed upon the Writer's heart also), how eternally safe and secure the fold of JESUS is through all the eventful periods of this world's pilgrimage. Yes! thou precious GOD of thy people, who art the same yesterday, and today, and forever; thy promise is like thyself; *thy people shall never perish neither shall any pluck them out of thine hand.* Unworthy, undeserving, and ill and hell-deserving as they are in themselves, they are beloved for thy sake, and they are beloved

for the FATHER'S sake. Oh! may we ever remember on what account it is our mercies are secure; and begin now, ere we come to sing it louder in glory, the song of salvation to GOD and the Lamb.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

A melancholy relation is contained in this Chapter. The children of Israel fall into idolatry. The LORD'S visitation in a way of judgment follows. Phinehas distinguisheth himself amidst the general corruption in his zeal for the LORD'S honor, and is solemnly blessed of GOD for it.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter now again in the close of it, and while taking a leisurely review of the sad consequences of a fallen state, look up for grace to keep thee from the stratagems of Satan and all his agents, lest thou fall after the same example of unbelief. I would convert the apostle's account of this sad history into a prayer, and say, LORD grant that I may not lust after evil things as they lusted, neither commit fornication as some of them committed; but grant gracious GOD that amidst all the variety of temptations, which beset my soul in this wilderness, a way may be made for me to escape, that I may be able to bear it.

And while I behold the zeal of Phinehas, who amidst the general corruption was found faithful to his GOD, oh! may I never forget thee, thou great High Priest of a better dispensation established upon better promises. Dearest JESUS! it is thou, whose ardent love for thy FATHER'S glory, and thy people's welfare, brought thee down from heaven; and in the destruction of sin, thou hast destroyed the works of the devil. Be thou my everlasting priest, thou great Melchisedec, and may I find in thee all the FATHER'S grace, and mercy, and love, displayed in thine everlasting priesthood.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

The sacred historian records in this Chapter the number of the people previous to their going into Canaan. Particular notice is taken of the deaths of Dathan and Abiram; as also of the deaths of all that came out of Egypt, excepting Caleb and Joshua.

REFLECTIONS

IN the contemplation of the events recorded in this Chapter, I feel my heart constrained to cry out, LORD! what is man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of! Think, my soul, while thou here reviewest the dreadful ravages of death during forty years only, what destruction hath been made by death during nearly now six thousand years since sin first entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passeth upon all men, because all have sinned. But dearest JESUS! here again let me turn from the view of the desolations made by death, to behold thee in all the glories of thy redeeming character, as having by thy death overcome death, and opened the first view of the everlasting mansions of life, in thy triumph over the grave. Precious JESUS! thou art the Rock of ages. On thee may I be built, as a sure dwelling place. In thy book may my soul be found numbered! And when all the wilderness dispensations of a wilderness journey, and the wilderness itself, shall be destroyed, may an entrance into the Canaan of thy everlasting, unchanging love, be my portion among the numbered tribes of GOD.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the private history of the daughters of Zelophehad suing for an inheritance among the other tribes of Israel. The LORD'S determination in their favour. Moses is

admonished of his death: and Joshua nominated by the LORD, as his successor.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! make me as anxious for an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, as those daughters of Israel were for an inheritance among their brethren: and may it be my noblest ambition to be among the people of GOD, rather than among all the enjoyments, this side the land of promise hath to offer. And oh! thou blessed Spirit, from whose gracious influence all wisdom is imparted to the mind of thy people, give to me suitable grace, upon every occasion of difficulty, how to act in doubtful cases; lead my soul to imitate thy servant's example, and, like Moses, the man of GOD, bring the matter before the throne: and may thy promise of strength as the day is, be my portion.

But chiefly, dearest JESUS, now thou hast led me as thou didst thy servant Moses, to view by faith the promised land, oh! may I be as ready as he was to resign my soul into thy arms with full assurance of faith. Yes! my gracious GOD and Saviour, from the hill of Calvary and the Mount of Olives, thou hast opened indeed my eyes to behold fair views of that blessed country whither thou art gone before, to take possession of it for thy people. LORD! strengthen my faith every day in this well-grounded assurance, and until thou shalt be pleased to give the signal for my dismissal, may I be hourly waiting and longing for thy coming; and when the moment shall arrive, oh! enable me to die, as I pray to live, believing the promises; and at the very last crying out with him of old, LORD, *now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

As the people are now approaching Canaan, they are once more numbered; the sacrifices and burnt offerings again enjoined; and

the several services for every day, the Sabbath day, and the new moons, and the day of passover, particularly again appointed.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! may all these ordinances, statutes, and appointments of a shadowy dispensation, be made the means in thy hands, of leading me to thee, in whom I behold, through the Spirit's teaching, all ordinances, statutes, and sacrifices, having their fullness and completion. Thou art indeed, the morning Lamb, and the evening sacrifice. Thou art CHRIST, my Passover, sacrificed for me: therefore give me grace to keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. May I esteem thy person, thy favor, thy sweet communications of love, better than all new moons and feasts of the richest earthly enjoyments. Thou art thyself the very sabbath of my soul, and the only rest wherewith thou dost cause the weary to rest, and to become their refreshment. And LORD, grant that by thee I may be enabled to offer to GOD continually, the first fruits of my heart and of my lips, giving thanks in thy name.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

The same subject is carried on, through this Chapter, which formed a part of the former, namely, the repeating the laws to be observed on the solemn seasons. Here are directions given concerning the festivals of the seventh month; the feast of trumpets; the feast of expiation; and the feast of tabernacles.

REFLECTIONS

LET neither the Writer nor Reader for a moment be led to suppose that the frequent repetition of these laws concerning the religious services of the LORD'S heritage, are superfluous or unnecessary: but rather let both therefrom be led, to remark, how

infinitely important must be that glorious liberty of the gospel to which they all ministered; and how ineffectual all other services are in themselves to bring the heart to GOD. If the Reader and the Writer should, under the blessed teachings of the HOLY GHOST, be directed to this improvement from the whole, every repeated precept and ordinance will be indeed made precious to the soul.

Do thou, my soul, seek grace from above to learn yet more and more, however slightly and inconsiderately viewed by others, the vast, the infinite importance of the full, free, and rich salvation by JESUS, as it must appear in the divine eye, to cause it to be ushered in through so many ages with such a wonderful profusion of sacrifices and offerings. Who indeed, can go through the perusal of so many Chapters concerning sacrifices, and behold them again and again repeated and insisted upon, in such awful terms, for obedience, without being wonderfully struck with the conviction of the infinite importance of the blood and righteousness of JESUS. Oh! thou precious, precious LAMB of GOD! who hast by the one all-sufficient, all-effectual offering of thyself once offered, forever perfected them that are sanctified. Oh! may I feel my heart more powerfully constrained to the love of thee, in every renewed perusal of these sacrifices of the law! Dearest JESUS! in every service, under every ordinance, in the feast days of holy rejoicing, or the fast days of humiliation; both when the gospel trumpet is sounded, of pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of thy cross; or when the laws of a broken commandment are read, to show my soul that by a covenant of works no flesh can be justified before GOD: in any and in all be thou my hope, my joy, my confidence, my righteousness, my all in all, to bring my heart to GOD. And do thou, blessed Spirit! whose work alone it is, to shed abroad a Saviour's love within me; so incline my every affection into the love of JESUS, that I may henceforth no longer live to myself, but to him that died for me and rose again.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

This Chapter is devoted to the prescribing of laws concerning vows. Here are general rules, as well as particular cases, considered: such as the vows of daughters, and those of wives.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! do thou undertake for me, in all my earnest desires and strongest resolutions, to love and serve the GOD of my salvation, for otherwise I am well assured, that all my strength in the hour of trial will prove to be perfect weakness. I can do nothing, dearest LORD, nothing in myself but sin; but I can do all things if thou art my strength and confidence; and therefore, never can I trust myself too little, or my Saviour too much.

But may I not see, in this merciful exemption from rash vows ill undertaken and unfaithfully performed, a gracious exemption for the infirmities of thy people? Surely JESUS is the everlasting Father of his people: and surely thou art no less their husband also. Do thou then, blessed LORD! confirm and strengthen my soul by thy grace, to perform all I vow in thy strength, and enable me to accomplish it. And do thou rescind and do away the obligation to perform everything unprofitable to be done, by thy sovereign power, and right of dominion over me. For I trust, that by thy HOLY SPIRIT thou hast begotten me again to a new life; by which I am thine as thy child by adoption and grace: and that thou hast betrothed me to thyself forever, by which my Maker is mine husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name. And for the dedicating myself to thy service forever, LORD enable me so to vow, and so to perform, that I may say with one of old, I will pay my vows unto the LORD, in the presence of all his people; even in the courts of the LORD's house.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have the relation of Israel's war with Midian. The number of the army appointed by the LORD himself; the success of GOD's host; the event of the battle in the spoils brought with them: the purifying the people after the war; and the division of the booty.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the perusal of this whole Chapter, and duly contemplate in the case of Balak and Balaam's confederacy against Israel, and the event which here so soon after followed, in the destruction of Midian, the truth of that Scripture, *The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.* And again: *Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

In the contemplation of the holy war of Israel, behold, my soul, the figure and similitude of that war in which thou art engaged. LORD, help me to go forth to every conflict in thy strength, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. Let not mine eye spare any of those lusts, in my corrupt members, which war against my soul; but do thou blessed JESUS, as the great captain of my salvation, go before, and by the precious influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT, drive them out before me, until they are utterly consumed. And grant, gracious GOD, that when returning from the slaughter, I may have so fully learnt the song of salvation to GOD and the LAMB, that the blood of JESUS may be my oblation for the atonement of the sin of my soul. Of my soul may it be said, as it is and shall ever be of all the redeemed in the holy army of the LORD, *They overcame by the blood of the LAMB, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the history of Israel is pursued. Here is an account of the desire of the Reubenites, and Gadites, to settle on this side Jordan: Moses reproves the thought; as if they wished to withdraw from the conquest of Canaan. They explain their intention, with which Moses is satisfied: and the lands of the kingdom of Sihon and Og, are conditionally appointed to them and their descendants.

REFLECTIONS

REMARK, my soul, in the case of those Reubenites and Gadites, how injurious to the pilgrimage state in thy pursuit of Canaan, is a love of worldly ease and settlement. Alas! what have we, who profess ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and are supposed to be seeking a better country, that is an heavenly, what have we to do with the things of time and sense? But how true is that saying of the apostle's; All seek their own, not the things of JESUS CHRIST. Precious Redeemer! do thou so endear thyself to my view, that I may esteem it my chief happiness to endure affliction, if need be, with the people of GOD, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and like thy servant of old, esteem the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than all the treasures on this side Jordan.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the account of the journeying of Israel from Egypt to Canaan; and once more the LORD'S command is repeated, that the people be sure to drive out the Canaanites from the land.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause here, and behold the wonderful love of GOD to his people. Behold, what a series of hazardous journeys, as they must have appeared to human nature, and impossible ever to have been accomplished by flesh and blood, unprotected by the LORD, were GOD's Israel brought through. Call to mind, in rehearsing these two and forty stages of their pilgrimage, what a train of miracles accompanied them, more or less, at every stage. Traverse, in idea, the inhospitable regions of uninhabited desolate places the LORD led them through, for forty years together, during the whole of which space their garments waxed not old, neither were their feet swollen, and surrounded as they were with beasts of prey, and fiery flying serpents, and scorpions. And behold the people at the close of their journey, as many in number at least, and as healthy, as when they first set out; and will not every beholder be prompted to exclaim, *what hath GOD wrought!* But while beholding Israel of old, forget not, my soul, to contemplate the true Israel of GOD now. Is not our JESUS carrying home his church through the wilderness? Are not his people in continued movements? Are they not exercised with the same wilderness dispensations? And is not JESUS himself always with them, driving out every enemy before them, and continually manifesting himself to them otherwise than he doth to the world? Oh! my soul, search diligently for thine own personal interest and part in this history; and do thou be continually inquiring for the evidences of thy journey in the spiritual warfare of JESUS, until the LORD shall have accomplished thy wilderness state, and shall bring thee home to Canaan, to behold his glory, and dwell with him forever.

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the relation of the boundaries of the land of Canaan according to the LORD'S appointment of it: and the persons whom the LORD commissioned to fix the boundaries.

REFLECTIONS

HERE, my soul, pause, and meditate on the love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS! GOD had promised Abraham that his seed should inherit Canaan, and behold the assurance of GOD'S promises. Oh! for the faith of Abraham, to trust GOD in the certainty of an immortal Canaan, and like him, to go forth if needful, through the wilderness of this world, in the sure expectation of it, not knowing whither he went. Blessed JESUS! be thou the Canaan of my soul; and through every journey of the pilgrimage state towards it, do thou fix the bounds of my habitation, that in thee my whole desires may centre. Thou art the Priest, like Eleazar, and the Captain of my salvation, like Joshua, to go on before me to the promised land. LORD! give me grace to eye thee in every step; to live upon thee in every movement; and finally, to dwell with thee where thou art, to behold thy glory.

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

This Chapter may be properly considered as a continuation of the former. As the sons of Levi had no portion with their brethren, because the LORD was their portion; in this Chapter we have the part which the LORD assigned in Canaan for the possession of his priests. Forty-eight cities, with their suburbs, are marked out for them. Beside these, six cities are appointed as cities of refuge for the manslayer; which this Chapter takes notice of; and other laws for regulation concerning murder, to which those cities of refuge were not to reach.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed be that HOLY SPIRIT, the Teacher of my soul, from whose influence I am enabled to look beyond the Levitical dispensation, in those cities of refuge, and behold in them the evident emblems of him, and his complete security, who shelters all that flee to him from the avenger of poor guilty sinners. Oh! thou dear Redeemer, may I be led by thy Spirit's ministry continually to thee, and not stop short of the security thou hast afforded, in thy opened wounds, for the salvation of my soul. Neither shall I be in the danger which the people under the Levitical dispensation were exposed to, by the death of the High Priest; for thou blessed JESUS ever livest, and the efficacy of thy atonement is always the same.

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

The subject, relative to Zelophehad's daughters, is resumed. To prevent the inconvenience which might result from the inheritance of daughters, the LORD appoints a remedy in determining that the daughters of such tribes as possessed the inheritance of their fathers, should marry, in the elder branches of their own tribes.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! my soul, in the perusal of this Chapter, how graciously the LORD watches over his people, in all their concerns. And is he less attentive now? Is his arm shortened, or his ear grown heavy? Must not the people of GOD be very dear to GOD, and doth he not watch over them for good, to guide them in all their ways, and to keep them, lest any hurt them, night and day.

Let the people of GOD learn from this Chapter how suitable and proper it must be, like the daughters of Israel, to be united only to their own tribes. And ought not every true believer in JESUS to be very attentive in the near and tender relations of life, to be united only to such as are united to the LORD? If JESUS cements the union

between souls, certainly those united to him will form the truest union with each other, *for they that are joined to the LORD are one spirit.*

DEUTERONOMY

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THERE is the same cause, in perusing this *fifth* and *last* Book of the writings of Moses, to remind the Reader of what, in every one of the former, he hath been very earnestly desired not to lose sight of, that *Moses wrote of* CHRIST. And, indeed, if while going through the preceding writings of this inspired penman, the Reader hath not discovered JESUS in every page, there is but the more reason to implore grace, and the teachings of the HOLY GHOST, in his attention to this concluding book of Moses, that he may now discover that it is He, *of whom Moses and the prophets did write*, JESUS *of Nazareth*. May that Almighty Instructor, whose office alone it is to take of the things of JESUS, and show them unto his people, be the Teacher both of him that writes and him that reads.

The Book of *Deuteronomy*, which signifies the *second law*, is probably so called, because that this is the *second* enumeration of the precepts which Moses had in commission to deliver to Israel. It is not, however, so properly a *second law*, as a *rehearsal* of the former. And the reason for this repetition is abundantly evident. All that generation was dead before whom Moses had rehearsed it on their coming out of Egypt. And as very many of the precepts had a peculiar reference to the conduct of the people after their arrival to the promised land, it became highly proper that the laws should be rehearsed in the ears of the generation which had sprung up in the place of their fathers, and before whom they had not as yet been delivered.

As the Book of Deuteronomy contains what one of the prophets calls the *great things of God's law*, it should be recollected by the Reader, that it doth not contain much of history. Indeed the whole date of it, from beginning to end, compriseth a period only of two

months. One month previous to the death of Moses, and one after. See Joshua 4:19, compared with Deuteronomy 1:3.

The vast importance of this sacred book of GOD may be best implied from the singularity of the precept for attention to it, with which it was accompanied. It was to be read publickly every seventh year by the priest before all the people, at the feast of Tabernacles, see chap. 31:10. The king himself, when the people were settled in Canaan, and the LORD had appointed a king over them, was to write a copy of it with his own hand, and read it all the days of his life. See chap. 17:18, 19. And as a more public memorial of it, to which the *people* might refer, great stones were to be made smooth with plaister, and the law engraven upon them. See chap. 27:2, 3. All which imply the high esteem in which this sacred book was held. I only detain the Reader after this account just to add, that the honour and respect paid by our adorable Redeemer to this part of the divine word, is not inconsiderable; for all the answers with which he thought proper to repel the attacks of the devil, in the season of his temptations, were gathered from this book. Sweet testimony of its value, endeared as it is by so precious an example!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This sacred book opens with an account of the children of Israel just as they are entering the borders of Canaan. They had nearly completed the fortieth year of their wilderness journey: and now, before they enter the promised land, Moses addresseth them in a long discourse. This chapter is the beginning of it, which goes on without much interruption, (excepting at the end of the fourth chapter) until the close of the thirtieth chapter.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a most beautiful representation doth this chapter afford of a faithful, laborious minister, in the character of Moses! Who can behold this aged servant of JEHOVAH, thus sermonizing even to the

very close of life, and going over again and again in relation, all the great things the LORD had shown him and the people, without being struck with the loveliness of such a minister, and being led to admire yet more and more those holy principles which he laboured to impress upon the minds of the people.

But here again, as in every other instance, how doth the contemplation of the *servant* lead the heart yet more immediately to the *master*. It is thou, blessed JESUS, whose ministry is glorified even in the view of thy servant's zeal. Thou camest, full of grace and truth, to make known to thy people the everlasting counsel of peace in thy covenant righteousness and blood. And how art thou, even now, still reminding us, by thy SPIRIT, of the LORD'S continual mercies and our unworthiness. Continue, dearest LORD, the sweet influences of thy ministry still, until, like Joshua, thou bringest us where Moses and the law cannot lead, even over the Jordan of death, to behold thy glory, and dwell with thee forever.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This chapter is a continuation of Moses's sermon. It is full of memorials, in bringing to the people's recollection the events with which GOD had distinguished his mercy towards them, while passing the borders of the Edomites and Moabites; with the recapitulation of what referred to the of Israel's war with Sihon, King of the Amorites.

REFLECTIONS

MYsoul! cherish the thought (for it is a precious one) while beholding the revolutions of states and empires, recorded in this chapter, how happy the lot of those who belong to *a kingdom which cannot be moved*. What indeed can be wanting to give comfort to the heart of any man who hath a well-grounded assurance of an interest in the kingdom of GOD, and of CHRIST! Dearest King of Zion! do thou reign in my heart, in my soul, in my affections: and then am I sure thou wilt in thine own time, which is the best time, drive out

before me all the *terrible ones*, and all the *crafty ones*, which now stand in my way to Canaan. Blessed LORD! let thy HOLY SPIRIT wean my desires from *every* alluring object accursed, that I may covet nothing which belongs to the carnal, but having thee for my portion, in thee I may find everything, and in everything enjoy thee.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The continuation of Moses's discourse is carried through this chapter. Here are described the victory Israel obtained over Og king of Bashan, with the division of his dominions, to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh: the order given to Joshua, as the intended successor of Moses, to carry on the conquest of Canaan: Moses's earnest request at that time to the LORD, that he might go over Jordan with the people, and the LORD's refusal.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST the various improvements which the perusal of this Chapter opens to my view, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, while I behold, as in the case of the kings of Sihon and Bashan, that giants are but as dwarfs when GOD fights the battles of his people; and that, while going forth in the strength of the LORD GOD, making mention of his righteousness, even his only, I shall be more than conqueror through him that loveth me: let me desire like Moses, with an eye of faith, to see that goodly land, and yet more especially JESUS, the LORD of it, who is the greater Joshua, gone before to take possession of it in the name of all his people. Oh! thou LORD of the country, and of the true tabernacle, which our GOD hath pitched and not man, grant, by the influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that my soul may be ever longing, until faith is realized in vision, for the view of thee, and of thy glory. May my soul contemplate now by faith all ordinances, means of grace, and every institution of service, as pointing to thy Person, and having their consummation in thee;

and when thou shalt give the order for my dismissal from this region of shadows, LORD grant that I may awake up after thy likeness, to be fully satisfied with thee.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This Chapter concludes the first part of Moses's Sermon, and a most pathetic and practical conclusion it is: in which he earnestly urgeth the people to the love and obedience of the LORD GOD of their fathers. In the close of the chapter Moses appoints certain cities of refuge for the manslayer on that side Jordan.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET and precious Chapter, when explained to my soul by the HOLY GHOST, in reference to my adored Redeemer. May the LORD give me grace to read it with all possible reverence and affection; and may he open mine eyes to see the wondrous things of his law. Oh! may I be enabled to see the vast claims there are upon me, by virtue of my covenant relationship in CHRIST JESUS; and as powerfully find grace to live in them. And as I trust the LORD hath stretched forth his Almighty arm, and assayed, as in the case of Israel, to go and gather me from another nation, greater and mightier than I am; and hath brought me out: Oh! may the same most merciful GOD in CHRIST, which hath called me by his grace, support and keep me by his power. Dear JESUS! be thou my city of refuge, my hiding place, my security, my GOD, my portion! LORD, I come to thee, and do thou remember thy sweet promise, for thou hast said, all that the FATHER giveth thee shall come, and him that cometh thou wilt in no wise cast out.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, Moses reassumes the subject of his Sermon. He brings to the remembrance of Israel that great event, of the giving of the law at Horeb, when Moses acted as a Mediator between GOD and Israel. He repeats the ten commandments, and subjoins his observations upon them; reminds them of what they had said at that time, and takes occasion, once more, to enforce the great duty of obedience.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou great law-giver, and law-fulfiller, of a better dispensation, founded upon better promises! May I behold thee in all thy precious offices and characters, while reading in this chapter thy servant Moses commanding the attention of the people. In the name of JEHOVAH thou camest personally once in the days of thy flesh; and now thou comest spiritually in the day of thy power, commanding all thy people to hear the gospel offer of thy blood and righteousness! Oh! give me grace, to receive thy precious word, and cry out, with the affection of one of old, Oh! how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day! Blessed JESUS! may it be my portion to receive the law of faith, which is obeyed, not by works of righteousness, which I have done, or can do, but by thine own perfect obedience, in a law-fulfilling, and law-satisfying righteousness. And grant, gracious GOD, that while I see myself justified by thy blood and righteousness from all things by which I never could be justified by the law of Moses, may I be enabled, by the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, so to live a life of faith, on thee and thy complete salvation, that though dead to the law, as a covenant of works, I may not be without law unto GOD, but under the law to CHRIST.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former. The man of GOD is exceedingly earnest in enforcing obedience to all the precepts contained in the covenant.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED GOD! may it be my happiness to be distinguished from all carnal and ungodly persons, and to carry about with me, wherever I go, all the distinguishing features of character which should mark thy people. I rejoice, gracious GOD, in the recollection of the unity of the divine essence, and while I pray for continual grace to live a life of faith in the constant enjoyment of communion and fellowship with all the Persons of the GODHEAD, may it be my joy and comfort, the conviction of this first and most glorious truth, the LORD our GOD is one LORD!

Oh! that all who in the present hour are tempted to question, whether the LORD JEHOVAH existeth in a plurality of persons or not, would read those numberless passages, where the word LORD which is *singular* and means the one glorious JEHOVAH is joined with the word GOD in the *plural*: as if forever to silence the blasphemy of infidels and to strengthen and confirm the faith of believers. And oh! that all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh would consult their own scriptures on this glorious truth, that when they discover the sacred name of, Jacob's GOD joined with words that are *plural*, they might no longer doubt whether a plurality of persons exist in Him who is the glorious GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Hasten thou great deliverer, and arise out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

LORD! I beseech thee give me grace, that the vital religion of my adored Redeemer, may be with me a family religion, a personal religion, A religion manifested to all the world. May it be my glory, and delight, to let everyone know whose I am, and whom I love, and desire to serve in the gospel of GOD's dear SON. Yes! thou blessed Redeemer, be thou my portion, my joy, my happiness, my delight;

and be thou my LORD my righteousness, that I may speak of it every day, and all the day, and wear thy holy and dear name as a seal upon mine heart, and upon mine arm; and as frontlets between mine eyes. And do thou, dearest LORD, own me for thine, both now and when thou comest to make up thy jewels.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Moses continueth his discourse throughout this Chapter. In addition to the same general instructions to obedience, and adherence to the LORD, here are precepts of prohibition against Israel forming any alliance with his enemies.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over the review which thou hast made in this chapter, both of the enemies of Israel, and Israel's GOD driving them out before him. Bring home to thine own heart the circumstances of their spiritual state, and examine thy case by Israel's. Have you discovered that the same foes are now opposing your eternal welfare, as opposed Israel's conquest of Canaan? Have you felt their power, seen their malice, and learnt your own total inability to fight your way through them? Have you, my soul, discovered JEHOVAH JESUS, as the glorious Captain of your salvation; as one mighty indeed to save; as the LORD your GOD in a covenant way, the LORD GOD that *can*, the faithful GOD that *will*, drive them out before thee, until they are all consumed? And hath thy GOD in CHRIST indeed begun for thee this holy war; and is he now going before thee, in subduing enemies both within and without; the powers of darkness and the world from without, and the corrupt lusts and affections from within; are these thy views and thy experiences? Then bless GOD for thy mercies, and let the precious precepts, and precious promises, beautifully blended as they are in this chapter, be thy comfort, and support thy mind through the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, during the arduous, but certainly successful, war.

Precious, precious JESUS! thou, whom the FATHER hath given as a leader and commander to thy people, to thee do I look up; and on thy dear arm would I wholly lean. Never, never, blessed GOD, do thou suffer me to make peace with any of these enemies, or for a moment enter into any league of amity with them. Here, LORD, in thy strength do I vow, that thy foes shall be my foes, and thy people my people. And as my eyes are towards thee, and any whole reliance is on thy great salvation, do thou carry me on, and bear me through all opposition, until thou hast put them all out before me; and then bring me into thine holy mountain, to behold thy glory, and to sit down, according to thy blessed promise, on thy throne, as thou hast overcome, and art sat down with thy FATHER on his throne. Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The subject of Moses's Sermon is continued through this chapter. The man of GOD makes use of some of the most persuasive arguments to enforce an observance of the holy precepts he had given to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou matchless instructor of the LORD's people; blessed SPIRIT! do thou graciously condescend to keep alive in my soul, by thy divine teaching, the remembrance of myself, and my own poor and low estate by nature, which thou hast taught me; and during the whole of my wilderness state, through which thou art bringing me, give me also to keep in view the infinite fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency of salvation in the LORD my righteousness.

Very gracious hast thou been to me, O LORD! Thou hast indeed humbled me, and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart, and given me in part to see what still remains there of sin and unbelief. Thou hast fed me, as thou didst Israel of old, with the manna of salvation, and with the bread of life. All the chastisements

of thy grace have been as the chastisements of a kind and wise father: and thou hast brought me into a fulness of mercies, and the riches of redemption, in CHRIST JESUS.

LORD, keep me by thy grace from all spiritual pride and self-confidence. Never, dearest LORD, never may I be prompted to say, or think, that anything in me hath in the least contributed to the obtaining so great salvation; that neither my might, nor my hand, hath wrought it; but may I be ever ready to ascribe the whole to the sovereignty and freedom of thy grace. Like one of old may the uniform language of my lips correspond to the feelings of my heart, and may his sentiments be mine; not by works of righteousness which I have done, but according to thy mercy, LORD, thou hast saved me, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed on me abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST my Savior. And therefore not unto me, O LORD, not unto me, but to thy holy name be all the praise.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

Moses is still discoursing to the Israelites: and the leading point in the Sermon of this Chapter, is to impress upon the minds of the people, what the LORD's people in all ages need to be perpetually reminded of, that the distinguishing mercy of GOD not for any merit in them, but purely from the free grace and pleasure of GOD. Moses particularities certain instances of Israel's transgression in proof.

REFLECTIONS

LEARN, my soul, from the view of Israel's rebellion, all the way through their eventful history, what nature is in its highest attainment. And may the blessed SPIRIT convince me yet more and more, that it is not in the days of my unregeneracy only, that I am to look back for evidences of the sin of my nature, but since the LORD brought me out of spiritual Egypt I have had many *Horebs*, many *Taberahs*, and many *Massahs*, as well as Israel.

Blessed JESUS! let those views of the sin of my nature tend yet more to endear thee, who art the LORD my righteousness, to my heart. And while I beseech thee to drive out all my enemies before me, keep me, by such tokens of sin in my nature as every day's experience affords, humble in my own sight; and most gladly to refer all the victory, all the glory, and all the praise, to thine arm, which alone bringeth salvation.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

In the continuation of Moses's Sermon, the man of GOD, in this chapter, makes a beautiful digression from complaining, as in the former chapter, of Israel's rebellion, to remark in this the unmerited examples of the LORD's mercy. He points out some evidences of it in restoring the tables; continuing the priesthood; separating the tribe of Levi; and regarding Moses' intercession for them. He takes occasion, from all these things, in the close of the chapter to exhort them to obedience.

REFLECTIONS

THINK, my soul, from the perusal of this Chapter, what a gracious GOD thou hast to do with, who when thou hadst broken both tables of the commandment, hath graciously condescended to furnish thee afresh: and hath put his written law, as a covenant, ratified and fulfilled in the person of his dear SON, in the ark of mercy, as an everlasting security for thy perfect obedience. And think again, with heartfelt thankfulness and praise, that in thy glorious Surety and Representative, all that the LORD thy GOD requireth of thee be hath answered. JESUS is indeed the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Blessed SPIRIT! do thou circumcise my heart, and cause me to be no more stiff-necked. Unless purified by thee, and preserved by thy sin-subduing influence, what am I but a mass of corruption, and still

remaining in the uncircumcision of carnal nature? Oh! for thy purifying, preserving, and renewing influences, that being called out of the state of a stranger in Egypt, as all my fathers were, I may be found among the number of the children of GOD, and my lot may be among the saints!

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We may consider the contents of this Chapter to be the conclusion of one branch of Moses's Sermon, in the arguments he had been bringing forward to enforce Israel's love and obedience to the LORD. Blessings and cursings are held forth in order to accomplish this great end. The man of GOD is very particular in reminding Israel of the many signal instances of favor the LORD had shown the people, and he carries this subject to a most extensive view.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST JESUS! be thou everlastingly adored for all the great things which mine eyes have seen of thy wonders of grace, in the rescue of thy people from more than Egyptian bondage in sin and death. Oh! give me yet more and more to see and know my vast privileges, and be ever ready to ascribe the whole where alone it is due, to thine arm, and thy power, which alone bringeth salvation.

Oh, for an ardent zeal to be looking for that city of Canaan whither thou art gone before. Blessed JESUS! may the recollection that thou art there, prompt my soul to be sending forth its warmest affections and desires after the attainment of it, knowing that while I am present in the body I am absent from the LORD.

And do thou, HOLY SPIRIT, whose grace and influence alone can effectually direct and incline my heart to a right judgment in all things, do thou sweetly constrain my soul into the love of GOD and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST; that while thy servant is here setting before me, the blessing and the curse, life and death, and

good and evil: JESUS himself who is the sum and substance of all blessings, all mercies, all good, may be my choice and my Portion forever.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This chapter differs in some degree from what went before. It is certainly the continuation of Moses's Sermon, but is not so much in a way of exhortation as in precept. He here directs to the observance of certain duties which the LORD had appointed to be regarded in Canaan; such as the throwing down all the idolatrous monuments the people should find in the land; appointing a certain spot to be peculiarly dedicated to the service of the LORD; cautiously abstaining from the use of blood in their sacrifices; and eating them, holy things in the precise place which the LORD had commanded; together with observing due attention to the person of the Levite; and being so exceedingly tenacious of their attachment to the GOD of their Fathers, as not even to enquire after the mode of worship which the idolaters of Canaan followed.

REFLECTIONS

HOLY and Eternal SPIRIT! be graciously pleased of thine infinite mercy so to write thy statutes and judgments upon my mind and in my heart, that I may live to JESUS in the enjoyment of them all the days of my pilgrimage upon the earth. Thou, dearest LORD, art both the lawgiver and the law-fulfiller of thine own sacred will. Oh! may I behold thee as the end of the law for righteousness to me, and to every one that believeth; and while, through the influences of the blessed SPIRIT, I live a life of faith *to* GOD and *upon* GOD, may I feel an holy jealousy to throw down all the idols of the heart wherever I find them.

Dearest LORD! make that place peculiarly sacred to my soul, which hath JESUS for its object. Here would I dwell, forever dwell, under the shining of thy divine countenance! Here would I bring my

poor offerings, and here alone present my sacrifices, seeking the acceptance both of my person and offering in him and his precious righteousness, who is the altar, the offering, and the high priest of all His people. And as I am not yet come to that rest which is thyself, blessed JESUS, in glory, and only behold thee now by faith; LORD, help me until the vail be removed, to walk more by faith and less by sight, that I may not do according to what the world is doing, whatsoever seemeth right in a man's own eyes; but that forgetting things that are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I may press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. Return to thy rest, to thy JESUS, O my soul, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee!

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former. Particular and special precepts are contained in it to arm against the motives to idolatry; the persons tempting to it are to be stoned, and even the cities where this sin is committed, are to be razed to the earth.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! behold to what temptations thou art exposed, not only from false prophets and false teachers, but also from false friends and relations. How hath the GOD of this word blinded the minds of men and brought them over to his interests! How doth that prince of the power of the air, as he is called by the apostle, still work in the children of disobedience! And how doth he govern them, direct them, and influence them, by his secret insinuations, to dishonour GOD themselves, and prompt others by their counsel and example! Are not evil spirits and evil men of every description and character his ministers? And what are all those acts of men which we behold going on in life, in drunken clubs, riotous pastimes, revels, banquetings, interpreters of dreams, fortune-telling, and the like, but

so many sabbaths of his, and festivals to draw souls aside from the LORD GOD of their fathers. “My Soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor be not thou united.” But dearest LORD! arm me with thy grace, and the power of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that I may flee from idolatry, and be found among the number of the faithful, in cleaving to thee, O LORD, with full purpose of heart.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

MOSES is prosecuting the same subject of GOD's laws through this Chapter. Here are precepts concerning the persons of the children of Israel, concerning their diet, of what may be eaten and what not; together with the tithes of divine service, and of rejoicing in them before the LORD, and of the third year's tithes of alms.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! give me to see that thou hast *chosen* me to be one among thy people, that thou hast *adopted* me into thy family, that thou hast *sanctified* me by thy grace, and that I am thine in an everlasting covenant which cannot be broken: and help me to live to thy glory that I may be distinguished as thy people are distinguished, and then shall I live to thy praise and honour all the day long.

LORD! teach me to learn from the precepts in this chapter, how pure and holy all thy people ought to live, repeating things which are without. May I never wallow in those corruptions which the ungodly and carnal wallow in! May it be my meat and my drink to do thy will! May I use a sparing enjoyment of mere creature comforts, but constantly keep in view, and make it by grace the mark of my conduct, that *the kingdom of GOD is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter a continuation of Moses's discourse. Here are contained, the order for the release of debtors every seventh year: cautions to the people not to withhold lending to their needy brethren, on account of the year of release being at hand: some particularities respecting the Hebrew servant, and concerning the offering of the firstlings of their cattle to GOD.

REFLECTIONS

BEFORE I close the chapter, let me pause again and review the divine mercy in the appointment of the year of release. Let me contemplate the FATHER's everlasting love, the Redeemer's unequalled grace, and thy rich mercy, O thou eternal SPIRIT! from whose teaching alone it is that I behold, in this ancient representation, the everlasting free grace of JEHOVAH in the finished righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Oh! thou, who in the fulness of love didst come to give liberty to the captive, sight to the blind, and to proclaim the year of release to all thy redeemed! Hail, precious Saviour! blessed for ever be thy name, that when our poor fallen nature lay bound in the prison house, to have remained there forever, as debtors to the infinite justice and law of our GOD, thou camest full of grace and truth, didst restore us to our freedom, and not only didst send us out in happy liberty, but also full of the gifts and graces of the HOLY GHOST. By what name shall I call thee? or in what endearing point of view shall I look up to thee, O thou compassionate Redeemer, who in the accomplishment of this great work didst consent to have *his* ear bored to the door of thy FATHER's house, that I might be freed forever? Add one blessing more, O LAMB of GOD, to these unspeakable mercies, and cause the purchase of thy blood and service to be dedicated to thy glory: that as I am no longer my own, but bought with a price, I may glorify GOD in my body, and in my spirit, which are his.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

The servant of GOD is prosecuting the subject of divine laws through this as in the foregoing chapter. We have here the precept for the observance of the three yearly feasts: of the Passover; of Pentecost; and of tabernacles. Beside these, here is a direction for the offerings of the people at those feasts, and the prohibition of making groves and images.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED GOD! give me grace to observe, with holy joy and thankfulness, the solemn seasons of thine appointment, in communication of thy mercies. I would pray indeed for the leadings of the HOLY SPIRIT, to observe the month of *Abib*, which pointed to JESUS, and his one, all-sufficient sacrifice, all the year; and since CHRIST, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, I would, all the year, keep the feast. And no less, thou blessed HOLY SPIRIT, would I beseech thee to pour upon me thy precious influence, that every day may be the renewal of the day of Pentecost to my soul. Oh! that thou wouldst come down as showers on the new-mown grass, to revive my drooping, languishing heart, by the soul-strengthening communications of thy love. And dearest LORD, when I appear before thee in thy courts, and house of prayer, oh! constrain my heart that I may not appear before thee empty. But, having so much communicated to me of thy fulness, my poorer brother may partake of my overflowing cup; and I may by grace be able, both in temporals and spirituals, to comfort others with the same comforts wherewith I myself am comforted of GOD.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The subject of the divine laws is continued through this Chapter. Moses under GOD'S authority, points out the unblemished state required of the animals to be offered in sacrifice; of the punishment of idolaters: of controversies in judgment: of the election of a king; and of special duties required of him.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! thou art the unblemished spotless offering of my soul, and while I desire of thine own, O my GOD, to bring the best and choicest offerings, in token that all I am, and all I have is thine: it is JESUS himself, my sin-offering, my only righteousness, with which I would come to thine altar. And oh! how sweet and lovely art thou dearest Redeemer, in all thy person, offices, and characters! In purity, in comeliness, thou art not only fairer than the children of men, for grace is poured into thy lips, but thou dost infinitely transcend the angels. And is it not on behalf of thy people that thou appearest to our view, and art presented by faith to our GOD in the everlasting righteousness of thy spotless purity and holiness? Dearest JESUS! be thou ever my sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor!

Blessed SPIRIT! help me to look up to thee in the perusal of this chapter, and seeing thou didst enjoin the king of Israel, to copy with his own hand the sacred word, and to read therein all the days of his life; Oh! give me grace to meditate therein day and night; and like thy servant of old, may I be enabled to say, "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may be occupied in thy words. LORD, make the law of thy mouth dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver."

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This is a very interesting Chapter, because the HOLY GHOST in after ages of the Church, explained a striking passage in it as immediately pointing to JESUS. Besides this prominent feature, here are certain laws appointed respecting the Church revenue: the maintenance for the priests and Levites: cautions again repeated in relation to idolatry: and certain regulations in respect to prophecy.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD pass by numberless other passages, how interesting soever they may be in themselves, to attend to this most engaging one, which contains the FATHER's promise of raising up a prophet to his people, whom they should hear; because his blessed SPIRIT is pledged and engaged to make such willing to hear in the day of his power. To thee would I look up, O thou great prophet, thou LORD GOD of the prophets, who hast indeed been raised up, in confirmation of the FATHER's promise, from among thy brethren! Thou camest, blessed JESUS, fully furnished and complete to the precious office, as the prophet of thy people! In all the great truth of salvation thou hast taught thy people, and thy people hast thou caused to hear thee by the sweet and constraining influences of thy SPIRIT. And how hast thou brought our dark, ignorant, and blind-minds, acquainted with the mysteries of thy kingdom! How hast thou revealed the FATHER's love to our hearts! How made known thy precious love! And how shed abroad the blessed SPIRIT's fellowship in the minds of thy people! Oh thou divine prophet! continue to my soul all thy sweet offices. Speak to me, blessed JESUS, speak to me in all my doubts, under all my fears, and when distressed by reason of the enemy! Is it not thine to do all this, and to speak a word in season to weary souls? And if GOD my FATHER hath graciously said, this great, this Almighty prophet shall be heard, be it my portion to hear thy voice, and to rejoice in this assurance, that JESUS hath been anointed as my prophet, to guide me, and to instruct me in the knowledge of himself, and his great salvation.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Our ever adored Redeemer told the Pharisees in the days of his flesh, that on the two great commandments, of the love of GOD and the love of our neighbor; hung all the laws and the prophets; and accordingly, Moses having in the foregoing chapters largely pointed out the first of these, proceeds now, in this chapter, to enforce the duties of the second table of the commandments.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let me gaze on thee again and again, thou dearest JESUS, who art indeed the only City of refuge for all thy people, and who art placed in every avenue and way by which a poor slayer of himself and of his own soul by sin, may find shelter from the avenger. And while I look on thee as my sure hiding place from all the anger of my FATHER's broken law, and from all the accusations of my own guilty conscience, and from all the malice of Satan; Oh! may the HOLY GHOST give speed to my flight and earnestness to my desires, that before the avenger of blood can reach me, I may have taken shelter in thy person and righteousness. Oh! thou blessed Refuge of poor sinners, how fitly art thou prepared, how completely suited to all the wants of thy people! My soul even now, seems to feel an holy triumph in the security it finds by faith in thee! No plague shall come nigh my dwelling. In thee I feel a growing confidence of my everlasting security. Cease then your pursuits, ye ministers of evil, for my LORD hath shut me in like Noah in the ark, and housed me from your malice; and I am persuaded through his grace keeping me, that neither life nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate me from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to the military government of Israel among those who were more immediately appointed to fight the LORD's battles. Here are directions for their conduct, inspiring them with courage and making provision for those whose hearts failed them. While this chapter may be read with much profit, if considered with an eye to our spiritual foes in the cause of GOD, soldiers, and those whose profession in arms calls them to warfare, may derive under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, much to animate them in their conflicts, while fighting under the captain of their salvation, CHRIST JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not shut the book after the perusal of this Chapter, without first looking up for grace to bless the LORD for our happy lot, in being brought within the peaceable kingdom of JESUS who hath gone before us, and driven out the enemies of our salvation before our face. But while we bless his holy name for the privileges we enjoy as a people, in the consciousness that in our own hearts enemies are found, which too often oppose our way in the path of grace; let us see that we give no truce to those everlasting foes which wage war against our GOD and against his CHRIST. Yes, dearest JESUS! I would say, do not I hate them, O LORD, of every description and character that hate thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? Yea I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.

Let the military character, and especially the ministers of JESUS, learn from this chapter where their strength and confidence is to be found, and in the sure presence of a gracious covenant GOD in CHRIST, and long experience of his faithfulness always derive courage to animate themselves and the holy army of GOD's people in their warfare with the enemies of their salvation. If the LORD of hosts be with us, the GOD of Jacob will be our refuge.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

Provision is made in this chapter for various circumstances, of such things as might arise in the government of Israel. Here are appointments for the discovery of murder: for the marriage of captives taken in war: for preserving the birth-right of inheritance to the eldest son of a wife not beloved: for the punishment by stoning of a rebellious son: and for the taking down the bodies of malefactors before sun-set. Such are the contents of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! may it be your happiness and mine, while perusing this chapter, to remark the superiority of the gospel to the law. Evidently we here see by the provision made for certain cases to which no outward restraints could reach, how infinitely transcending that spiritual worship is, to which believers in JESUS are called, who are not without law to GOD, but under the law to CHRIST. The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better hope did, by which we draw nigh to GOD.

But chiefly, Reader, in the perusal of this Chapter, may you and I derive grace from the great glorifier of JESUS, to behold him shadowed forth in those services of the law. Blessed spirit of truth! do thou guide our souls into all truth. Say, Holy LORD! is it not JESUS whose blood shed in the valley of this world, opens a source for the discovery of all our soul-murdering transgressions, by which we destroy ourselves? And is he not our peace in making peace, for us with our GOD, with our consciences, with our neighbours, with the world, with all things? Is he not the holy Warrior which hath conquered sin and death, and brought home our souls as captives to his salvation? Is it not he, who, for the love he hath to our persons, hath betrothed us to himself forever and ever? And was he not content to be made a curse for us when he hung on the tree and sustained the whole pressure of our sins, that in his righteousness we might be blessed! Hail, holy, blessed, dearest JESUS! be thou my

strength and song, for thou art become my salvation; my soul doth magnify the LORD, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my Saviour!

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have certain laws respecting moral conduct, in the tenderness required to be shown to the brute creation: of distinction in apparel: and of the deportment towards the married and unmarried women, together with special laws for particular cases.

REFLECTIONS

HOLY SPIRIT of truth! enable me to see the precious designs of thy blessed will, in the compassion thou hast manifested by those precepts of tenderness, by which thy people are to show their affection to their brethren, in their regard to whatever is theirs. And as the one great character by which they are known, is, that they dwell alone, and are not reckoned among the nations: may I never mingle anything with the garment of JESUS's righteousness, but be found wholly the LORD's, both, towards him and all that are in the world. LORD, keep my soul chaste and inviolable to thee, and spotless among men. Oh! preserve me blameless to the day of thy coming, and may I walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved me and given himself for me, an offering and a sacrifice to GOD, for a sweet smelling savour: but fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named, as becometh a saint of JESUS; and may the peace of GOD, rule in my heart, to the which I am also called, and be thankful.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

This chapter is but a continuation of the same subject as in the former. Here are certain laws for the preservation of Israel, as an holy people to the LORD, without blemish and without imperfection; laws, also, for the keeping in purity the camp, and the persons of LORD'S people; against whoredom, usury, the breach of vows, and encroachments on another's property.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! While thou beholdest the many disqualifications, by which men are kept off from the congregation of the LORD'S people, think of thy privileges, and bless GOD that thou art neither an Ammonite nor an Edomite, though a Gentile, and not of the original stock of Israel; and yet permitted to come into the congregation by the new and living way, opened for sinners in the blood and righteousness of JESUS. LORD! give me grace that I may not associate with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them; and may I be always found cleansed from all my pollutions in the blood of JESUS. Dear LORD! I thank thee, that when by thy HOLY SPIRIT, I was enabled to flee to thee, from the rigorous and hard service of Satan; thou hast not given me back again into his power, but hast graciously promised that sin shall not have dominion over me, for I am no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace. May I not hope, blessed JESUS, that as sin hath reigned unto death, so shall grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD?

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

The Chapter before us is a continuation of certain laws, appointed to be observed in certain cases. Here are directions

concerning divorces; of the permission, for the newly married to refrain from war; concerning pledges; men-stealers; leprosy; hire of wages; of justice, and of charity.

REFLECTIONS

I BESEECH my GOD and Saviour, that he will enlighten the eyes of my understanding, that in reading those precepts of his holy law, I may be led to view somewhat either leading to JESUS, or pointing to him, in every one. If, dearest LORD, thou hast betrothed me to thyself, thou wilt not give me a writing of divorcement, though I am altogether unworthy of thy love, for thou hatest putting away, and thou hast said I shall be thine forever. LORD, give me grace to imitate thy tenderness, and in all my concerns with my poorer brother, forget not that thou hast condescended to call me thy brother; and even to strangers, may I never forget, that when in the bondage of sin and corruption, thou didst seek me out and free me, I was a stranger in the land of Egypt. Oh! for grace to manifest my love to thee, in the remembrance of all thine afflicted, tried, and distressed family. The LORD JESUS help me by his sweet constraining love, to do by others as he hath done by me; and to put on, as the elect of GOD, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering: that it may be manifest to my own heart, and to all with whom I have to do, that the same mind is in me, which was also in CHRIST JESUS.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

The subject in this Chapter is similar to the former. Here are laws of direction, for the punishment of evil-doers: respecting the ox in his labour: the disgrace of him that refuseth to build up his brother's name: the punishment of the immodest woman: laws respecting weights and measures: a precept for the blotting out the memory of Amalek.

REFLECTIONS

I DESIRE grace to bless my compassionate GOD, that my stripes have fallen far short of my sins, and I may truly say to my soul with one of old, Know, therefore, that GOD hath exacted of thee less than thy iniquity deserved. It is thou, dearest JESUS, who hath been wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities; the chastisement of my peace was upon thee, and with thy stripes I have been healed. LORD! grant me the teachings of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that in all thy dealings with men, I may bring no reproach upon thy cause, nor have divers weights and divers measures, but a just balance, which is thy delight. And for all the Amalekites and enemies of my salvation. LORD! endue me with strength and holy resolution, that mine eye may not spare, however delicately they may seem, but by the arm of my GOD, may I hew them in pieces before the LORD my Saviour.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

As the man of GOD is drawing to a conclusion on the subject of laws, in this chapter he points out the form of words to be used in offering the basket of first-fruits; and the prayer with which the offering is to be brought; and then follows up both, with reminding the people once more, in whose name and authority he had acted, in the delivery of the commandments.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! thou art the first fruits indeed, and the first and last, and best offering of my soul, for acceptance with my GOD. Early do I desire to bring thee in the first of every year, and the first of every day, and the first of every morning of the day, and close of the day, as the sole cause of my rejoicing: for in the moment I do this, I desire with the Israelite to cry out, A Gentile ready to perish was my father, and from the Egypt of sin and death, hath the LORD

brought out soul. He remembered me in my low estate, for his mercy endureth forever. And will the LORD, indeed, condescend to avouch me for his own? Shall I be of his chosen ones! Will the FATHER of mercies look upon me as accepted in the beloved, and mark me as the object of his peculiar love? Hath my JESUS purchased me with the peculiar price of his blood? Hath the HOLY GHOST visited my soul with the influences of his peculiar grace? Am I, indeed, the object of the united mercy of the Holy Three in One: and are the peculiar blessings of the covenant, the portion of my soul? LORD! grant me grace this day to avouch myself, with all I have, and all I am, to be thine forever. Take my two mites (for soul and body are nothing more, compared to this vast treasury) and accept them, O LORD, in JESUS, for of thine own do I give thee. Witness for me, ye angels of light, that I will know no other GOD but the LORD GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that I desire to be distinguished from all the nations of the earth, that are not the Israel of GOD, as separated from them; and that henceforth I will make mention of his righteousness, even his only, who is the GOD of my life, and will be my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

As Moses had now nearly concluded everything relating to the precepts; he enjoins the people in this chapter to adopt a means of keeping alive in their remembrance the great things of GOD's law, by writing it upon stones. And the chapter is concluded in aiming to impress the whole still more upon their minds, by causing the Levites to pronounce curses upon all that disobeyed the divine commands.

REFLECTIONS

How sweet and refreshing to my soul are the views of JESUS, as the high priest and altar, and offering of my heart, in the moment that I read the solemn charges of God's law, and the dreadful penalty

of disobedience. My soul indeed cannot but subscribe with full consent to GOD's justice, in all these sentences of curses on the breach of his holy law; while my heart flies to the gracious offer of mercy in JESUS. And in the very moment I am constrained to say Amen, to every tittle of GOD's righteous law, Oh! how precious is it, dearest JESUS, to view thee as the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Thou art the altar my soul would flee to, for thou art my great deliverance, when both law and justice challenge me before GOD. Be thou my GOD, my guide, my peace, my joy, and my consolation forever!

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the former, and is in fact part of it. The curses having been proclaimed in the foregoing, the blessings are subjoined in this. But I conceive that this Chapter is partly prophetical, for many of the things spoken of; were fulfilled in the successive periods of the church. The christian Reader will find, under GOD the HOLY GHOST's teaching, much of gospel veiled under the several parts of it, which I hope the LORD will bless to his perusal.

REFLECTIONS

OH, my soul! let the awful review of the calamities here held forth to disobedient Israel, endear, with increasing love and affection, the person of thy ever-adored Redeemer; and his great salvation to thee; and may the perusal of this Chapter under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, constrain thee into his love, and to cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, for he is thy life. Oh! precious, precious JESUS, what eternal praises are thy due! Oh! what unspeakable mercies do I behold in that one view of JESUS, a GOD in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. I see, I feel, I stand convinced, that to this one cause, every blessing in time, and to all eternity is owing. LORD!

keep me, hold me, establish me in this most precious assurance, and may I never dare to taste a single joy until I see JESUS in it. If thou, dearest LORD, will give it me, it will be sanctified. But without thee, the best of creature comforts will prove a snare.

My unawakened brother! if GOD in mercy should cause my humble Commentary to meet the eye of one of this character, will you not in the perusal of this Chapter, stand convinced that the judgments of GOD are sure judgments; and the least of them most awful indeed! And is not GOD the faithful GOD, as fully pledged to perform his written threats to the ungodly, as he is pledged to perform his promises to his people. Oh! that grace may open the eye, convince the heart, awaken the affection, and induce sinners to flee from the wrath to come: for depend upon it, there is, there must be a day coming, when indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will fall upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

There is a great solemnity in this chapter. Israel is presented as a body, by way of proof, that the LORD's covenant meets their most hearty and cordial consent. Here is a general recital of some of the leading objects of the covenant; and the chapter concludes with pointing out the striking distinction between the things which are secret, which belong unto the LORD, and those which are revealed, which belong unto his people.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST JESUS! it is thou that art the covenant of thy people, for *with* thee, as their great head, the covenant is made; *in* thee it is fulfilled; *by* thee it is completed; and *from* thee, the full assurance of the blessings of it must come. Thou art given as a covenant to the people by the FATHER: and thou art the everything belonging to it . Oh! may I behold in thee, how all thy people stand complete in thy

righteousness. For it is not confined to the captains of the tribes, nor the elders, nor the officers: but our little ones and our wives, the stranger that is in our camp, and the hewer of wood, and the drawer of water, are all equally interested in the fulness and preciousness of thy salvation.

Endue my soul with suited strength, that I may never forsake the covenant of my GOD, nor turn my back upon the LORD of my mercies. LORD! grant, I pray thee, that there may never be in me an evil heart of unbelief; in departing from the living GOD; but daily, while it is called today, may my soul be strengthened with thy SPIRIT'S might, lest I should be hardened with the deceitfulness of sin. And Oh! do thou, blessed GOD, confirm me in all the privileges of thy covenant, that those things which are so graciously revealed, may belong to me and to my children forever.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

This is a very interesting chapter. It contains much solemn exhortation: but it is full of divine mercies, as if the LORD intended to manifest to Israel, after what had been delivered of threatenings in the two preceding chapters, that it is in mercy the LORD delighteth. Here is a provision made for the penitent sinner to return, and life and death are set before him.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! my soul, the earnestness with which Moses, the man of GOD follows up his Sermon, in the warm and impassioned manner he adopts in the close of it, so as to persuade the Israelites to duty and obedience. But, alas! what persuasion can operate until grace pleads in the soul? When thou hast fully viewed the solemn picture, and art become as fully satisfied from thine own feelings, that nothing less than sovereign grace, can be competent to restrain the corrupt passions of man's fallen nature; then, my soul, from Moses turn thy view to contemplate the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and

behold in him the only possible source to enable sinners both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Oh! thou ever-blessed JESUS, that art the first cause and final end of all the hopes, the strength, the ability, the holy desires of thy people. In thee we behold an adequate relief for all our wants. It is thou and thou alone, which by the influence of thine HOLY SPIRIT in the minds of thy people, dost first awaken eternal life; and as thou begettest, so thou alone canst maintain, support, preserve, and carry it on from day to day in the soul. Oh! enable me to cleave unto thee, for thou art my life, and the length of my days; thou art my hope, and my portion forever. Do thou, by the sweet constraining influence of thine HOLY SPIRIT, keep me close to thyself, that I may live upon thy fulness, have the lively actings of faith upon thy person, and live to thy praise here, until thou shalt bring me home, to rejoice in thy glory forever.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

The man of GOD, having finished his sermon to the people, in this chapter makes a particular address to Joshua, whom the LORD had appointed as his successor: enjoins him to be valiant for GOD, and assures him of the divine favor: Moses gives the law which he had written to the priests, commanding it to be read every seventh year: By the LORD's foretelling Moses, he admonishes them of their degeneracy. He writes a song and rehearseth it in the ears of the people, which song is contained in the succeeding chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this Chapter, and behold in Moses the dying circumstances of all mankind. Both saints and sinners, ministers and people, even Moses, the highly favoured servant of the LORD, must go down to the grave, though as to the circumstances attending his death, he was peculiarly favoured in going up to the mount, to give forth his soul, as some have thought, upon the very mouth of GOD. Here again, dearest JESUS, let my soul, from the view

of the universal condition of mankind, turn my thoughts to thee, who by thy precious death hast overcome death, and by thy triumph over death and the grave, hast opened to thy people everlasting life. Sweet and refreshing is the thought, amidst the humbling prospect, of dissolution, that JESUS ever liveth; and though all our circumstances around are perishing, and we ourselves involved in the same, yet the hour is hastening, when death shall be swallowed up in victory!

In the view of Israel's perverseness, LORD, give me grace to behold the universal taint of all mankind. Am I better than they? No: in no wise. All are included under sin. Oh! thou precious sin-bearing LAMB of GOD! let everything and every view, both of the sin of others and my own, tend to endear thy person, and thy righteousness, to my heart, convinced, that there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

This chapter is almost filled with that beautiful song of Moses, which, from its containing so much of gospel in it, hath warned and instructed the mind of GOD's people in all ages. Having finished his sermon, the dying pastor gives out this hymn at the close of it, before he dismisses his congregation, and is dismissed himself with the blessing. Here are contained some of the many gracious dealings of the LORD with Israel. Here are contained also, some of their many grievous dealings with the LORD. Here are blended promises and threatenings. The chapter concludes with the LORD's command to his servant Moses, to go up into the Mount preparatory to his death.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, and behold, the beautifulness of holiness, and of praise, in the conduct of a dying pastor, like Moses; and in the outlines of

this hymn, behold how becoming it is to be faithful. Heaven and earth must witness at the last day for every faithful servant of JESUS, if he hath kept back nothing that was profitable for the people; and though the people be not gathered, yet he hath delivered his own soul.

Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, in viewing the LORD'S love to his church, and the series of mercies manifested towards his people, to discover, in a spiritual sense, the same gracious hand bringing us out of Egypt, and bearing us as upon eagles wings all the way through of our eventful journey. Oh! thou most gracious GOD! in every view which my soul is enabled to take of thy love towards me; and in all thy three-fold characters of Person, thou hast been my FATHER, and the guide of my youth. My Saviour, and the Redeemer of my soul; my Sanctifier, and the helper of all my ways. Oh! grant that I may not, like Israel of old, forget the GOD of my mercies, and lightly esteem the rock of my salvation. Do thou perfect that, gracious GOD, concerning me, which thou hast begun, for thou art indeed a rock, and thy work is perfect. It is of thine own free grace thou hast planned salvation, by thine own power thou hast formed it, and wilt execute it. In thine everlasting love, in the eternal purposes of thy counsel, by the blood and righteousness of JESUS, and by thine own grace, and the influences of the HOLY GHOST, in the hearts of thy people, thou wilt accomplish and complete it: and shall I doubt thy gracious purposes concerning me? Be thou my rock, my JEHOVAH JESUS, to which I may alway resort; for thou hast promised to help me; therefore into thine hands do I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

The man of GOD here finisheth the whole of his ministry with Israel. Nothing remained after the Song but to bless Israel in the LORD'S name; and this he doth partly in a spirit of prophecy, in

telling each tribe of Israel of some of the most remarkable events which would follow them; and partly in a spirit of prayer; of what he hoped the LORD would bless them with. He concludes the Chapter with a most animated apostrophe, both of the blessedness of the GOD of Israel, and of the Israel of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, My soul, over the perusal of this most delightful Chapter, and while the man of GOD is pronouncing these blessings over the people of Israel: see, whether you can now, by virtue of an union with the true spiritual LORD of Israel, claim an interest in these mercies, and call yourself by the name of Jacob, and surname yourself by the name of Israel.

Israel of old, was a chosen generation, for GOD the FATHER chose them in CHRIST JESUS before the foundation of the world. And if I belong to Israel now, have I not been chosen in him, and ordained by him to be of the chosen generation, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to show forth the praises of him who hath called me out of darkness into his marvellous light. My soul! is it so with thee? Am I the purchase of JESUS' blood, the subject of the HOLY GHOST's fellowship: and do I enjoy communion with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST? Then shall I, as Israel, dwell in safety. My GOD will thrust out the enemy from before me, and will say, destroy them. The eternal GOD is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

Here is related to us, the account of Moses' death. To whose pen we are indebted for the relation of it, under the HOLY GHOST, is not said. The LORD gives his servant a view of the promised land: to which is added, the account of his death and burial, the mourning of Israel for Moses, and the appointment of Joshua as his successor.

REFLECTIONS

FAREWELL, Moses! thou faithful servant of the most high GOD! thou highly favoured, highly honored herald of my ever adored Redeemer! Thy memory shall be ever dear to me: for under the sweet and precious influences of the HOLY GHOST, thou hast informed me of things which I knew not, and brought to my knowledge such truths as are past finding out. But chiefly do I desire to honour thy memory, in acting as a schoolmaster to bring me to JESUS. Here I value thee as more precious than gold; for whatever tends to reveal to my soul the person and righteousness of GOD my Saviour, would I esteem more than my necessary food.

The very thought of JESUS fires my soul. And when I trace in the eventful history of Moses, and in his writings, that he pointed only to JESUS, I long to have my soul brought yet more and more under the HOLY GHOST, in his teaching to discover JESUS.

And do I not see in Moses himself, and in all his ministry, somewhat, which by faint figures, or more pointed similitudes, testifies of JESUS! If Moses acted as the messenger of JEHOVAH; became, as occasions required, the prophet, the priest, the king of Jeshurun: if Moses stood between JEHOVAH, and the people as the Mediator: if this man led out the LORD's people, delivered them from Pharaoh, wrought miracles, subdued kingdoms, appointed statutes, established ordinances, gave a law to Israel, and taught precepts to Jacob; what were all these and as many more, but so many representations of the LORD JESUS?

Didst not thou, blessed JESUS, act as the messenger of JEHOVAH, when thou camest to our spiritual Egypt, to deliver thy people out of captivity? In all thy ministry, righteousness, and salvation, wast not thou the sent, the sealed, the anointed of thy FATHER? And wast not thou the great prophet, priest, and king of thy people? If Moses stood between JEHOVAH and Israel, as a Mediator, how much more thou? for Moses never could have stood, but as thy representative, none but thyself could turn away divine wrath, or make atonement but in thy blood. If Moses, acting as the minister of JEHOVAH, opened a way through the Red Sea, what was this, but as typical of that new and living way, which thou hast opened in thy blood and

righteousness, for thy ransomed ones to pass over, when mountains of sin on every side, and the enemy, like Pharaoh, is behind, hastening on to destroy thy chosen? And if Moses' meekness forsook him not, amidst all the contumacy, ingratitude, and rebellion of Israel, what was Moses meekness compared to thine, Oh, thou patient LAMB of GOD, who, when thou wast reviled, reviledst not again; but in all the backslidings, coldness, and departures of thy people, never leavest nor forsakest them, but having loved thine own, which are in the world, thou lovest them unto the end! Hail! thou first, and best, and chiefest among ten thousand! thou holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens! If I forget thee, dearest JESUS, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: yea, if I prefer thee not above my chief joy! And Reader! may you, and every ransomed soul, publish his name, declare his doings among the people, ascribe ye greatness unto our CHRIST; let everyone, the fathers unto the children, declare his truth!

And now, Reader, having taken leave of Moses, and his sacred writings, I would desire grace to set up my *Ebenezer*; that hitherto the LORD hath helped me. May a gracious GOD accept everything that hath been here humbly offered, by way of Commentary upon those Five Books of Moses, and which the LORD hath made, or shall hereafter make profitable to his people; for that is the LORD'S, and of his own, do I with all humility of soul offer him. And may he as graciously pardon and blot out everything that is amiss; for that is wholly mine; and I desire to take shame and confusion of face, in the recollection. And finally, I beg once more to recommend all that is here offered, to the Reader, with myself, and poor services to his prayers, that a covenant GOD in CHRIST, through the influences of the eternal SPIRIT, may abundantly bless and own this feeble attempt to promote the LORD'S glory in the heart of the Reader, both while the unworthy writer is spared, a monument of sovereign mercy upon earth, and a long time after the hand that now writes, shall have returned to its original dust. To the sacred Three in One be endless, undivided praises. Amen.

JOSHUA

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THIS Book of GOD takes its name from Joshua, not perhaps from his being the writer of it, for it is more than probable that he did not write it, more likely, as some think, to have been Phinehas: but because it treats principally of him and his victories in the conquest of Canaan, as captain of the LORD's host. And as by name, as well as in this character, he was an eminent type of the Almighty Joshua, nothing could have been more suitable than that in the history of the church's taking possession of Canaan, it should be recorded in his name, who evidently in all he did in this great work, typified a greater than himself even the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

In point of history, the Book of Joshua contains all, the great events which took place in the Church of GOD, from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua, a period of somewhat more than twenty years: during which time the conquest of Canaan, and the division of it among the tribes of Israel, were accomplished.

It forms a memorable period in the history of the church, and especially so when considered with an eye to the spiritual conquest of the church over her enemies by the true Joshua, in subduing all opposition, and bridging his people unto that rest which remaineth, for the people of GOD.

Reader! one request I have to make of you through the whole of the perusal of this history. Seek grace from him whose office it is to glorify JESUS, that in the conduct of Joshua in leading on the people of GOD to victory, you may look beyond the type, and behold the outlines of him, whose very office, as Joshua's was, is to save his people, to go before them, to conquer for them, and finally to give them all an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Oh thou Almighty Joshua! thou Captain of Salvation, who art bringing many

sons unto glory, may I behold thee going before me in all the victories over sin, death, hell, and the grave; and drying up the Jordans of affliction, trials, temptations and difficulties, through which thou art leading me. Dearest JESUS! do thou lead on, and lead me out, and give me grace to follow, until thou shalt bring me in to behold thy glory, and dwell with thee forever!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Joshua succeeds by the LORD's appointment to the government of Israel on the death of Moses. Joshua accepts the command. The people are pleased with it. Officers in the inferior departments are appointed. The Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites whose inheritance was on this side Jordan, are engaged to go over with their brethren to the reduction of Canaan. These are the contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the review of the death of one servant of the LORD, and the appointment of another, what a precious thought is it, that our JESUS lives forever. Moses must die, and Joshua must die, and all the servants and ministers of the church must be gathered to their fathers, and see corruption. But JESUS our dear Redeemer is the same, and his years shall not fail. Oh! what relief, amidst every dying circumstance of every faithful servant of the LORD!

In the prospect of passing over Jordan to the possession of the promised land, may my soul be enabled to act faith, in the certain assurance that, as Joshua was commissioned of the LORD to promise the people, so hath our Almighty Joshua promised and secured it to his. And here, as in a thousand instances, our glorious Joshua hath infinitely exceeded and outdone all that his type represented. Joshua, it is true, went before Israel, and went with Israel. And so doth JESUS in all the way, for he is ever with them, and his Almighty presence their support. But he is also gone before. He hath already taken

possession of the promised inheritance in their name. The battle is already fought and won. The conquest is finished, By and by he will return to take his people to himself, that where he is there they may be also. Almighty Captain of my salvation! as thou hast overcome and art set down on the seat of the conqueror in thy FATHER'S throne, so do thou enable me to overcome that I may sit down on thy throne. In all my warfare let me behold thee before me, and may I be enabled to stand still, and see the salvation of my GOD.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains that memorable history which is handed down to gospel times, with such honourable testimony of the harlot Rahab. Joshua having sent spies from Shittim to Jericho, Rahab in faith received them into her house, concealed them, and before she sent them away in peace made a league with Israel through them, for her own personal safety and that of her family. The return of the spies to Joshua, with the assurance they gave of the certainty of their success in the conquering of the country, from what they had seen and heard, is also related in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter, and contemplate the several parts of it, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath caused it to be written for thy instruction, to be thy teacher.

Do not I behold, in the instance of Rahab the harlot, the testimony of that blessed doctrine, that where sin hath abounded grace should much more abound: and as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Take courage, my soul, in this, and in every other instance of the triumphs of GOD thy Saviour. Even in Jericho the LORD will seek out and save his people, if a soul of his be there. The LORD knoweth them that are his. And from all their filthiness, and all their idols, JESUS will cleanse them. Through him shall

publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of GOD, while self-righteous Pharisees are cast out. Dear LORD! may thy precious blood be sprinkled on the door of my heart, as the scarlet thread was fastened to the window of the harlot's house, that in the hour of visitation, as in the destruction of Jericho, thy destroying angel may see that sweet token between my GOD and me, and spare my soul. And convinced of my security and shelter in thy blood and righteousness, may my faith stand firm within, and never go out while the judgments of my GOD are passing, as in the case of Jericho, on the ungodly: for sweet is that assurance, *he that believeth shall not make haste.*

But chiefly, dearest JESUS! may my soul pause over this Chapter, and contemplate thine unequalled condescension and love, in the instance of this woman. Was it not enough, O thou SON of GOD, in thy pity to our fallen nature, that thou shouldst leave the glories of eternity, and take upon thee our flesh; but that thou shouldst stoop to the lowest possible abasement in the assumption of our nature, and condescend to spring from a stock such as this woman! Was it not enough, that our nature, when thou tookest it upon thee, had been sunk to the deepest misery and sin, short of hell, but as if to surprize and overpower the mind both of angels and of men, even Rahab, was made choice of to be thine ancestor after the flesh! Oh! thou holy, harmless, undefiled LAMB of GOD, how hast thou endeared thyself to the most affectionate feelings of thy people, by such testimonies of thy love and mercy. And though, in taking our nature upon thee, thou hast taken none of the pollutions of it, yet in making choice of such channels, thou hast effectually put out the pride of all human glory: and hast most convincingly taught us by this process of grace, that in thy Gentile, as well as thy Jewish pedigree, all is grace; mercy, and love, in every act of thine concerning thy people. All flesh is corrupt before thee, and all alike filthy and polluted. It is thine own arm which hath brought salvation, and to thee alone be all the glory?

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This is as memorable a Chapter of the LORD's dealings with his people, as perhaps any in the Old Testament. And as there can be no doubt but that it is typical of yet greater mercies to be manifested in the New, it demands the attention of every believer more particularly. We have contained in this Chapter, the miraculous passage of Israel under their commander Joshua, over Jordan: the assurance given to the people of this event before it came to pass: the preparation for it; the sanctifying the people against it: and the event fully accomplished.

REFLECTIONS

YE happy souls! whom GOD, even the GOD of the whole earth, is bringing in, and bringing through all the fords of Jordan, and all the difficulties which lay on this side Jordan, in the way to Canaan; here stand still, and see the salvation of GOD. How eternally safe, and how eternally secure, must they be, who have the ark of the covenant to go on before them, and the LORD himself their rereward!

Ye priests of JESUS, Levites of a better dispensation than that of Moses, and established upon better promises, with what fearless and undaunted zeal may you pass on, before the camp of GOD's Israel, surrounded with his ordinances and the ark of the covenant of the GOD of the whole earth, with you!

But chiefly thou, dear JESUS! who art both the ark and the resting place, the mercy seat and the security, the all in all of thy people. Oh! be thou ever with me in all places, at all times, in all the Jordans of difficulty, and in all the Canaan for happiness; for without thee nothing is safe, nothing desirable. Be thou my ark, my sanctuary, my covert, my resting place, for in thy person and righteousness, are the lives of thy people eternally secured and made happy. Unto thee, blessed JESUS, as my everlasting home, do I desire to come, for thou LORD hast dealt bountifully with me.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The people having all passed over Jordan, the priests are commanded to come up out of Jordan with the ark of GOD, and pass over also. A memorial is commanded to be set up, both in Jordan, where the feet of the priests had rested, and also in the place where they lodged, of this great and miraculous event. Joshua is peculiarly magnified in the sight of Israel. These are the principal points recorded in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

HERE would I pause, and in the contemplation of Israel's passing over Jordan, look back upon that sacred stream, and cry out, What hath GOD wrought? Surely, not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD promised Israel. Well may they look forward to the sure conquest of Canaan, since GOD hath thus begun to magnify the riches of his grace towards them, and set up the pillars of remembrance to the divine glory.

My soul! hast thou no part in this history? Is not thy Joshua here beautifully represented? Was it not JESUS and his power over all the Jordans, which rolled to keep him and his people back which are here set forth? Fear not then. Set up thy *Ebenezer* in *Gilgal*. And when thy children ask thee in time to come, what mean these things? Point to JESUS. Direct them to the Red Sea in his blood. And let them know that all his people are more than conquerors through his grace helping them, that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor all the *Jordans* of sin and the grave, shall be able to separate from CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This is a very interesting Chapter, and contains several very memorable events. Israel is now entering the frontiers of Canaan. The Canaanites are alarmed. Israel is animated. The LORD, as if to remind them of his covenant engagements, commands the rite of circumcision to be renewed, which had been long omitted. The feast of the Passover also, after eight and thirty years neglect is again celebrated. The LORD victuals the camp with the good things of the land of Canaan. The manna ceaseth. The captain of the LORD's host appeareth to Joshua.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! in the perusal of this chapter, stand still and see the salvation of GOD! Behold how thy GOD puts terror in the hearts of his and thy enemies! when thy GOD, thy JESUS, shall have conducted thee over Jordan, their hearts shall melt away, neither shall they have the spirit any more to make their attacks upon thee. In the consciousness of this, I would say, LORD! grant me the true circumcision of the SPIRIT! lead me, blessed JESUS, to the banqueting house of thy love, and may my soul keep the feast of the true passover, testifying to the whole congregated world of angels and of men, that I seek salvation only in thy blood and righteousness. And when the manna of ordinances shall cease: when, O my Saviour, I shall have done with my day and generation here below: bring me to that country, that promised land and city, whose builder and maker is GOD: and give me to eat of that hidden manna, which thou hast promised to all thy people. Precious JESUS! do thou manifest thyself to me, as thou didst to thy servant Joshua, as the Captain of the LORD's host; and the captain of my salvation. Was it not in these several appearances of thine? Was it not to give Old Testament saints a token of thy favor, and of the good will thou hadst towards our nature? Was it not to convince them that thou wast longing for the time, when as really and properly man, thou wouldest bear our nature, and perform that great work, which for our redemption sake

thou hadst engaged to do, in the covenant made between thy FATHER and thyself? And now thou hast really and truly become man, and finished the work the FATHER gave thee to do, wilt thou not to me, and to all thy New Testament believers, agreeably to thy promise, manifest thyself to our souls, otherwise than thou doest to the world? Come dear JESUS, come to my soul in ordinance seasons, in the sweet promises of thy word, in the tokens of thy providences; comfort me, strengthen me, cheer my heart, revive my poor languishing frame, brighten up my evidences, warm my whole soul with thy love; and let me see, and my sole happiness be found in this, that thy love is shed abroad, from thine heart to mine, and that thou, and thou alone, art formed there, the only hope of glory!

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This chapter is the continuation of the former. He which appeared to Joshua in the close of the foregoing chapter, begins in this to give directions, as captain of the LORD'S host, how Joshua is to proceed in the reduction of Jericho. Here is the progress of the siege, and the event of it, in the overthrow of Jericho. Joshua pronounceth a curse upon the builder of Jericho, whoever in after ages should attempt it.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE! my soul, again and again, over the several parts of this most interesting chapter, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to give thee to see the gospel sense of it, in thine own history. How was my heart, like Jericho, shut up, when the LORD laid siege to my soul! when without were fightings, within were fears! But when the LORD seemed to delay the execution of his anger against me, and destruction did not immediately follow, my confidence, like the men of Jericho, revived, and my rebellious heart became again stout. Oh! thou dearest JESUS, thou Almighty Joshua, when by thy SPIRIT, thou didst break down all The walls and resistances of my carnal nature,

and didst cause the weapons of sin to fall out of my hands; then didst thou conquer my soul, and make me a willing captive in the day of thy power! Reader! let you and I, while contemplating with holy joy the victory of JESUS, rejoice with trembling, in beholding the inflexible justice of GOD over his enemies. Oh! the discriminating grace of GOD to his people. Oh! for an heart to love and adore such unparalleled mercy! LORD! give us grace to lay low in the dust, in token of our nothingness, and be ever ready to ascribe the whole of salvation, from beginning to end, to GOD and the LAMB.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

We have a sad interruption to the conquest of Canaan related in this chapter, in one of the children of Israel disobeying the commands of GOD, and taking of the spoil for himself; for which sin the LORD manifested his displeasure against Israel, and causeth the men of Ai, to be victorious over a party of Israel. Joshua's distress upon this occasion is related also, and his prayer to GOD. The LORD informs Joshua of the cause; enquiry is made for the transgressor. And he and his house being found, are stoned in the valley of Achor.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the dreadful example of *Achan*, the ruined state of our corrupt nature: and, while justly condemning him, learn to search thyself. Oh! who can stand in GOD's sight, and challenge strict enquiry. LORD! I would say; *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight can no man living be justified!* Teach me, thou blessed SPIRIT of all truth, teach me to look into myself; to lay my hand with trembling and godly fear upon my heart, and ask how my GOD is sanctified? How are his commands revered? And how his name and majesty honoured? Alas! I fear from the principle of self-love and self-deception, I shall make no discovery equal to what the state really is. Teach me then, thou HOLY SPIRIT, so to stand convinced, of the multitude of transgressions

which are secret to my own knowledge, but which are all open to the light of GOD's countenance, that solemnly condemned in my own heart I may fly to JESUS, take refuge in his all-atoning blood and justifying righteousness; that I may plead this, and this only, before the throne, under all the self-reproaches of my own mind, the charges of Satan, the curses of GOD's broken law, and the holy demands of his justice. Here, dearest JESUS, do I fix my hope. On thee do I hang all my expectations of pardon, mercy, and peace, through thy blood. And when the demand is made, what I have to say, this shall be all my plea: *Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have an account of the renewal of Israel's victories. The LORD encourageth Joshua, and the holy army conquereth Ai: the king of Ai is taken and hanged: Joshua erects an altar to the LORD: writes the law on stones; causeth the repeal of the blessings, and cursings, and of the law to be read in the ears of the people.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! while I behold *Ai* and her king, and everything appertaining to her subdued, brought down, and destroyed, under thy servant Joshua, as thy type and representative, oh! give me to see, and as firmly to believe, that all the *Ai's* of the present moment, shall bow down and be vanquished, which oppose the salvation of thy people. Lead me on, blessed Captain, conquering and to conquer: from grace to grace, and from strength to strength. And like thine army, which I here behold, teach me by thy HOLY SPIRIT, to pause over the several victories and the redemptions which thou workest for me, to offer my sacrifice and to bless my GOD, as I go on, even in the presence of my foes. Do thou, blessed JESUS, who hast with thine own arm, gotten thyself the victory; do thou only

hold me up, and bear me on, and carry me through, until thou shalt bring me in to the full possession of the Canaan which is above; be thou my sun and my shield, my hiding place and my covert, and then shall I assuredly know, that my GOD which giveth grace, will assuredly give glory.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us, the confederacy formed by the several kings of Canaan to fight against Israel. The subtilty of Gibeon, to make peace with Israel; and the event of their craft, in being made servants to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter, and in the review of the conduct of Gibeon, behold and see, what an earnest concern this people manifested for the preservation of their lives. And wilt not thou feel a more awakened concern for thine everlasting welfare? Is it not said in GOD's most holy word, as it was told the Gibeonites, that the LORD hath given commandment, to destroy all nations that are not his Israel? Is it not a most sure and certain truth, that the hour is hastening when the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget GOD? And wilt not thou arise, and flee for thy life, and seek peace with thy Joshua, in the covenant promises of Israel?

Oh! thou Great and Almighty Joshua, thou sent, and sealed, and anointed of thy FATHER; behold I am come to thee, and am come from a far country indeed, for who so far from GOD as the sinner, until brought nigh by the blood of JESUS. My own garments and my own covering are old, like the Gibeonites. They were indeed once new, when my nature in my first parent was erected in GOD's image; but now rent and torn, and worse than nothing. Make thou a league with my soul, I desire to be thy servant forever: far better wilt it be to be thy servant in the lowest place, a door keeper in thine house, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness, though in a royal city, like

Gibeon. If I am thy servant, I shall be the LORD'S freeman. And to be but a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water, for the service of thy sanctuary, will I esteem an higher honor than to enjoy all the pleasures of sin for a season. Thy reproach will be greater riches to me, than all the treasures of Egypt.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the relation of wonderful events: five kings wage war against Joshua, in the south of Canaan. Gibeon is made the seat of war, in the first instance, because of their league with Israel. Joshua hasteneth to the rescue of Gibeon, and carrieth on his victories, in taking and destroying six royal cities: the sun and moon at the voice of Joshua stand still: hailstones are sent from heaven, to aid Joshua in the destruction of the kingdoms: after his victories Joshua returneth unto Gilgal.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the distresses brought upon the Gibeonites, by reason of their league with Joshua, what a lively picture it affords of every renewed soul, in the conflicts it is sure to be engaged in, whenever it is brought to seek fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST. Do I not know the truth of that scripture by heartfelt experience, that they who will live godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution. Oh! happy experience! blessed testimony! Be it my joy to suffer all things, so I may win CHRIST! Dearest JESUS! vouchsafe to make a league with my soul! grant me an interest in thy covenant, and then will I not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Behold again, my soul, with holy joy in the perusal of this chapter, the victories of Joshua, and contemplate in them, the representation of the victories of thy Joshua over all the host of foes, and in the sure possession of Canaan. Yes! JESUS hath conquered all.

In vain have all the confederate powers united. The sun was darkened at his triumphs, and the moon shall be turned into blood, in the completion of his redemption. The stars from heaven shall fall, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken, in token of JESUS'S victory and the conquest of his redeemed ones. Oh! thou dear Redeemer, thou Almighty Joshua, great Captain of my salvation! GOD thy FATHER girded thee with strength unto the battle; and thou hast not only cast down all principalities and powers, but thou makest thy people to put their feet upon the necks of their enemies. Lead me on, dearest LORD, to thy victories. By the sword of thy SPIRIT, even thine holy word, and by the armour of thy salvation, give me grace to subdue all the remaining enemies of corruption within me, as well as the foes without; and wake me more than conqueror through thee, and thy grace helping me: that it may be said of me as of the armies of heaven: *they overcame by the blood of the LAMB, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The account of the holy war is continued in this Chapter; and in this is concluded the conquest of Canaan. In the former is related to us, the carrying on of the war in the Southern provinces of Canaan: in this, of the Northern. The kings of the North, like those of the South, join in confederacy against Joshua. The LORD encourages Joshua. He conquers them all, and destroys the Anakims.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in those wars of Joshua, the lively similitude of the victories thy Joshua hath accomplished, in the attainment of the heavenly Canaan. How did JESUS wade through difficulties, and contend with principalities and powers, in the accomplishment of thy salvation! Oh! thou great Captain of the LORD'S host, may I look beyond the Joshua of the camp of Israel, to behold thee to whom Joshua ministered, and of whom he was but the type; and view thee

shadowed out, by all, that he accomplished, in thy victories, resurrection, and glory. Thou, thou art the standard and ensign thy FATHER lifted up for his people's conquest, in all ages of thy church. This was the holy war, which thou didst maintain in thy FATHER'S name, with hell, death, and the grave. And now, having triumphed openly over them all, and nailed them to thy cross, thou art our everlasting banner, by whom we triumph, and in whose name we are more than conquerors, and shall finally inherit the heavenly Canaan. Dearest JESUS, may this be my confidence when, like the *Hazor* kings, all my foes join in confederacy against me, that thou wilt go before me and subdue all things to thyself: and not only break down the force of the enemies from without, but break down within all the strong holds of sin, and the lusts of the flesh; and make my soul strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

In this chapter the HOLY GHOST is pleased to have brought into one view, the catalogue of the conquests both of Moses and Joshua. Those of Moses on the East of Jordan, and those of Joshua on the West. The extent of the boundaries of the kingdoms which were conquered are marked, and the number of the kings, with their territories, are mentioned, in number one and thirty.

REFLECTIONS

HERE stand, my soul, again, and see the salvation of GOD; here seek for grace, to put thy feet upon the necks of all those kings, for in them behold thy JESUS conquering not only thirty-and-one of thine enemies, but the earnest of all thine enemies being put under thy feet. And, my soul in this view, beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to engage thee anew, with increasing vigor, under JESUS's banner, and to arm thee with the whole armour of GOD: that beholding what thy Joshua hath done for thee, his HOLY SPIRIT may work in thee, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. Remember, O my soul, that it is

a badge of thy holy calling, to endure hardness, as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST: to be separated from the men of Canaan, and distinguished from their customs: to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth: and to count not thy life dear unto thyself, so that thou mayest finish thy course with joy, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life. Blessed JESUS! do thou, for thou alone canst accomplish it, arm me with thy strength, so shall I be more than conqueror through thee, who art the LORD my righteousness.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This Chapter begins with the account of the division of Canaan, to the several tribes of Israel. After the subjugation and conquest of the promised land, the LORD'S promise is to be fulfilled in the enjoyment of it. A remarkable event is recorded in this chapter well worth the record, in order to manifest the fulfillment of divine judgments, as well as mercies; and that is, the death of Balaam the sorcerer, whose awful history hath this termination.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the advanced years of Joshua, how all things, and all persons in nature, tend to decay. Well may we exclaim with *Zechariah, our fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live forever?* But oh! how precious in the contemplation, thy JESUS, thy Joshua, ever liveth, and is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Blessed JESUS! thou art the life-giving, the life-preserving, the life-rejoicing source of thy people! And because thou livest thou hast said they shall live also, and when heart shall faint and strength shall fail, thou wilt be the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Let me as *Levi*, have no portion with the Reubenites on this side Jordan. But may JESUS be my portion, GOD my FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST my comforter and sanctifier. Give me, heavenly LORD, all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS: pardon, mercy, peace and joy in

the HOLY GHOST here, and life forever in the world to come. Cause me in this sense to inherit all things, be thou my GOD, and make me thy adopted child in the LORD JESUS.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The same subject is continued here, as in the former Chapter, in the division of the land. Caleb desires to have Hebron, as had been assured him. Joshua consents to his request.

REFLECTIONS

IN beholding the LORD's division of Canaan to his people, my soul would fain cry out, thou LORD shalt choose my heritage for me, and thou shalt be my hiding place forever. Instructed by thee, thou blessed SPIRIT, like *Caleb*, may the mountain of the spiritual Hebron be my portion, and there may I rest in JESUS in whom all fulness dwells. It is the well known character *of the inhabitants of the gardens*, to hearken to thy voice, to associate with thy people, to sit down at thine ordinances, and to dwell in thine house. LORD JESUS! let this be my employment while passing on and passing through this pilgrimage state. Thy GOD and FATHER will be my GOD and FATHER, and thy HOLY SPIRIT will be my guide; then shall I sweetly drink out of the wells of salvation: then shall I be continually refreshed in the Hebron of my GOD, until having passed on from strength to strength, and from one manifestation of grace unto another, I shall at length with all the redeemed of the LORD appear before my GOD in Zion.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The division of the land is again prosecuted in this Chapter. Judah's lot is marked out, Caleb's part in Judah's portion is also again mentioned. The marriage of his daughter and her portion; and the cities named which were assigned to Judah.

REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, my soul feels disposed to cry out with the Patriarch Judah, Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise! But oh! how doth Judah, how do all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles sing to nothing, when compared to thee, thou LORD of Judah, thou dear Redeemer, the Saviour of all men, but especially of them who believe!

Let the spirit of Caleb be upon me if it please my GOD. If he who took *Kirjath-Sepher* be thus esteemed, what shalt be the lot of him who by violence taketh the kingdom of Heaven, and hath his name written in the Book of Life! Oh! dearest JESUS, may my name be written in thy book, and may it be known in that day of victory, that I am chosen in, and saved by, the LORD JESUS!

LORD, I would say, give me as *Achsah*, a blessing, and who but JESUS do I require? Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed. In him are contained all the upper springs and the nether springs of every joy. LORD JESUS! let all my fresh springs be in thee!

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the account of the portions of Joseph and of Ephraim. But inasmuch as they expelled not the Canaanites from among them, they bear the reproach.

REFLECTIONS

IT was the language of the dying Patriarch, concerning his son Joseph, that he was, and should be, a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. And here we see how his children broke out in fruitfulness, on the right hand and on the left. But oh! my soul, in him, to whom the son of Jacob ministered but as a type, how fruitful are thy boughs, O JESUS, and how dost thou run over the wall of thine enemies. Here indeed I see the blessings of heaven from above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, and blessings of the breasts of the womb. All nations shall call thee blessed! Blessed JESUS! be thou my portion, and do thou, for thou alone canst accomplish it, drive out all enemies from before thy face.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

This is but a continuation of the former chapter, inasmuch as the same subject is continued. The children of Joseph, in the half tribe of Manasseh, have their portion assigned them. They petition for more. Joshua gives them an answer.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in the view of the several boundaries of the tribes of Israel arise and behold those everlasting possessions, which thy JESUS hath purchased for thee by his blood. And oh! pray for the sweet offices of the HOLY GHOST to be realized to thy experience, that they are thine in an everlasting covenant, which cannot be broken. And while the daughters of Joseph's tribe sue for their earthly inheritance, do thou plead for JESUS himself to be thine, and then he will bring with him all temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings. Dearest LORD! while Joseph's sons murmur because they have but one portion, oh teach me to seek no more! Be thou my portion, LORD, and never, never will I desire any other. In thee I have

enough, and all the chariots of the enemy will not dismay, for in thee I shall discomfit an host of men, and by the help of my GOD leap over a wall.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of the setting up the tabernacle in Shiloh. The remaining part of the land is divided. Benjamin's lot particularly marked out, with the cities belonging to it.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! while beholding the Israelites busily engaged, as this Chapter represents them, setting up the tabernacle in *Shiloh*; do thou let thy meditation take wing, and behold that true tabernacle which the LORD pitched, and not man. See, gaze, contemplate, look upon it, and view well the glorious building. And when the whole of its splendors have passed and repassed in delightful review before thee, look within the sacred temple, and behold JESUS, thine own JESUS, the Almighty minister of this sanctuary, even the Shiloh himself, to whom the gathering of the people shall be. Oh! thou dear Redeemer, than great High Priest of our calling! give me to hear that voice which John heard, and to know my personal interest in it. *Behold! the tabernacle of GOD is with men; and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and GOD himself shall be with them, and be their GOD!*

I would call to mind, while looking over Benjamin's portion, what the man of GOD prophesied concerning this lot. He called him *the beloved of the LORD*. He prophesied that *he should dwell in safety by him; that the LORD should cover him all the day long; and that he should dwell between his shoulders*. Oh! for an interest in the same love, the same assurances of safety, the same Almighty covering, and the same dwelling under the GOD of Jacob. Dearest JESUS! make me the object of thy love, the object of thy care, thy

protection, thy safety. Witness for me, ye angels of light, and above all, thou HOLY SPIRIT of all truth, do thou witness to my spirit, that I prefer these mercies of my GOD and Savior, beyond all the riches of the earth. Oh! may I be found so justified in the blood and righteousness of him, that is the Surety and Defence of his people, that I may be like Benjamin, the beloved of the LORD; and like John, *the disciple whom JESUS loveth*.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The division of the land occupies the contents of this chapter. More are the lots of Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan. After the division to the several tribes is ended, Joshua hath an inheritance assigned him by Israel.

REFLECTIONS

STILL, my soul, in beholding Israel's resting places, and their several portions of an earthly Canaan, do thou follow on to know the LORD, and the power of his might, that thou mayest arrive at that heavenly rest which remaineth for the people of GOD. I see here, in the draught of Israel's bounds, extensive plains, lofty mountains, verdant lawns, and wells of water. But what are these to the tree of life, to the mountain of GOD, and to the river of the living SPIRIT, whose streams make glad the city of my GOD! Here in JESUS' righteousness I view mountains of myrrh, and hills of frankincense; mountains dropping with new wine. And what endears these ravishing views of all my covenant right, made over to me not as an earthly Canaan, but an everlasting inheritance; not subject to the interruption of foes, but eternally secured in the gift of GOD my FATHER, the purchase of my Redeemer's blood, and sealed to my soul by the HOLY GHOST; I behold the whole, as given to me with a love that is perfectly unchangeable, and coming in a way which makes the whole doubly sweet, as centered in the Person of JESUS! Dearest LORD! do thou as the Joshua of Israel, take up thy settlement in our

midst. Take to thee the *Tinnath-serah* of my very soul, and form thyself there *the hope of eternal glory*.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This chapter is but short, but the contents of it are interesting. The LORD appoints, and the children of Israel set apart, six cities for refuge. And as those cities were evidently a shadow of good things to come, the relation of them is made the more particularly.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pass over all inferior considerations in the perusal of this Chapter, to attend to that grand, and most important one which the HOLY GHOST hath here held up to thy view in the city of refuge, as a lively similitude of thy never-failing and always open refuge the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And do thou learn from the care which the blessed SPIRIT hath shown, in causing it to be among the first things regarded, in the division of Canaan, that its importance must have been great indeed. And as a whole chapter in the history of Joshua's victories is here appropriated to this subject, and no other suffered to make a part in it, do thou give it thy whole attention, and suffer nothing to break in upon thy meditation, until thou beholdest JESUS, as thy city of refuge to which thou art fled, and in whom thou art fully delivered from the wrath to come.

Yes, blessed JESUS! thou art, indeed, a refuge from every storm and a covert from every tempest. Raised up and appointed by our GOD and FATHER, thou shelterest poor sinners who through sin and ignorance and unbelief have destroyed their own souls, and savest them from the malice of hell, the threats of a broken law, and the avenging cries of their own awakened consciences. Haste then my soul, flee for thy life, take refuge in the person, the blood and righteousness of thy crucified Saviour; and as thy High Priest liveth forever, abide in him, and forget thine own home, and thy father's

house: for he is thy rest forever, and in him thou mayest dwell as thine eternal habitation.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The portion of the Levites forms the particular heads of this chapter: eight and forty cities in number are assigned to them; and the chapter closes with an observation on GOD'S faithfulness in the fulfillment of his promises.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST JESUS! cause me to, learn from hence thy tender care of thy more immediate servants. Thy Levites shall be well provided for, whom thou hast set apart to thy service. And if they have no portion among their brethren, is it not, because thou thyself art their portion? And though to the eyes of an unfeeling world, some of thy most faithful labourers are sent without scrip or shoes as thy first disciples, yet having thee for their portion, they lack nothing, but are full and abound. Oh! let me learn from hence to reverence thy servants, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and for the sake of their ever-blessed Master.

Pause, my soul! and remark the faithfulness of JEHOVAH to his people. And if there failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to Israel, but all came to pass; will not this prompt thee to believe thy GOD to be faithful to thee also? Will not GOD thy FATHER fulfil all his covenant promises? Will not thy JESUS be still JESUS in all his love and favor? And will not the HOLY GHOST continue his faithful influences, in directing thy heart into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST? Oh! for faith in lively exercise to believe GOD'S word: to trust him now in the moment of trial, and not to hesitate, until it be seen, how things will go. Is he not still the holy one of Israel? And hath not all the faithful gone before, bore testimony to his faithfulness and truth? Oh! sweet thought! Blessed be the HOLY GHOST for teaching it to the church: if

we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot, he will not deny himself. LORD! in this firm persuasion let me live; and in this assured hope may I die.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

Joshua having, as the captain in Israel under the LORD, accomplished all the purposes for which the two tribes and a half of Israel, whose possession was assigned them on the other side of Jordan, had accompanied Israel to the war, now dismisses them with a blessing to return. In their return they build an altar to the LORD, which, at the first, gave great offence to the rest of the tribes, when they heard of it, fearing that it savoured of idolatry. But when they heard the cause, that it was intended to commemorate the glory of GOD, they were well pleased. These are the principal contents of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! in this contest of Israel learn to remark how exceedingly disposed by nature the best of men are to form misconceptions, and draw unfavourable conclusions of each other's conduct. Alas! what a veil of ignorance hath the fall thrown over our minds. While I admire and pray for grace to copy after the zeal of Israel, in everything which concerns GOD's honour and glory, I would no less seek grace also, to imitate the children of the two tribes and half over Jordan, and think it not enough to do right, and to seek the LORD's countenance to it, but very cheerfully explain all my motives, when those motives are with an eye to GOD's glory, to the inspection and approbation of men.

But is there not an higher improvement to be made in our view of the subject? Do I not behold in the *Reubenites* and their companions, the representation of all awakened believers on this side Jordan? Are we not all, as they were, remote by situation from the tabernacle, and the precious things in Canaan? Though JESUS

graciously condescends to visit us, and warms our hearts with the sweet visits of his love, yet do we not need continual monuments to tell our hearts, that this is not our home; and these are not the objects on which our affections here below should be placed? How often do even the ordinances of holy worship prove unsatisfactory: and the wells of salvation we cannot draw from by reason of our earthly, barren and lifeless frames! Precious JESUS! I would not erect an altar, nor offer a sacrifice, nor make mention of a burnt offering! I would not bring, if I had them, thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil: but I would look to thee; my longing eyes should fix on thy person, and my soul look to thee in the most dependant assurance of salvation, in thy blood and righteousness; for thou art the one only altar, the high priest and sacrifice; thou art all and in all. Be thou my witness, my hope, my portion, all the day. And although I am as yet on this side Jordan, yet, bye and bye, thou wilt come and take me to thyself, and I shall behold thy face in glory, when I awake up after thy likeness.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

In this chapter we are drawing towards the close of Joshua's ministry. Like all the other servants of the LORD, his work being finished, his death succeeds. He is represented here as convening the LORD'S heritage together, to make his farewell discourse to them. This chapter hath the leading heads of his sermon; and it should seem by what follows in the next chapter, that this is closed before that he ends his discourse.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! In the close of Joshua's ministry and labours, I see that all things and all men come to an end. But though Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and Joshua must die, yet thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. Oh! the sweet consoling thought! the

LORD liveth, and blessed be my strong helper; and praised be the GOD of my salvation.

But though the saints and servants of my GOD go the way of all the earth, yet through thy grace, O LORD, the fruits of their labours, their zeal and patience, their prayers and examples, are left behind. Here would I, for myself and Reader, pray that the dying words and legacy of the man of GOD, might live in my remembrance. Oh! for grace to cleave unto thee, thou dearest JESUS, for thou art indeed my life. And in the awful day of idolatry, and the pleasure-loving age, in which the LORD hath cast our lot, Oh! for faith to resist stedfastly all the enemies of our salvation. Make them, O LORD, thorns and briars in our path; hedge up our way with thorns if need be, that we may never find such lovers. Keep our souls close unto thee, and so powerfully restrain us, by the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, that we may be more and more dead unto the world, but alive unto GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

We are now arrived to the end of Joshua's history. This chapter contains the finishing of his sermon, and the finishing of his life together. He dies, as he had lived, in the act of praising GOD, and most earnestly and affectionately entreating the Israelites to the love and obedience of the LORD. The chapter closes also with an account of the death of Eleazar, and of the removal of Joseph's bones.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in closing this sacred book of GOD, and in reviewing the many precious things contained in it, let us with increasing diligence look up for the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, that beside the historical relation in it as the proof of GOD's faithfulness, we may spiritually discern the great tendency of the whole in pointing out the heavenly Canaan, under the typical representation of an earthly land of promise. Joshua, as the minister of GOD, hath indeed

brought the LORD's people over Jordan, and brought them in, and divided them their inheritance, as was promised. But Joshua and all Israel found that land to be but the land of an earthly inheritance. Though they had the signs and symbols of worship, and the refreshing views of the divine presence, yet these were only suited to a transitory state. Beautiful and conclusive is the apostle's reasoning upon it. If Joshua (says he) had given them rest, then would the LORD not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of GOD. And what is that rest but JESUS himself, who is the very sabbath of the soul to his people, and who hath promised to give all them that come to him, to find rest unto their souls. This (saith the prophet) is the rest wherewith ye may pause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing. Isaiah 28:12.

But before I take a farewell of Joshua, as the servant of the most high GOD, and the captain of the LORD's host, I would pause and contemplate some of those precious views thy person and character afford, as a type of my almighty Joshua, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Methinks I see in thee the faint outlines of his glorious person and character, who was, and is, indeed, the minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched, and not man.

In name as well as office, surely, Joshua, thou were a lively representative of our precious JESUS. He, as captain of the LORD's host, hath brought, and is still bringing, many sons unto glory, and to the division of their inheritance in the heavenly Canaan, as thou didst under his command to the possession of an earthly. It was at Jordan thy ministry commenced. And here it was also, in the very spot JESUS entered on his labours, when anointed with the HOLY GHOST, and under the baptism of the SPIRIT without measure. Here JEHOVAH began to magnify the earthly Joshua in the sight of all the people. And here both the persons of the FATHER and of the HOLY GHOST, glorified the LORD JESUS in their united testimonies to his person and office.

And as the earthly Joshua brought the people over Jordan; circumcised the house of Israel anew; led them on to sure victory and to conquest; and never left them, until the LORD had given them rest from all their enemies round about: so the heavenly, the

almighty Joshua, brings all his people through every river of affliction, and all the Jordans of sin and tribulation; takes away the foreskin of their heart, that they may be no more stiffnecked, makes them more than conquerors through his grace helping them, and never gives over until he hath brought them into that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people of GOD. Hail thou great, thou Almighty Joshua, thou captain of our salvation. Thou hast indeed proved thyself to thy church, to be the true Joshua, the real Saviour, for thou hast saved thy people from their sins. Thou hast led them on to sure victory, and hast arrayed them with the robes of salvation. It is thine, and thine alone, O blessed JESUS, both to purchase and bestow, both to put into the possession and secure thy people in it, even of an everlasting possession; and not, like Joshua, when the work is wrought, to leave them by reason of death: but thou ever livest to receive the grateful praise from thy people, and to see the work of JEHOVAH prosper in thine hand. In all that remains until thou shalt take me home to behold thy glory, do thou cause me to rest on thine arm, and to standstill and see the salvation of GOD. And be it my portion to live in thy faith, and to die in the assurance, that where thou art, there shall I be also to the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made me accepted in the beloved. Amen.

JUDGES

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IT is not very certain who was the immediate Penman of this book. Some writers have supposed that it was *Samuel*. However this cannot be depended upon. The subject itself contained in it is much more interesting for us to regard. And the object intended from the records here presented to the church, seems to be directed to those two grand purposes; namely, to show how unsuitably GOD's people conducted themselves to the privileges they enjoyed; and yet, in the midst of their unworthiness, how gracious the LORD manifested himself towards them.

The book of the Judges comprises in point of time a period of about 300 years; commencing from about 1400 years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to about 1100 years; and recording the annals of 14 Judges, from *Othniel* to *Eli* included.

There is much of gospel shadows and types, both as to persons, and things, in the several parts of the Book of the Judges. The HOLY GHOST was graciously pleased to cause many striking allusions to the great events of salvation, to be represented during the period of the church, which this book refers to. And several of the persons, whose history forms a part in this scripture, were eminent types and servants of the LORD JESUS. The Apostle to the Hebrews makes special mention of several of them, and with the most honourable testimony, as very illustrious patterns of faith; such as *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and *Samson*, and *Jephthah*. Hebrews 11:32.

I shall not detain the Reader with any further preliminary observations on the Book of Judges. But I must request him before he enters upon the perusal of it, that he will bend the knee of prayer, and join my spirit in a fervent supplication to the mercy-seat of our GOD in CHRIST, that the minds of both Writer and Reader may be

under the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to behold in every period and age of the church, how the LORD hath been carrying on the great purposes and counsels of his own will, and gradually preparing the minds of the faithful for that glorious era, when his people should not be under the commonwealth of Judges, but *a King should reign in righteousness, and execute judgment, and justice in the earth: in whose days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell safely. And this is the name whereby he should be called, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

Reader! may our souls rejoice together, that our GOD in mercy hath caused us to see this day. We may truly take up the language of the Prophet, and make application of his sweet words to our own circumstances, and say, as he did, *The LORD is our Judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our King.* Isaiah 33:22.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The sacred historian prosecutes in this Chapter the subject of Israel's contest with the remaining Canaanites, after the death of Joshua. The chapter opens in the enquiry of Israel of the LORD, who should go before them to the subjugation and destruction of their enemies. The LORD's answer. The several tribes divide in their war, some are successful more than others. several of the tribes permit the Canaanites to remain with them, contrary to the command of the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, in the history of Israel, what conflicts await the believer after a work of grace is begun in the heart. *Let not him that putteth on the harness boast like him that putteth it off.* Never, until that we undress for the grave, can the soldiers in the holy army of JESUS be said to have done with battle. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* But oh! what a sweet relief to the mind is it, in the consciousness that the issue is not doubtful. Though the

Canaanite be still in the land, the promise is, that he shall not always be. *There is a rest which remaineth for the people of GOD.* Blessed GOD! comfort the souls of thy people with this assurance. And, until the day of deliverance comes, may we fight under his banner, and in his strength, who is *the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

Dearest JESUS! at the very mention of thy name, methinks, new strength is imparted to my soul. How infinitely dost thou transcend thy type of Israel's Joshua, in all that is precious and endearing! He was not able to continue, by reason of death. But *thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* Oh! how sweet, how very sweet is that assurance! *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* Be thou ever with me in all my trials, difficulties, and temptations. Be thou with me in all my happier hours of seeming prosperity and quiet. Be thou ever with me, to soften every evil, and to heighten every joy. Upheld by thine arm, which bringeth salvation, I shall be more than conqueror. And surrounded with thy love, my cup will run over. Oh! for the lively actings of faith thus to be always in the spiritual company of JESUS, and to live *to him and with him*, to the FATHER'S praise, and the SPIRIT'S grace, which maketh his people *accepted in the beloved.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains an interesting account of the appearance of an angel, with a message from GOD to Israel. The sacred historian also takes a retrospective view of Israel's conduct under Joshua, by way of pointing out their sad departure after his death. The people's behavior on the subject of GOD's message.

REFLECTIONS

MYsoul! read again, and again, thine own history in this account of Israel's departure and backsliding. Can any portrait be more strikingly drawn! How hath the LORD overlooked and passed by thy disobedience! By how many messages of grace, like the angel from

Gilgal, hath the LORD sent to call thy ways to remembrance? Oh! for the gracious office of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to act as the Remembrancer in my forgetful heart, to make my soul like *Bochim* before GOD.

Dearest JESUS! how increasingly interesting, in every renewed view of my unworthiness, is thy lovely person, and thy complete righteousness. Oh! mayest thou be made to me *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption*. I see, I feel, and groan under the recollection, in how many things I offend and come short of thy glory. Though like Joshua to Israel, I hope and trust thou hast begun to magnify thy great name in bringing me into the privilege of thy people, yet too many of the Canaanites are in the land. I do not *see all things put under thy feet*: But I look forward with the hope, that in thy strength and *power*, I shall by and by, be enabled to put my feet upon the neck of these foes. LORD! in thy name let me rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness be exalted.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The subject which opened in the preceding Chapter, of the backsliding of Israel; from the LORD, is prosecuted in this. Here are inserted the names of Israel's enemies, which acted as instruments in the divine hand, for Israel's correction. Some account of their punishment, and of their humiliation in consequence thereof, is also given in this Chapter. GOD's gracious interposition in the deliverance of Israel, by Othniel, from the oppression of their foes, and by Ehud, and Shamgar, three of the first judges, is also related.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn here again, in the history of Israel, how much in all ages the church of GOD is the same, and how uniformly the LORD is training his people for himself. GOD leaves his people in the midst of their enemies, to try them, and to prove them. As polished stones, for his temple, they are long preparing, and all the plan of his

proceedings towards them, is mercy and goodness. But oh! how very precious is it to see, in Israel's history, how everything pointed to the LORD JESUS. Brought, as the people were, by sin and rebellion, into a state of repeated slavery, GOD raised up the several judges as their deliverers. But what are *Othniel*, *Ehud*, and *Shamgar*, compared to him who delivereth his people from the wrath to come, and whose deliverance is everlasting! Look up, my soul, to JESUS, when the corruptions from within, or foes from without, would bring thee again into bondage; and in the cry of distress and sorrow to the LORD, oh for faith to behold JESUS the sent and sealed of the FATHER, to drive out thine enemies from before thee, and to make thee more than conqueror through him that loveth thee.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Few events in the history of Israel, are more interesting than what this Chapter contains, of the defeat of Sisera's army by Barak, under the animated zeal of Deborah. Here are the several particulars related which gave birth to that war; with the event of it, in the conquest over the enemies of Israel, by a wonderful interposition of the LORD for his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I would call upon you while I desire grace to call up at the same time all the finer affections of my own heart, in the perusal of this chapter, to contemplate with fresh satisfaction, the renewed love and attention of the LORD to his people. *Again*, the HOLY GHOST records, Israel did evil. And *again*, the LORD visits *their offences with the rod, and their sins with a scourge*. But oh! my soul do not forget, though it be the *rod*, it is the *rod of the covenant*. It is the rod of chastisement, the correction of a father, not the scourge of an enemy. For though the LORD raiseth up enemies to correct his children, those enemies are but his instruments, and can act no further than he commissions them. Oh! for grace to remember

this, in all the gentle chastisements of his love. Dearest LORD! do thou, wherever needful, *hedge up my way with thorns, that I may not find my path*, when my way is perverse before thee. Bring me into the wilderness, and *plead with me face to face*, until that thou hast *purged out the rebels, and the lusts of transgression*; and until, by the sweet influences of thy Almighty grace, thou hast wrought a change in my soul, that I may say, *I will go, and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now*.

Blessed LORD! teach me, in the view of the humble instruments thou wert pleased to make use of for the deliverance of thy people, never to *despise the day of small things*, but to learn the full assurance of that precious doctrine, that *it is not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD*. Oh! for grace to be forever leaning upon thy strength, thou dear Redeemer, and to know, that thy strength is perfected in weakness. Ever, dearest LORD, be thou my strength, my hope, and song of rejoicing. I shall be more than conqueror through thine arm helping me.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the second triumphant song of the church over her enemies. That at the Red Sea by Moses, is the only one prior to this which the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have recorded on those memorable events. Probably with a view not only to show the suitableness of praise for signal mercies, upon all occasions, but as a pattern for the after ages. Here are blended both praise and prayer. It begins with praise and ends in prayer, and celebrates both the divine goodness, and the instrumentality of human endeavors, crowned with GOD's power.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! My soul with holy joy, how infinite the resources are in the faithfulness of Israel's GOD! What hath he not wrought! What is he not able to accomplish! And although Israel merited it not, yet

nevertheless JEHOVAH wrought for his name's sake, and that he might make his power to be known.

And is there nothing in all this, to lead the heart both of the writer and the reader in the discovery of similar deliverances? If *Deborah* and *Barak* had their day of triumph in the LORD's manifestations for Israel, cannot you and I look back, my brother, and count the day when we had cause to praise the LORD for the avenging of Israel? Oh! yes, trust we may both well count the day when the LORD JESUS made bare his holy arm, and rescued our souls from the arrows of the enemy, in the place of drawing water from the wells of salvation. Long did our foes oppose our way, and the highways of ordinances were unoccupied by us, until that JESUS arose and led captivity captive. Then, dearest LORD, when thou wentest out of *Seir*; when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, then did the mountains of sin in our nature melt before the Sun of Righteousness at his rising, and Sinai with all its terrors gave way at the presence of JESUS. Oh! give us grace, dearest Redeemer, to awake and utter a song, even a song of salvation, to the LORD JEHOVAH. May this be the everlasting rejoicing of our hearts: *the LORD is our strength, and our song, and he is become our salvation.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

In the progress of the history of Israel, we are here presented in this Chapter, with an account of Israel's rebellion by sin against GOD, after the forty years rest which the LORD had given them, from all their enemies, from the victory of Deborah and Barak. We are here told of their ill treatment by Midian: GOD's message to Israel by a prophet: Gideon is raised up, for their deliverance: an angel appears to him to encourage him: the conduct of Gideon in consequence thereof.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I pause over this chapter, and in the view of Israel's repeated departures from the LORD GOD of their mercies, behold the picture of our own hearts. How often, how very often, hath our adorable Redeemer saved us from our enemies, and yet how prone are we to forget the gracious hand that hath wrought our salvation? And while we view our unworthiness, let the reflection lead us to contemplate renewed mercies. Doth not GOD send his messengers, like the Prophet, to remonstrate with us? Are not his visitations, either in the common Providences of life, in sickness, trouble, persecution, and the like, voices like the Prophet's of solemn expostulation? And when, these messengers of correction and reproof are accompanied with his grace, and put a cry in our heart, under a sense of sin, and the prayer of earnestness for deliverance, doth not JESUS fly to our aid, and like his type, the Gideon here spoken of, come forth to our rescue? Oh! thou adored LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! how precious is it to my soul, to see thy renewed goings forth for me in all the redemption of thy mercy! Dearest JESUS! grant me, from such repeated testimonies of thy love, such unalterable assurance of my interest in thee, that I may neither seek the moistened nor the dry fleece, to tell me that thou art a faithful GOD. Oh! for grace amidst all the departures and backslidings of my unworthy heart! Oh, for grace to believe stedfastly the record which GOD hath given of his dear SON.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The former Chapter was introductory to what is contained in this. Gideon was called in that to the LORD's service. And in this we find him entered upon it. We have here the LORD's directions concerning who should accompany him to the field of battle against Midian; how he should be sure of victory; how the LORD leads him by stealth to the camp of Midan, by way of strengthening his faith:

and the event of the battle, in the LORD'S delivering Midian into his hand.

REFLECTIONS

IT is profitable to remark, how the LORD is graciously pleased to work by slender means for his people's deliverance. *Not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD.* In these precious memorandums of the church's history, may my soul learn how infinite the resources in the salvation of JESUS. Trumpets, and earthen pitchers, are effectual weapons when the LORD commissions them to conquest.

But oh! thou adored Redeemer! may I never lose sight of thy victory over death, hell, and the grave, when contemplating the gracious consequences of it in the triumphs of thy people. It is thine everlasting love, thy grace, thy righteousness, which hath laid the foundation of all thy people's deliverances, in every period of thy church. All the after-actings, in all the eventful circumstances which mark the church's history, are but the result of that love and mercy wherewith thou lovedest thy people before the earth was formed, and when thy delights were with the sons of men. Sweet and precious JESUS! how infinitely doth it enhance every blessing, and tend to endear every mercy, thus to trace it to its fountain head, in thee and in thy love to our nature! Oh! for grace in lively exercise, thus to live upon and walk with thee, my ever dear and beloved Saviour! May all my goings forth be in thee, and thy strength, the sword of JEHOVAH JESUS! And may all my victories be like those of the armies of heaven, through the blood of the LAMB. Even now, in the same faith as Gideon, in the assurance that the issue is not doubtful, may I send back all the strength which might appear ever so promising, and begin that song, as if the war was ended, which was heard in heaven, and which, ere long, I hope to sing in glory; *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our GOD, and the power of his CHRIST; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our GOD day and night.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This Chapter is but a continuation of the history of the battle, and success of Gideon, related in the former. It forms indeed the sequel of Gideon's life. The consequence of his victory excited the displeasure of the Ephramites, because he called them not to the battle. Gideon softens their displeasure by his mild answer. Some other events are related which took place after this victory. Gideon declined the government of Israel, but by his prudent conduct preserved, under the LORD, peace to Israel forty years, and died full of honor. These are the principal things recorded in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over the review of this chapter. Call to mind the wonderful mercies shown to Israel, as related in the former chapter, and then behold the issue of divine deliverances, in the shameful departure of Israel to idolatry. My soul! art thou not astonished at the view of such perfidy? Couldst thou have believed, that there dwelt in the human heart, such vileness and corruption?

When, my soul, thou hast duly contemplated the church of GOD of old, look at the church of JESUS now. *What*, (saith the apostle), *are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.* Yes! my soul, thou art in the same condemnation by nature, and in heart and mind, prone to depart from GOD. Oh! precious JESUS! how dear and invaluable is thy salvation! how great that efficacy of thy blood and righteousness which pleads for the pardon of thy people. Oh, for grace to take shelter under both, from a conscious sense of my utterly ruined and undone state without it! Be thou my refuge all the day, and the justifying righteousness of my soul for evermore, for thou alone art *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter prosecutes the history of Israel, after the death of Gideon. Abimelech, the natural son of Gideon, usurps the government; slays all his brethren, except the youngest, who hid himself from him. His reign, did not, however, terminate according to his wishes, for his evil conduct produced at length his own ruin. These are the contents of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE I beg the Reader to reflect with me on the sad account of human sin and transgression which this chapter affords, I desire him no less to remark, how various the ways the LORD is pleased to adopt, to punish the sins of his people. Sometimes by the scourge of the enemy, and sometimes by the baseness of false friends. Oh! my GOD, give me to behold, and with humble thankfulness to contemplate, thy mercy in thus adopting any, and every means, thy grace and wisdom see most suited to the end, to call home our rebellious hearts, when at any time, from a fullness of blessings, we depart from thee. Yes, blessed GOD! do thou mercifully appoint chastisements, of whatever kind, or nature, or degree, the case requires, so that my wandering soul is again allured and brought back to thy fold; and JESUS becomes increasingly precious, from a stronger conviction in my past rebellion, of my need of him. Raise up, gracious LORD, an holy conflict, in the struggles of my poor fallen nature, until, like the men of *Shechem*, and *Abimelech*, they mutually destroy one another, so that every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST. Root out all the brambles and thorns which would propose shelter to my sins; and do thou, blessed JESUS, as the cedar of Lebanon, or the olive tree of *Engedi*, and the vine of Zion, cover me with thy rich branches, and give me to sit under *thy shadow with great delight, that thy fruit may be sweet to my taste.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This chapter relates a pleasant, but short interval to the wars of Israel, under the peaceable government of two of its Judges; Tola, the son of Puah, and Jair a Gileadite. A renewal of Israel's transgression succeeds; and, in consequence, a renewal of troubles. GOD's anger and visitation: Israel's sorrow and humiliation; these are enumerated in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul! over the perusal of this chapter, and behold once more a renewed instance of human corruption, and divine grace triumphing over it, in the richest display of that glorious testimony; that where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

But chiefly my soul, remark in this chapter, what is said of his unequalled love, and tender sympathy with his people; whose soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. Yes! dearest JESUS, here I fully recognize thee! It is JESU'S soul that was grieved. It is the same, of whom it is said, that in all their affliction he was afflicted. In his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and *vexed* his HOLY SPIRIT. Oh! sweet and precious view of the humanity of JESUS! Sweet and precious evidence, that he hath indeed taken our nature upon him! Sweet and precious assurance of his being the same JESUS, yesterday, and today, and forever: when, in an age so long before his incarnation, and the eternal purposes of salvation came to be fulfilled, JESUS' soul participated in the miseries of his people. And shall not my soul find a growing confidence in this unequalled view of his love? Shall I not rest assured, that if my adored Redeemer took a part, and so decided a part in the sorrows of his people, before redemption-work was finished; will he not now feel an interest, and concern in all that relates to them? Did the SON of GOD indeed come down from heaven; did he leave the bosom of the

FATHER, and tabernacle in substance of our flesh, on purpose to accomplish salvation; and was his soul grieved for those miseries he came to do away; and will he now relax in his regard, and overlook the miseries of his Israel, when he is exalted at the right hand of the FATHER, and all power is His in heaven and earth? Will not JESUS, of whom it is said, having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them unto the end; will he not commiserate our distresses, soften their asperity, and overrule them to his own glory, and his people's welfare? Oh! thou dear Redeemer! convinced as my soul is, that amidst all the hallelujah's of the blessed, the care of thy church below, attracts thy unceasing concern; nor can all the joys of heaven cause thee to remit one moment thy participating in all the circumstances of the humblest and poorest of thy tried family: may my soul feel the SPIRIT'S constraining influence in drawing me nearer to the view, and to the enjoyment of thee my GOD and Saviour; till from conducting me through all troubles, and sympathizing with me in all needful afflictions, thou shalt bring me safe to that blessed place, where as the LAMB in the midst of the throne, thou feedest thy redeemed, leadest them to living fountains of waters, and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The history of the Judges during the commonwealth of Israel, and their government is continued. In this chapter we have the relation of Jephthuh's administration. His birth, valor, contest with Ammon in the deliverance of Israel, victory, and rash vow, and the event of it, on the person of his daughter: these form the contents of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! ponder over this chapter, and remark with me, how very striking the marks of distinguishing grace! While all the sons of Gilead, in hawkish descent, were passed by; Jephthah, the son of an

harlot, is chosen to be the servant of the LORD to his people! From hence let you and I learn never to overrate anything, from the mere outward and adventitious circumstances of birth, or human distinction. Not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But GOD hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath GOD chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. And oh! that the GOD of all grace, may give us both grace, that we may know by heartfelt experience, the sweetness and preciousness of being the distinguished object of so much mercy, which may be a never-failing source of comfort here, and of everlasting happiness hereafter.

But while we behold in Jephthah, this distinguishing mark of the divine favor, let the Reader learn in his instance, how to appreciate the grace of GOD, while beholding the little deserts of men. Reader! it is delightful, indeed it is, to observe in the history of all men, even the best of men (for this is the uniform character of the whole race) that GOD's mercies, (even the richest of mercies, JESUS himself) have never been bestowed because we have merited them. No, blessed GOD! all are founded in thine everlasting love; they originate in thine own free and sovereign mercy. Thou art the first cause; and thou art the final end. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen. Reader! let us pass over all other considerations, all other subjects, and in the view of JESUS, the first, best, and most comprehensive of all gifts, the mercy of all mercies, here rest our contemplation. And thus far imitate Jephthah's vow to say, if our GOD will indeed give JESUS into our arms, in our heart, and form him there by the sweet influences of his HOLY SPIRIT, the hope of glory; then will we give up for a burnt-offering, every other joy, and relinquish all that flesh and blood holds dear, so that JESUS be the strength of our heart, and our portion forever.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This chapter is connected with the former. It relates to us the displeasure of the men of Ephraim against Jephthah, because he called them not to the battle with Ammon; and the sad consequence of this jealousy: the death of Jephthah; the three successive judges to Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, including a period of 25 years.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! in all the contentions and animosities of life, and especially among brethren, never lose sight of Him, and his unequalled love, who passeth by the repeated provocations of thy sinful nature, and in return for thy manifold instances of ingratitude, pours himself, and his fullness of mercies into thy bosom. Precious JESUS! thou hast indeed endured the contradiction of sinners against thyself, and on the cross remembered our poor blind nature, when in that sweet prayer, thou didst call upon the FATHER to forgive the sins of ignorance, for they knew not what they did. Wilt thou be pleased, dearest LORD, to be to me all I need. Do thou fill up all relations: make up the want of every tie of natural affinities, and so influence my soul by the constraining graces of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that the language of my heart may be the true *Shibboleth* of thy gospel; so as never to betray thy interest, nor give the enemy cause to blaspheme; but that thy name, thy person, thy righteousness, thy salvation, may be as ointment poured forth, for the fragrantcy of it, and my mouth may daily speak of it among the people, for I know no and thereof.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This chapter commenceth with another sad account of Israel's transgression, and the consequent punishment from the LORD. We

have in it also, the relation of the birth of Samson, and the message of an angel concerning him. The conference between the angel and the mother of Samson in the first interview, and the renewed conversation at a second, when her husband was present. Both are circumstantially related in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

CONTEMPLATE, my soul, the wonderful grace of GOD manifested to this humble family, amidst the general corruption of Israel; and remark from it, for thy comfort and encouragement in evil times, how the LORD watcheth over his people for good. Behold! how angels minister unto them that are the heirs of salvation. And may I not hope, may I not trust, that some celestial messenger will graciously be sent to my relief in any, and in every case, wherein my GOD and FATHER sees it needful.

But do I not see in this instance JESUS himself, the Almighty Angel, and Messenger of the FATHER'S covenant? Surely, dearest JESUS, as the great Mediator of it, and in this light thy FATHER'S servant, it is thou thyself which hast brought all the glorious revelations of heaven! It is thou which hast communicated all the important messages from JEHOVAH to men. Surely it was thou which didst converse with the Patriarchs, with thy church in the wilderness, and upon many occasions, like the present, to thy people, as if thou didst long for the period fixed on from all eternity to arrive, in which thou wouldest assume our flesh, and dwell among us. As if thy precious soul, in contemplating the glories of redemption, anticipated with joy and rapture the hour when by thy appearing in substance of our flesh, thou wouldest ransom the souls of thy people from everlasting destruction. Oh! thou Almighty Angel of the New Covenant, thou High Priest after the order of Melchisedec; thou Altar, thou Rock, and Sacrifice! do thou be all these, and infinitely more, if needful, in all my poor offerings; and do thou perform wondrously, and give me faith to look on, till my eyes see thee ascending in the flame of thine own complete and all-sufficient sacrifice, as an evidence that thou art all in all, and goest up with thy people'S intercession in thy dear name and righteousness; and then,

like Manoah and his wife, I would fall with reverence of soul and body at thy feet, as the LORD my righteousness.

But let me take one prospect more of the subject in this Chapter, and in the promised child of *Samson*, the Nazarite from the womb, behold him typified, who was not only separated from the very shadow of guilt, and before his incarnation devoted to his FATHER's service, but was miraculously conceived by the overshadowing power of the HOLY GHOST. Samson, though set apart from his mother's womb, a Nazarite by birth, was born in sin, and shapen in iniquity. But the Almighty Samson of our salvation was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. The Samson of Manoah and his wife was indeed raised up of GOD to be the deliverer of his brethren from temporary affliction; and even this limited, as it necessarily was, to the boundaries of this life, by reason of death, could not be accomplished but in part. But the Almighty Samson of our heavenly FATHER, was raised up to be the Deliverer of his people from everlasting ruin, and to save them from the wrath to come. And in this glorious work, JESUS is not only the author, but the finisher of the work, and hath completed the eternal redemption of our souls. Hail! thou that art mighty to save! the LORD of Hosts is thy name. LORD! let thy grace be sufficient for me, and thy strength, of which Samson's was but the mere shadow in resemblance, be made perfect in my weakness. For of thee, and through thee, and to thee, are all things; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The history of Samson occupies the whole of this Chapter. His marriage with a daughter of the Philistines: his slaying a young lion: the story of the swarm of bees after this, in the carcase of the beast: his riddle: the stratagem of his wife to solve it: his anger upon the occasion: his destruction of thirty young men of Ashkelon: his wife given to another man. These are the several contents.

REFLECTIONS

I would pass over all other considerations in the perusal of this Chapter, to discover every feature which I can trace in this Nazarite, as pointing to the person and offices of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth. And though I am a poor blind creature in such a study; yet do thou, LORD, teach me the wonderous things of thy law; and then shall I discern somewhat to comfort my mind in every part of thine holy word; *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*. Yes! blessed JESUS! I behold in the going down of thy servant to the Philistines, and tracing the wonderful events which followed, an emblem of thy gracious coming down for salvation-work to this lower world.

I view in the men of *Timnath* the baseness, treachery, and unprovoked anger of thine enemies! I behold nothing but perfidy and unfaithfulness in return for all thy favor, I see moreover, in this representation, not an unapt or distant allusion to the honey of thy gospel. How unexpected from such a quarter! How unsought for and overlooked! And what a riddle to the wisdom of this world, that GOD should have chosen weak things to confound the mighty. Oh! give me to eat of this honey, to be food to my soul, to recover from disease, to heal the wounds of sin. And however loathed by many, yet make me like the bee, earnest to gather it for my daily food. And be thou to me, dearest JESUS, in all thy person, relations, and offices, sweeter also than the honey, and the honeycomb.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The history of Samson is continued through the whole of this Chapter. Several remarkable and surprising events are here recorded of his quarrels with the Philistines, his triumphs over them, the treachery of his enemies, his great thirst, and the LORD'S seasonable supply.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST JESUS! may I, in these views of Samson, which represent him as delivered up by his countrymen into the hands of his enemies, have my soul instantly directed to the contemplation of thee, and of thy voluntary surrender; when, in the accomplishment of redemption, thou gavest thy back to the smiter, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. And may my soul so view thee, in this unequalled mark of grace and condescension, as to have my whole heart interested in all that concerns thee. But oh! precious JESUS, while I behold thy matchless power, displayed in bursting asunder the bands of death, do thou manifest the same omnipotency, in breaking the bands of sin and death in me. LORD! burst the bands of Satan, the strong man armed, in my heart; loosen his hold upon my poor fallen nature, and bring me out of the spiritual prison, where he hath long kept my soul captive. And at length, when thou shalt break through, and come in the clouds to judgment, oh! raise my body, loosened from the bands of corruption, to glorify the triumph of my GOD and Saviour; that having in this life known the power of his resurrection by grace, I may in that life be among the risen to glory, through the alone merits and salvation of JESUS.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

The close of Samson's history forms the subject of this Chapter. We have in it a melancholy proof of our fallen nature, in the renewed breakings out of lustful passions in Samson, and the sad consequence of them, in the loss of his eyes, when, after repeated disappointments, the Philistines got him into their hands. His recovery by grace, and the LORD'S merciful answer to his prayer, with his death: these are among the relations in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

I CANNOT dismiss the review of this very remarkable character, Samson, without once again, and before I take a farewell leave of him, desiring grace and the divine teachings of the HOLY SPIRIT, that I may look at him so as to profit. I would pause and consider, with what an air of importance his birth was introduced: how singularly the pretence of the LORD led him on through all the remarkable periods of his life: and what decisive tokens of the same Almighty presence and favor distinguished his death. Thus brought into the world, so solemnly set apart as a Nazarite to GOD: and so peculiarly distinguished from every other in all the events which befel him: it is impossible but to suppose that the divine intention concerning him, was to prefigure another. And to whom shall I direct my eyes, in order to behold the person represented, but to thee, thou holy blessed glorious Nazarite, whose whole nature was *purser than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than rubies, and brighter than polishing sapphire*. Thy birth indeed, blessed JESUS, was miraculous; and great were the predictions and preparations, made in the sacred word for thy coming. Anointed with the HOLY GHOST without measure, and solemnly set apart for thy FATHER'S service, when thou didst come thou wast at once brought into a display of the most triumphant exploits; not indeed of the destruction of the Philistines, but in thy victory over the enemy; when from thy baptism thou wast led up of the SPIRIT into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Basely wast thou betrayed as Samson, by false friends, and like him delivered up into the hands of thine enemies. But infinitely surpassing him, though thine enemies nailed thee to the cross, and then insulted thy sufferings, thou hast, by that very death, fulfilled the whole council of JEHOVAH, put an everlasting end to sin, with all its dreadful consequences, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is to all, and upon all that believe. Here then, LORD, let me behold thee in thy death, and in the triumph of it. And beseech thee, thou gracious GOD of my salvation, that now thou hast by thy death spoiled principalities and powers, and made ashew of them openly, triumphing over them in it, that thou wilt mercifully go on by the preaching of thy gospel, under

thy blessed SPIRIT'S influence, conquering and to conquer. Oh! may thy sovereign word be as the arms of Samson, to pull down all the strong holds of sin and Satan. Let that cursed foe be beheld by thy people, to fall as lightning from heaven. Let the foundation of every false god be thrown down, and the ruin of antichrist be brought to pass. Oh! let thy Kingdom come, thou dear Redeemer, and hasten the latter day glory. May that period soon arrive, when the nations of the earth shall own thy power, when every knee shall bow before thee, and every tongue confess, that thou art CHRIST, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The subject of this, and all that remains in the book of the Judges, puts on a different complection from what went before. The Reader will recollect the title it bears: the transactions here recorded; where in those days when there was no king in Israel; when every man did that which was right, or pleasing, in his own eyes. And how right that was, the sad account here given doth but too plainly show. In this chapter we have, in the example of one house and family, a lively Feature of the Idolatry of the land. Micah sets up an image for his god, of silver stolen from his mother: and takes a vagabond Levite for his priest.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pass over all lesser considerations in the perusal of this Chapter, to drop a tear over Israel's degeneracy, in setting up idols in their houses; and the corruption of the sacred order of the Levites, in acting as priests of the same. Is this Israel before whom the LORD GOD manifested such wonders, and to whom the LORD showed such distinguishing grace? *Tell it not in Oath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice: lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.*

Blessed be GOD! the day is come, the fountain is opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, when the LORD hath cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and in which the LORD hath promised, that the prophets and the unclean spirit shall pass out of the land. Oh precious JESUS! thou prince of the tribe of Levi, give us pastors after thine own heart, and let not thy faithful servants be obliged to wander to seek places; much less be content to prostitute their sacred order for a piece of silver, and for a morsel of bread. Oh! make them more anxious to win souls than to gain kingdoms. Let the salvation of sinners in thy blood and righteousness be the sole object of their work, and here may they labor night and day in thy word and doctrine. And do thou bless them, gracious LORD, in their ministry; and when thou the Chief Shepherd shall appear, may they obtain that crown of glory which fadeth not away.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

The same melancholy subject of idolatry is the burden of this chapter. Certain Danites having called at the house of Micah, impiously consult the priest of Micah concerning their journey: being joined by others, they rob the house of Micah of his gods: and his priest, as might reasonably be expected, leaves the service of Micah to be priest to the robbers. Idolatry is long established among the children of Dan.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD my soul! what dreadful effects the fall of man *and* his apostasy from GOD, hath wrought in the human heart. Behold! how general and even universal that apostasy is by nature. Well might the prophet, contemplating the horrid picture, confess; *all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.* For though the different tracks, the different characters of men take lead into various bye paths; yet the bias and direction of every man's

mind, in a state of nature, is all turning from GOD. And how very dear ought that rich dispensation of mercy which sought us in our lost estate to be, which brings back sinners from the error of their way, and turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living GOD.

Precious JESUS! may it my portion to learn from hence, how much I owe to thee and to thy rich mercy, who, when running after the idols of any sinful heart, came and delivered me from this dreadful captivity. And no less to thy mercy, heavenly FATHER, do I desire to ascribe the great salvation, whose everlasting love made such ample provision for my recovery, in the complete redemption of thy dear SON! And thou Almighty SPIRIT, from whose effectual teaching, and in thy glorifying both the FATHER'S love and JESUS's grace to my view, I am brought over from the dominion of Satan, and made willing to be saved in JESUS, in the day of thy power! LORD, let the cry of my heart evermore be like that of Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols!* In the LORD JESUS do I desire to rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness to make my boast. Thou art my GOD, and I will prepare thee an habitation; my father's GOD, and I will exalt thee.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Melancholy views of Israel's transgression still appear, and are prosecuted in their contents through this Chapter. In the former we have beheld the daring sin of idolatry; here we are presented with the horrid representation of the sin of murder. The concubine of a Levite forms the chief subject of the story: her abuse: her being murdered: and the Levites conduct upon it: these form the principle events here recorded.

REFLECTIONS

THOUGH the several contents in this chapter lead to the review only of the sin, and consequently the sorrow of our nature, yet my

soul, if the contemplation of man's ruin by sin, prompts thy heart to admire and embrace yet more affectionately the glorious recovery by grace, and brings thee home to Him, who hath done away sin and all its real consequences by the sacrifice of himself, even this humiliating subject will form the foundation for greater praise. Yes! thou blessed JESUS, I see in thee, and thy great redemption-work, the glorious scheme of salvation, prepared long before the fall, and in the fullness of time completed, for to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore perfect order among all the works of GOD. I behold the Almighty GOD and FATHER founding this plan of unequalled mercy, in the ancient settlement of eternity, and thou generously undertaking it when neither Levite nor Priest, nor righteousness, nor offering, could stand in the least stead to bring sinners to GOD. And what is it now in time, but the same everlasting righteousness arising out of JEHOVAH's everlasting love, by which the salvation of thy church and people is secured forever. Hail! thou holy, precious, pure, and spotless LAMB of GOD! Oh may my soul find constant relief, and every suited encouragement, in reposing on thy righteousness, when at any time, in myself or others around me, I feel or see the sad consequences of a sinful state. LORD! I would lay low before thee, under a deep sense of sin, and this body of death I carry about with me, while taking refuge under the incense of thy merits, and seeking redemption in thy blood. Be thou to me, O LORD, all I need; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: and may all my glorying be in thee, O LORD.*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The history in this chapter, like the two or three preceding, is full of distress, though the subject varies. From private calamities we are now introduced to the relation of public: and from an house, or family, the evil is extended to the Nation. Now we hear of the wars on account of sin. The story of the Levites' wrongs is heard in the several tribes of Israel; they form a resolution to avenge them on the

Benjamites: matters soon come to an issue: and a dreadful slaughter in consequence thereof is related in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let me learn, from the unanimity of Israel in a just cause, and the blessing of the LORD GOD upon them, how much it becomes the Israel of GOD, to unite in the suppression of sin, and in supporting the interest of JESUS in the world. Oh! for zeal for him, and his blessed cause, who hath so loved me, as to give himself for me! Here, blessed JESUS, give me grace to unite in heart and soul with all thy holy army, and to be valiant in thy cause. And, ye soldiers of the LAMB! ye who wear the regimentals of JESUS, and profess to have put on his whole armour; let me speak to you, as the Levite did at *Mizpeh*; behold! ye are children of Israel! be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Never give quarter to Satan; but resist stedfast unto death, striving against sin; and count not your life dear unto yourselves. So that you may finish your course with joy, and having fought the good fight of faith may lay hold of eternal life.

And ye men of Benjamin, shall I call you? my poor brethren in sin and transgression, oh! cast down your rebellious arms at the foot of the cross; or flee, like the men at *Rimmon*, flee to CHRIST JESUS for shelter, while the opportunity of escape remains, and while the door of salvation is open. Sweet is the voice, and most precious the promise: *All that the FATHER giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.*

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

This Chapter, which concludes the book of the Judges, gives the general conclusion also, of sin and its punishment in the sorrow and anguish of spirit it induceth. We have in it, the account of all GOD's people mourning, concerning the ruin of Benjamin. They take counsel, how to repair the breach, made by it, in one of the tribes:

and from the daughters of Jabesh-gilead, and Shiloh, give them wives, to build up their inheritance.

REFLECTIONS

May a gracious GOD, be pleased to follow up his own blessed designs, in recording the sad relations of Israel in this book, to, make both the Writer, and Reader of this Commentary upon it, wise, under his divine teaching, from what is written. If, Reader, the page of Israel's transgressions, in this book of the Judges, be so blessed of GOD the HOLY GHOST, as to prompt both your heart, and mine, to behold in it, what it really is, the history of all men according to nature, and unrestrained by grace: and, if the consciousness of the whole, tends to endear JESUS, in all his Person, Offices, Relations, and Characters, as the only remedy for sin; and, if our hearts are led to him for salvation; then let us both bless the Great Author of our mercies, who hath given this, as well as *all scripture, by inspiration of GOD; and made it profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Amen.*

Ruth

General Observations

THE Holy Ghost hath not thought proper to gratify our curiosity, in giving information from whose pen the book of *Ruth* hath issued. Had it been at all needful, no doubt the Church would have been made acquainted with it. But, that it carries with it marks of being written under his own blessed inspiration, and that he intended it for the perpetual instruction and comfort of the Church in all ages, there can be no question. Indeed, according to my view of things, the truest evidence that any Book bears his signature is, when his people are enabled, from his own precious teachings therein, to set to their seal *that God is true*. For, when at any time the Holy Ghost refreshes their minds with his word; when those sweet truths they read, in any part of the divine oracles, are made life and spirit to their hearts; this is what the Apostle says, *in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*. And in the instance of this book of God when those blessed effects accompany the perusal, here are the *three* all agreeing together. The sacred word itself is *one*. The Almighty Author of it is *another*. And the heart of the believer, in whom the word seals its authenticity, is a *third*.

The design the blessed Author of the book of *Ruth* had in giving it to the church, seems to have been directed for the display of the divine mercy, both in the world of Providence and of grace. And perhaps yet more pointedly, to lead unto Jesus.

The gracious superintending mercy of God over his people, in a way of Providence, is beautifully illustrated in *Ruth's* history. In her life, simply considered, as relating to the things of time and sense, connected with this world only, we behold the fullest proof of our dear Lord's promise displayed, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all things needful shall be added unto*

you. Ruth, in leaving all that was near and dear to nature, to seek the God of Israel, and finding him, and all things *with* him, and *in* him, became a living testimony of this precious doctrine. But though I very readily and cheerfully allow that this, in a subordinate sense, might be among the gracious designs of the Holy Ghost, in causing the Book of *Ruth* to be written, and her history recorded; yet I cannot but believe that a greater and more important design was intended in giving this sweet morsel of sacred truth to the Church. Was it not to display yet more illustriously the wonders of his grace? And what can more illustriously display the riches of his grace, than the call of this poor *Moabitish* daughter to be among the fellow-heirs of the same covenant promises with Israel?

Independent of all other considerations, the Book of *Ruth* claims peculiar regard from the followers of the blessed Jesus, in that Christ, after the flesh, sprung from *Ruth*; and thereby manifested his alliance to the Genthe as well as to the Jewish church, So that we may upon this occasion, as well as many oilier grand considerations connected with it, say with Paul, *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not a/so of the Gentiles? Yes! of the Gentiles also.* And it is, I conceive, a very delightful consideration to the believer, to trace this connection even in the minutest point. For it is not the question, or enquiry, after *endless genealogies* (as an apostle terms it) but it is concerning him, who is in all characters and offices, dear to his people, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless file.*

I shall not presume, in this humble Commentary on the book of *Ruth*, which I here offer, under divine teachings, in aid to the Believer to be wise above what is written; and therefore will not venture to allegorize the several very interesting things contained in it, which certainly seem to lean that way. That there are very many beauties in scripture of this kind, no one, who is conversant in the word of God, will question, It corresponds so much to the ancient method of instruction in the eastern world, that we might reasonably expect, in a gracious revelation from heaven, the great truths contained in it might, in accommodation to the capacities of men, be conveyed that way. And hence we find, not only the servants of the Lord Jesus, but the Master himself, adopted similitude and parable

in their teaching. Whether *some* of the most interesting outlines in the book of *Ruth* be of this kind or not, I leave undetermined. But the Reader will perhaps be led to think, (and I wish him not to think otherwise), that I am strongly inclined to this belief, when I add, who among the fallen race of Adam would ever have understood, unless the Holy Ghost had commissioned his servant Paul the Apostle to inform the Church of it, that the things concerning the history of Sarah's Isaac, And Hagar's Ishmael, *were an allegory*.

Reader! may the blessed Spirit of all truth guide me into all truth, while writing, and *you* while reading, this Precious book of God! May our hearts be mutually refreshed and comforted in all our researches, in the faith *which maketh wise unto salvation*. And may we be led into a saving acquaintance, and full assurance of understanding, to *the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Amen.

Chapter 1

SUMMARY

The book of Ruth opens in this Chapter with the relation of a certain family leaving Bethlehem in consequence of a famine, and sojourning in the country of Moab. The distressing events which followed: the death of the husband and his two sons; and the return of the widow, with one of her daughters in law, from Moab to Bethlehem. These are the principal things related in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, in the review of what is written in this Chapter, and see what reference it bears to thy spiritual state And circumstances. Is there not, by nature, a famine induced in the land to all the fathers race of Adam, when, before the soul is quickened to the use of any of its spiritual faculties, it neither feels the sense of its lost and famished state, nor hath any spiritual appetite to the bread of life, which came down from heaven? And hast not thou, my soul,

hike Elimelech and all his household, left the land of bread ‘to seek among the husks of the world the gratification of thy sensual appetite?

Oh! thou merciful Lord God, how gracious hast thou been to my soul, when hedging up my way, and inducing disappointment and afflictions in the creature, thou hast again inclined my heart to return to the Lord God of my salvation! Oh! how gracious hath it been in thee, Lord, to visit *thy* people again with spiritual sustenance, when by sin and disobedience we had called forth a dearth of such rich provisions! Shall I not hasten back to my Father’s house, convinced, as I am, that the world, like Moab, affords no resting place to dwell in. Shall any persuasions of others, or fears of my own, keep me from this purpose? Dearest Jesus! to whom shall I go but to thee, thou art both the bread of life, and thou only hast the words of eternal life; thou art the very Bethlehem of thy people, and in thee I shall find enough to live upon forever! Like Ruth, may it be my most determined resolution, to go where thou goest, and to know nothing among men but thee. I would forget my own people, and my father’s house, and both in life and in death, desire none in comparison of thee. And though my flesh and my heart faileth, yet thou art and wilt be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

Chapter 2

SUMMARY

As the history advanceth in its progress, the several particulars of it become more interesting. In this chapter we are introduced into the acquaintance of the hero of the subject, Boaz: and informed how Ruth became first brought acquainted with him. The events of a day are circumstantially related, and the consequences of it, in Ruth's conduct during the season of the harvest follow.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter. Are we not, hike Naomi and Ruth, returned out of the country of Moab, brought by divine' grace to seek sustenance in the land of Bethlehem? And have we not, hike them, a kinsman of our first parent, a mighty man of wealth indeed, whose name is Jesus? Yes, dearest Lord! let it be our hap to glean in thy fields, for all the world beside thee is but us a wilderness. All other sustenance is but as the husks which the swine do eat. And wilt thou not, dear Lord, though we are strangers, eye us when we seek to glean in thy pastures, and bid thy servants, the ministers of thy word, to drop suitable supply to our need? Conscious of our nothingness and poverty, we have reason indeed, like Ruth, to come with trembling and with apprehension. And should our Lord but graciously condescend to speak to his servants, Oh! what holy joy with it afford, that One so great, so glorious, should regard creatures such as we are. Surely the most becoming language of our hearts must be, like Ruth: *Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger.* Oh, Lord! let a poor Gentile, whom thou hast taken into thy church and family, find grace in thy sight: and let thine Holy Spirit give to me such strength, that I may never glean in other ground, nor seek comfort from other resources. No! blessed Jesus! there is enough in thee to live upon forever. Oh! may I abide in thee, and keep fast by the companions of my Lord's service. And let thine eyes be upon me

from harvest to harvest, and from one end of the year even to the other end of the year, until the whole of thy dispensations concerning thy church on earth are ended: and then may it be my lot, with *all, the ransomed of Zion, to return with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads; then s/tall we obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow an4 sighing shall/lee away.*

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

The history is prosecuted through this chapter, and of consequence in its progress and drawing nearer to a close, becomes more and more interesting. Naomi gives instructions to Ruth how to conduct herself in her deportment towards Boaz. According to the laws of Israel, Ruth had a claim upon Boaz to do the kinsman's part and marry her. Naomi directs her towards the attainment of this great end. This chapter relates also Ruth's obedience to Naomi's direction, and the noble behaviour of Boaz towards her.

Reflections

My soul! In the perusal of this chapter, I would say to thee, as Naomi did to Ruth, Shall I not seek rest for thee? And can there be any rest on this side the grave, but in Jesus? is he not the *rest wherewith the Lord will cause the weary to rest, and is he not the refreshing!* And as an encouragement to go to him, may I not say as sine did: *Is he not of my kindred?* Hath he not married our nature: united it to himself, and become *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh?* And can I go to one nearer and dearer than he? And doth he not hold a constant feast in his harvest seasons? And are they not in his church perpetual? Oh! for grace to anoint myself, and the sweet washings of the Holy Spirit, that I may go forth and lie low at his feet, and seek from the blessed condescensions of his love, that he may spread his skirt of righteousness, and his garment of salvation, over me, and betroth me to himself for ever, *in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: yea betroth me unto himself in faithfulness and that I may know the Lord*

And, dearest Jesus! give me grace while I wait at thy feet, that I may lie passive until the morning. Oh! for the lively actings of faith to believe what my God hath promised, and that he will do the kinsman's part, for he hath said it. He is the Holy One of Israel, and all the saints of God have borne testimony to his faithfulness. Help

me, Lord, to believe under every event: to trust and depend upon thee, how discouraging soever circumstances may seem. And do thou, blessed God, grant me such a degree of faith, that I may be enabled to make an application of thy general promises to my own particular circumstances: and if needful, hike the patriarch, *against hope to believe in hope*: and like him, to *be strong in faith, giving glory to my faithful God*.

And Holy Spirit, of all truth! as thou art the glorifier of Jesus, do thou by thy blessed influences, SO glorify the Lord Christ to my view, that I may behold in him the very Saviour my soul stands in need of, And in myself may I behold the very circumstances which renders Jesus so suitable a Saviour for me. Oh! for thy constraining grace, to fix my soul firm in this most unquestionable truth, that my desires for Jesus are not more earnest, when those longings are at the highest, than the desires of Jesus are for me. The God-man, my husband, brother, friend, will not rest, until he hath finished the thing he hath begun in righteousness. *He will save; he will rejoice over me with joy. He will rest in his love: he will rejoice over me with singing.* His name is Jesus: he is, he will be Jesus. *he will save his people from their sins.*

Chapter 4

SUMMARY

This Chapter concludes this eventful History of Boaz and Ruth: and a most interesting conclusion, even in this point of view only, it forms. But in the higher relation of a spiritual tendency, it comes home infinitely more strongly recommended and endeared. The relationship of Boaz, and his claims to Ruth in consequence thereof, the chapter opens with, and the marriage which follows, under the auspicious blessings of the people of Israel, are recorded. And, as if to direct the Reader to the consideration of a much more important subject veiled under the history, the sacred historian closes the book with the genealogy of Boaz, leading from Pharez (the son of Judah, Jacob's son) unto David, and consequently from David to Christ.

Reflections

AND now, my soul, before thou takest thy leave of this sweet book of God, pause over it, And review again, and again, the many, very precious things, contained in it, for thy edification, comfort, and delight.

I behold, O Lord, thy gracious providences strikingly exemplified, in this history. In a land of *Bethlehem* itself, the house of bread, thou turnest it into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. And when our poor fallen nature, as in the case of this certain man Elimelech, had heft thee, and wandered into the world of sin And transgression, by which death entered into the world, and ruin followed: it was thou, by thy preventing mercy going before, didst again visit the land in favor, and incline the hearts of the people, by thy grace, to return to the Lord, that he might have mercy upon them, and to our God, that he might abundantly pardon.

And do I not behold in the history of this poor Moabitish damsel, the astonishing proofs of thy grace? What but almighty, sovereign, free, And unmerited grace, could incline the heart of thy poor sinner,

to leave her country, and the gods of Moab, to join herself unto the people of God in Israel? What but the sweet drawings of the Lord Jehovah could prompt her to leave her father, and all that sine had, to go forth like Abraham, into a land that she knew not. Holy Father! was not all this the effect of thine everlasting love wherewith thou lovest the objects of thy grace, as thou didst behold them, in thy dear Son, before the foundation of the world! Blessed Jesus! was it not, because thou didst set thy love upon Ruth before all worlds, and sine was the purchase of thy blood and righteousness, in the counsel of peace, from all eternity! Holy Spirit! didst thou not know her person, and was not thy gracious influences pledged to call her to thyself, and to reveal the Father's love, and the Redeemer's grace, to her heart, when in the economy of redemption, thou didst undertake to make sinners willing in the day of thy power. Oh! may my soul feel interested in the same precious discoveries of grace! And since I see in so striking. an instance, that the Father hath given the heathen to his blessed Son for an inheritance, and that he might be the Father's salvation unto the ends of the earth; may this view of the call and conversion of Ruth, so often as I shall peruse this sacred history, comfort my soul, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, with the assurance, that God also *to the Gentiles hath granted repentance unto life*. And O Lord! grant that I may be the happy partaker of it.

But principally, and above all (if any thing upon earth can be more interesting) Lord, head us to see in Boaz, the man of Bethlehem, the God-man, Christ Jesus, pointed out, my Goel, my Kinsman-Redeemer, my husband, friend: performing the kinsman's part, redeeming our mortgaged inheritance, marrying our' nature, uniting believers to himself, rescuing our souls from everlasting bondage, and avenging the blood of our souls on the cursed enemy, who by his snares ruined us; Yes! dearest Jesus! thou art all this, and infinitely more. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Thou givest us grace by thy Holy Spirit, to seek thy fields and ordinances, and enablest us when there to glean among the sheaves. Thou commandest thy servants, the ministers of the bread of life, to let fall handfuls for our souls to gather. Thou spreadest thy skirt over us, and marriest us to thyself, and we become thine. Oh! for grace to

abide by thee, and never, never to seek another field to glean in, nor by creature confidences to forget our entire dependence upon thee. Be thou all in all to our souls: for in thee all fulness dwells, and all the Father's love and Spirit's grace come to our souls in and through thee. Thou art such a Saviour and Goel-Redeemer as our souls need; and are we not, blessed Jesus, sinners suited for the display of the riches of thy grace to be manifested upon? Here, therefore, may our souls fix, cleave unto thee, and abide in thee, for thou hast betrothed us to thyself, until, at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven, we are brought home to dwell with thee for ever, Amen.

1st SAMUEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IT is not certain, that Samuel was the author of this book, which bears his name, though, probably, he might be the writer of that part of it which contains so much of his own life and ministry, which is prosecuted to the end of the twenty-fourth Chapter. But it is certain from this very cause, that neither the close of this first book of Samuel, nor the whole of the second book could be his. The general title therefore given to it in our Bibles, should seem to be the more proper: otherwise called *the first book of the Kings*. But, (as I have before remarked in the general observations, introductory to the perusal of either of the books of the sacred volume), it is not so material to us in the present hour, to be informed *who* the person was, the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to appoint as a scribe, for committing his truths to record; as to discover in the book itself, the blessed marks and well known characters, that it was written under his immediate inspiration. When the Reader is himself illuminated to know the SPIRIT'S testimony, and can plainly read that testimony in the sacred writings; these are the grand things to be attended to, and the *imprimatur* of the HOLY GHOST, which is to be looked for. And in these points, both the first and second books of Samuel, carry with them the fullest assurance.

In point of time, the history contained in the first book of Samuel, relates to the annals of the world about eleven hundred and fifty years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And the history itself comprizeth a period of about fourscore years.

I would earnestly beg the Reader to look diligently, as he passeth *through the perusal of this book of GOD, for sketches and outlines of the blessed Jesus. And yet more earnestly, rather than lean to his own understanding, beg the enlightening*

grace of the HOLY GHOST to open to his view the several sweet tokens here given of the Redeemer. Depend upon it, here is a great deal contained in it, that hath peculiar reference to the LORD JESUS. GOD never left himself without witness, concerning the promised seed, in any one age or period of his Church. The apostle Peter in his sermon to the Jews, expressly assures us of Samuel's ministry concerning JESUS: All the prophets (saith he) from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Acts 3:24. And when we find that memorable promise of JEHOVAH, delivered to Eli, and which is recorded in this book of Samuel, in which GOD pledged himself to raise up a faithful Priest that should build him a sure house, and walk before his Anointed for ever: (Chap. 2:35.) Surely there is enough in this blessed book of GOD, to convince us of the grand, and important things contained in it, to call up our most earnest attention, and to prompt the mind to be looking out for New Testament mercies, covered under an Old Testament dress.

Oh! thou, who hast given all scripture by inspiration, and hast directed it, and made it profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; do thou blessed SPIRIT of all truth, direct both the Writer's and the Reader's mind into the truth, as it is in Jesus; that we may know the things which are freely given unto us of God; that what is written, whether in the law of Moses, or in the Prophets, or in the Psalms, concerning JESUS, may be opened to our understandings, that we may understand the scriptures, which will make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of Samuel's family; of his father Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, particularly. The distress of his mother, by reason of her being childless; the temptation of her adversary on this score: her earnest prayer to GOD; Eli the Priest taking notice of her fervor in prayers and mistaking for drunkenness, what he saw of her wrestling in prayer with God, reproves her; Hannah satisfies Eli, and obtains his good wishes, that the LORD might hear and answer her petition: Hannah is blessed of GOD, with a son, and Samuel is born; offerings are made in consequence thereof, to the LORD, in Shiloh. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

How sweetly the HOLY GHOST teacheth the Church in the history of all characters, the universal taint which marks our poor fallen nature! Elkanah, though a pious man, cannot be content without breaking the order of GOD, in a double marriage. And Hannah, though a partaker of grace, must have a child, or she is a woman of a sorrowful spirit. Oh! how fully doth GOD the SPIRIT teach us, by such views, the necessity of redemption by JESUS. Dearest Redeemer! we humbly feel our need of thee, and earnestly pray to be interested in thee. LORD! without thee, and thy righteousness, what are the best of men, but sin and corruption!

See Reader in this verse of Hannah's petition, the blessed effects of prayer! What cannot prayer accomplish! Prayer can shut up, and open again the windows of heaven. For *Elias* we are told, was a man of like passions with ourselves; and yet at his cry, so the LORD answered. *Hannah* was one also partaking of human infirmity. And yet the LORD proved himself a prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering GOD. Oh! for faith, to plead with GOD in JESUS's name,

nothing doubting, and our LORD JESUS hath said, that *all things we ask believing we shall receive.*

I detain the Reader with one observation more, in the dedication of Samuel to the LORD, to remark the sweetness, and graciousness of pious parents making a solemn surrender of their little ones to the LORD. To whom shall we commit them, but to Him from whom we have received them? May not every pious parent say; ‘All cometh, LORD, from thine hand, all is thine own, and of thine own do I give thee’. But how is this subject heightened to the soul of the believer, in the recollection that such was the unequalled love of the FATHER to a lost world, that he gave his only begotten SON, to the end, that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: Oh! for ever blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter, the song of Hannah in her devout thanksgivings to the LORD, for her Samuel. She had dedicated the child to the LORD’s service, and then closes the subject with praise. Besides this, the Chapter contains an account of the increase of Elkanah’s family: of the sin of Eli’s family; a man of GOD sent to reprove Eli: the threatened death of Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in one day: the gracious promise of GOD’s raising up to himself, a faithful Priest, and the degraded state of the house of Eli.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Stand still, and fully contemplate the character of Hannah, and observe, how the harp which was before hung on the willow, is now strung and sounded to the praise of JEHOVAH. See, how her note is changed. And the countenance which was before sad, is now lighted up in praise, and thanksgiving. And in remarking the blessed effects of grace, in this woman’s experience; do not overlook the

principal feature of it, in that her song of joy is not merely directed to praise GOD for his gift, but to praise the great Giver. She doth not dwell upon the loveliness of her Samuel, and celebrate, as a fond parent might be supposed to do, the features of his body, or the promising features of his mind. But her whole soul seems to be swallowed up in adoring the GOD and giver of her Samuel. Oh! how delightfully doth she hold forth the holiness, the faithfulness, the goodness and wisdom of a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering GOD: and how sweetly she triumphs in the assurance of having this GOD for her Rock, and as the horn of her salvation. Reader! do not overlook that this precious covenant GOD is the believer's GOD in JESUS, in all generations. He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. And why should not you and I find the same confidence? Oh! for grace to adopt the same assurance of faith, and in the contemplation of all his rich mercies in JESUS, to cry out, with one of old, For this GOD is our GOD, forever, and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.

While the sad contrast to Hannah's song, in the awful example of Eli's family, should fill our minds with suitable reflections, and call forth prayer to be kept from all presumptuous transgressions; let us, from lamenting the wretched and corrupt state of all Levitical and Priestly ministrations, direct our thoughts, and call forth our warmest affections to JESUS, that faithful priest of GOD our FATHER, the Mediator of a better covenant, founded upon better promises. Yes! thou clear Redeemer, thou art indeed the faithful priest our GOD promised to raise up. Thou hast done all, according to what was in thine and our FATHER'S heart, and in his mind. And GOD our FATHER hath built thee a sure house forever. Oh! grant, thou great Melchisedeck, that we, whom thou past made kings and priests to GOD and thy FATHER, may walk before thee, the LORD'S anointed, forever. And give us to rejoice that we have such an High Priest, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And while, as in the

instance of *Eli*, we perceive that none among the sons of Aaron, whose race is mortal, and whose stock corrupt, can be exempt from sin: though the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have related to us the call of Samuel, in an extraordinary manifestation of the LORD to him by night in the temple. What the LORD said to him; his fear of communicating it to Eli: Eli's demand of Samuel to be informed of it: Samuel's faithful relation of it: Eli's solemn resignation in consequence thereof to GOD's will. Samuel in the close of the Chapter is said to be established in the Prophetical office.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD pause over this delightful Chapter, which the HOLY GHOST hath graciously caused to be written for the edification of the Church; and in the call of Samuel desire to bless GOD for all the early manifestations, which the LORD hath been pleased to make to his people.

Who can venture to call in question the work of GOD, upon the heart of his people, when in the instance of a child like Samuel, we see that works so strikingly manifested, and at a time, when the rich partaker of this unspeakable grace, knew not the LORD, and was unconscious what grace meant. Let any Reader compare the striking dissimilarity, between the hoary Eli, and the young child Samuel: And then let him determine, (for to his own decision I leave it) what grace, could have made all this difference.

If the Reader be among the youthful part of mankind, let him reflect upon the blessed manifestations here recorded, to have been made to Samuel. And are you not anxious, I would say, my youthful friend, to enjoy the same? Do you not feel the rising prayer, in the

soul; LORD, *manifest thyself to me!* if not in a way so splendid, yet at least in a way so gracious, as to Samuel, that I may be a partaker also, of the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS!

And let not the most aged of my Readers close the book, and take leave of this Chapter, without first having dropped the knee in *prayer*; or *praise*. In *prayer*; if so be, that no evidences of the renewed life be found in his own experience; that the same GOD, who called Samuel, would, though at the eleventh hour, call him; and in *praise*; if the LORD hath manifested himself, as in the case of Samuel, to his soul, otherwise than he doth to the word.

Blessed LORD! help my soul to praise thee, under the humble hope and assurance, that thou hast called me out of darkness into this marvellous light, and translated me from the power of Satan, into the kingdom of thy dear SON; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This Chapter folds within its bosom heavy tidings for Israel in general, and Eli's house in particular. In a battle between the Philistines and Israel, the Israelites presumptuously, and without taking counsel of the LORD, bring the ark of GOD into the camp. The Philistines are again conquerors; they take the ark of GOD: the two sons of Eli, according to the LORD's declaration, are both slain. Tidings coming to Eli of those events, the old man falls from his seat, and dies; and his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, in the premature labor of child-bed, dies also. Such are the woeful contents of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

THOUGH I have incorporated several suitable thoughts as they seemed to arise from the several verses in the Chapter opening

before me; yet I have not said all that might be said by way of devout reflections in the perusal of it, nor superseded the necessity of adding more. Various are the improvements this chapter affords, and under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching, many are the precious practical observations which ought to result from it.

Who is there that beholds the ark of GOD as the symbol and token of the divine presence, and of the covenant engagements of our GOD in the person of his dear Son, but while reading in this chapter the just judgments of GOD upon his people in the loss of the ark, must feel deep concern for the transgressions of the people in all ages, and especially in the present day of infidelity, and the many crying abominations of the land. Did the LORD give up Israel of old for their sins into the hands of their enemies; and are his people Israel now more secure from his judgments? Was there just cause for this awful dispensation then, and is there no cause for a similar visitation now?

You that are the people of GOD! do you not feel yourselves deeply affected in the contemplation of the spiritual miseries that seem to be hanging over his church? Doth not our JESUS speak, as he did once to the church of *Ephesus*; *Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place*. Oh! should our eyes be brought to see the gospel taken from us: the sun going down upon our ordinances, and all our precious sabbaths and gospel feasts cut short: might we not, like the daughter-in-law of Eli, write, *I-chabod* upon all that would then remain, when the glory was departed.

Ye parents of tenderness, and masters of houses and families, mark in Eli's mistaken indulgence the dreadful consequence of honouring our sons or our households before GOD, and by a sinful compliance with the corrupt desires and irreligious dispositions of those about us, make shipwreck of the faith and of a good conscience. If we set not up religion in our houses; if we neglect both by precept and example to lead our little ones to the ark of GOD'S presence in his house of prayer; if our servants or our children make themselves vile and we restrain them not? Oh! think of Eli, behold the melancholy close of his life, and be assured that GOD will not pass over the iniquities even of his people.

But chiefly, ye ministers of my GOD, be very jealous for his honour who hath so honoured you, as to appoint you for watchmen on the walls of Zion. *Cry aloud! spare not! lift up your voices like trumpets, and show the people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins.* Be very jealous for the ark of GOD's sake. And oh, thou dear Redeemer! do thou, for to thou alone the glorious work belongs, do thou ever dear, ever precious JESUS, continue to us thy presence, thy love, thy pardoning, renewing, reviving, quickening, strengthening, and confirming grace. We would say in the language of thine own most holy word, to the holy undivided Three which bear record in Heaven, *Arise, O LORD, into thy rest: thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us the history of the ark of GOD while in captivity. The Philistines for a short space rejoice over their spoil. But this joy is turned into sorrow. GOD visits the Philistines with plagues, till at length they are constrained to call a council in order to deliver them from what at the first they considered a great triumph.

REFLECTIONS

How very precious it is to observe, the attention which GOD hath over his own cause. Though Israel is sunk so low as to be supine and inattentive to the attempt of recovering the ark, yet GOD will be jealous of his own honor. Reader! do you not see a sweet instruction veiled under this? When the poor sinner bound in Satan's chain is fallen asleep, and is unconscious of his impending ruin; neither sends forth a cry for help; nor is aware that he needeth that help; then it is that the eye of JESUS is upon him, undertakes himself his cause, and goeth forth to his deliverance. Oh! blessed JESUS, how

very precious is it to my soul to observe that thy grace, like the dew of Heaven, *waiteth not for men, neither tarrieth for the sons of men.*

And here also while poor dispirited sinners are thus taught that our GOD will maintain his own cause and deliver his people out of captivity; woe unto the oppressor, when our GOD ariseth to judgment! Secret punishments will be their lot in this life, and an open display of his anger in that which is to come. *The wrath of man shall praise him, the remainder of wrath will he restrain.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

As it was impossible not to take interest in whatever concerned the ark of GOD, the contents of this Chapter becomes very pleasing, in that it relates to us the conduct of the Philistines in sending away the ark of GOD. The great joy of the men of Bethshemesh in beholding the return of the ark. The presumption of the Bethshemites in looking into the ark, is punished by the LORD: they send to the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch the Ark. These are the contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

THINK my soul, how awful the state of Israel was during the seven months GOD was pleased to punish them for their transgressions, in depriving them of the ark. Truly awful indeed, is the condition of all men who live without GOD, and without CHRIST in the world. But chiefly ye people of GOD, whose backslidings make barren your ordinances and leave them but as the mere shell and carcase of religion. Let such determine what it is to visit ordinances, and find not the GOD of ordinances. To have the *form*, but not the power of godliness. Oh! for the unceasing presence of GOD in CHRIST, in the assemblies of his people.

But behold my soul in what is here represented of the bringing back the ark, how the LORD works when as he saith himself, *I am*

returned to Jerusalem with mercies. It is all of divine grace. Not our merit, not our exertions, not our prayers, not our labours; but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, O LORD, are the sole cause for which thou savest and redeemest thy people, for thy name's sake.

Precious JESUS! thou everlasting ark of thy church and people, thou art eternally fixed in Zion. And oh! how divinely reared for the security of my soul. Never, like the men of *Beth-shemesh*, would I presumptuously look into the secret things which belong unto the LORD our GOD. But with an eye unto thee and all thy suitableness, and all-sufficiency for the sinner's security, would I come unto thee in the way appointed. Surely, blessed JESUS, thou art thyself the very throne of grace, the very ark and mercy-seat, from whence all tokens of salvation come, and in whom JEHOVAH is accessible to all the humble requests of my soul. In thy blood and righteousness I find the removal of guilt, and the confidence of justification. In thy dear person I have all I need, both for security and comfort. Thou art my dwelling place whereunto I may always resort. LORD JESUS! cause me never to lose sight of thee in all my approaches. *In thy name would I rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make my boast; for thou art both the ark and the glory of our strength, and in thy favor our horn shall be exalted.*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The events recorded in this Chapter are much more pleasing than what hath been said of Israel a long time before. Here is an account of the men of Kirjath-jearim fetching the ark and placing it in an house. The Israelites are represented as mourning after the LORD. The history of Samuel is renewed, his government, and victory over the Philistines. He set up the stone of help between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it Ebenezer in token of GOD's help and his blessing again of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

REMARK, my soul, in the perusal of this Chapter, the first renewings of grace in the blessed fruits and effects of it; all hearts, like those of Israel, then will go forth in lamentations after the LORD. There will be no real enquiries, no heart-searching sorrow, though ordinances may be restrained, and even the ark of the divine presence be away, even to twenty years continuance, as in Israel, until the LORD pours out the renewings of his SPIRIT. But when this precious gift is dispensed, then the soul looks unto him whom it hath pierced, and will mourn. Oh! most holy FATHER! of thine infinite mercy bestow this blessing, this covenant promise on my soul: lead me by thy gracious influence unto the precious JESUS, that the goings forth of my desires may be unceasingly after him and to him, who is indeed the ark and the mercy-seat, the offering and propitiation for sin.

In beholding Samuel as praying for the people, offering the stucking-Lamb, and crying for Israel, unto the LORD, I would pass over the servant, to view in him the shadow of his master; and would behold in him the typical representation of thee, thou blessed JESUS, for thou art the sum and substance of all the shadows of thy ministering servants. They offered all by faith, and had an eye in all their offerings to thee, who art, in all the ages of thy church, both the sacrifice and High Priest, the golden altar and the ark, on which all offerings are made. However veiled in covering under the darker dispensation of those ages before thy coming, yet so much of gospel every rite contained, that the holy men of old could, and did, see enough in those sacrifices made under the law, to behold by faith thy person and righteousness, with all the glorious circumstances of redemption secretly and mysteriously included. Yes! dearest JESUS! in all ages thy faithful ones knew thee, loved thee, lived to thee, were strong in thee, and in the power of thy might! Be thou to me, therefore, holy Saviour, all and in all, in every word of thy sacred scripture. Oh! give me to see and unceasingly to live in the same blessed privileges. In thy dear person, righteousness, love, grace, and power, may I know myself to be eternally secure: so that no Philistines may any more come into the coasts of thine Israel. Like

Samuel, on JESUS the rock of ages, would I build an altar of earth to JEHOVAH, *In* him would I offer all my offerings. *Through* him would I make all my poor presentations. *From* him and his all-perfect sacrifice would I seek acceptance; and *to* him, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, would I ascribe all the praise.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains rather the dark side of Israel from the former. Samuel growing old, and his sons not closely copying after the example of their father, discontent broke out among the people. They ask for a king in imitation of the nations around them. The thing displeaseth the LORD. Samuel remonstrates with the people. They are obstinate. Samuel promiseth their request shall be complied with. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST the growing age and infirmities of all GOD's faithful servants, though we see Samuel and all the holy men and prophets going the way of all flesh, what a sweet and soul-reviving thought is it, that our JESUS liveth for ever! Yes! thou precious Holy One of Israel, thou ever livest; and because thou livest, we shall live also. Triumph my soul in this well-founded confidence!

And here, LORD, let me learn, from the rebellion of Israel in desiring a king, when thou thyself wast the gracious king of thy people, let me learn how prone the heart, even of thy people, is to rebel against thee. Oh! ye wretched, misguided, unhappy sons of men, who by deeds, if not by words, are continually saying: *We will not have this man to reign over us.* Think, I charge you, ere it be too late, whether he hath not a right to govern, who, as one with the FATHER is GOD; and as Mediator, hath all power in heaven and in earth. Is not every creature his, both by creation and redemption? And shall not every knee *bend before him, and every tongue confess*

that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER! Oh! kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way. Acknowledge him now for your lawful king and sovereign, before he comes in the clouds as your just Judge. If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

As for my soul, let angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, let all heaven and earth bear witness for me, that I desire no other king, neither will I know any other but he that is *a Priest upon his throne*. Do thou holy, blessed, royal LORD JESUS, reign in me, and over me, and establish, and preserve, and maintain thy rightful kingdom in my soul, against all there enemies, my lusts and corruptions, as well as the world, and the powers of darkness. Oh! do thou bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of our Christ! Do thou manifest thyself to my soul, in all thy sovereignty, grace, and goodness, in thy kingdom, both temporal and spiritual. Do thou pardon my sins as a king; do thou rule over my affections as a king; do thou bestow all needed grace as a king; do thou bless, protect, restrain; subdue, regulate and dispose of all things concerning me as a king, the glorious, gracious king which our GOD hath set in Zion. And by thus living under thine own kingly influences here below, mine eyes continually beholding the king in his beauty; in that tremendous day, when thou shalt come to take away all things that offend out of thy kingdom, my soul will find a growing confidence in thy salvation. For sure I am, since none but JESUS is king, he who hath borne my sins will not plead against me in judgment. The language of my heart, will be like the church of old; *the LORD is our judge: the LORD is our Lawgiver: the LORD is our King; he will save us.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the sacred historian first brings us acquainted with Saul, whom GOD had previously determined to appoint king of Israel. By an overruling providence, Saul, who was in pursuit of his

father's asses which were lost, is led to Samuel. And Samuel, privately admonished of GOD, gives Saul the first intimation of the LORD's design concerning him.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! I charge it upon thee while reading this chapter of the LORD's providence concerning Saul, that thou search diligently into the records of thine own life, for the testimonies of the LORD's dealings with thee, both in his world of providence and grace.

Pause and see whether the same gracious GOD, while thou hast been searching out the things of time and sense, hath not been going before thee, anticipating thy requests, blessing thee with things unasked, and infinitely exceeding all thy thoughts and expectations, with preventing and restraining mercy and grace? In things *temporal*, how hath he supplied all thy wants, *thy bread hath been given, and thy water hath been sure*, and GOD himself hath been thy defence as *the munition of rocks*. And in things *spiritual* how hath he outrun all thy desires! Nay, while thou wast standing out against him, and causing him to serve with thy sins, and wearying his patience with thine iniquities, then it was the LORD had mercy upon thee, even before thou wert conscious of the want of mercy; and saved thee though he *knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast a transgressor from the womb*. My soul! keep this ever in view, to make thee humble, to endear JESUS, to hide pride from thine eyes, and to make the redemption work of thy GOD more and more sweet and important. And oh! for grace, continual grace, to make suitable returns of love and praise and obedience, where mercy and favor are so freely given. Thou art called to a kingdom that cannot be moved. JESUS hath made all his children kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. Whatever trials beset us in the way to the possession of future glory, there is no state can be truly called comfortless while JESUS is our portion. Neither can one of his children esteem his mercies small who is saved from hell, and brought into the sure path of Heaven.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with presenting us by a view of the prophet's anointing Saul king. This is followed with tokens Samuel told Saul, should immediately take place, on his departure from him to return home to his father's house, and which accordingly came to pass. After this Samuel convenes Israel at Mizpeh; at which convocation, he proceeds to the election of a king. Saul is elected. With which event some are displeased, but Saul holds his peace. These are the principal things contained in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you and I behold the aged prophet pouring the vial of oil over Saul's head, let our meditation take flight, and by faith behold the HOLY GHOST anointing JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, and installing him into all these offices by which our souls live under his precious exercise of them through all the departments of grace. Yes, blessed JESUS! we would hail thee king of Zion! We behold thee consecrated our great high priest for evermore. And we accept thee as the anointed prophet of our GOD, to preach good tidings to the meek, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. We view thee as the Christ of GOD, the glorious GOD-man set up and anointed as the Mediator before all worlds. And oh! that thy *name*, in the sweet savor of it, may be as the fragrancy of *the holy ointment poured forth! therefore do the virgins love thee.*

And dearest JESUS! as it hath pleased GOD, even thy GOD, to anoint thee, as Mediator, with the oil of gladness for, and above thy fellows; oh for a portion of that sacred anointing of the HOLY SPIRIT, which was poured out upon thee without measure, to descend upon us like the precious ointment upon Aaron's head, which ran down to the skirts of his garments! Yes! we would pray for the largest, fullest portion of that rich anointing, which teacheth all things. We would covet the same holy unction, which, flowing from thee, makes all thy people priests, and kings to GOD, and the FATHER. And we would

desire, to be made such partakers of thy grace, that by the exercises of it, our souls might be enabled to lay hold of thee, by lively faith, so as to live upon thy Person, to hang upon thy righteousness, and to walk evermore with thee, in all the departments of our pilgrimage here, till we come to dwell with thee for ever, as men whose hearts thou hast indeed touched, and who cannot cease from following thee. And grant, blessed, dearest JESUS, that in the gifts of thy HOLY SPIRIT, thou wilt not merely give us *another* heart, but a *new* heart, even the *renewing of the* HOLY GHOST, *shed upon us abundantly, through* JESUS CHRIST *our* LORD: so shall we be, indeed, kings, and priests to the FATHER, and fellow-heirs of that *kingdom, which cannot be moved.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of Israel's distress, by reason Of the Ammonites' daring encampment against Jabesh-Gilead. The Gileadites are disposed to submit to the Ammonites, but their terms are both insolent and cruel. Saul being made acquainted with the circumstances of the case, commands all Israel to assemble for the relief of the Gileadites. He routs the Ammonites in battle, and makes a very great slaughter of them. All Israel rejoice, in consequence thereof, and are full of praises of their new king.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in those *Ammorites* behold the sworn foes, not of Israel of old only, but of the Israel of GOD, in all ages. How alive are they to harrass, and afflict believers. The reproach of Israel is their delight. To put out their right eyes would be their highest joy. And how hast thou, my soul, been ready to serve them, like the men of, *Jabesh-Gilead*, and to make any covenant with them, if they would but be easy in their government. Dearest JESUS! be thou everlastingly praised, that thou wouldst not let me rest in this yoke of sin, but didst come to my rescue, and hast gotten thyself the victory, and

brought down thine, and my enemies under thy feet. Oh! grant, heavenly LORD, that I may never more, after so complete a deliverance, be brought under the dominion of the enemy, nor meanly seek peace with thine, and my sworn foes. Give me grace and strength, openly, and boldly in thy great name, to wage war with sin, Satan, and the world. And in all my spiritual warfare, do thou as the great Captain of thy little army, go on before me, and make me more than conqueror, through thee, who hast loved me! Let this be my every day song; *the LORD is my light, and my salvation, whom then shall I fear; the LORD is my strength, and my song, and he is become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the address to Samuel, on the resignation of his government, now Saul is king. He appeals to him concerning his own integrity, in the administration of justice; brings the people to the acknowledgment of it: points out, yet once again, their sin and folly in the insisting upon a king: at the call of Samuel the LORD answers, in confirmation of what he had said of their sin and his rectitude, in sending thunder; and the chapter concludes with Samuel's assurances, that if the people obeyed the LORD, both they and their king should be preserved.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not too hastily pass over this chapter, without taking with us the several very interesting instructions it affords.

In this address of the prophet, dismissed, as he evidently was, by the people, we behold how pleasant a thing it is, in the close of any labours, to be able to make an appeal to GOD, for the rectitude of our proceedings. And while we are enabled to challenge the tongue of calumny, to be yet more refreshed, in the consciousness, that *our record is on high.*

In the beautiful recapitulation, which the man of GOD makes in his sermon of Israel's history, by way of calling up the remembrance of the people, both to divine mercies, and their unworthiness, we ought to learn the preciousness of faith, in referring all our blessings, while we review them, into the grace, and mercy, and loving kindness of our GOD. Faith finds great strength in such reviews, for future occasions. And I would desire the reader, not to overlook this instruction from it, while I pray, that my own mind may be refreshed in the thought; that the best method to seek strength for confidence in JESUS, for future blessings, is to make remembrance at the throne of what are past. Looking up to the great Author, and Finisher of faith, for suited strength for our day, we certainly take the most effectual means to trust him for what is to come, when we tell him of what he hath done before. And by giving him the glory of what we have received, to rely upon him for what we need.

But principally, as an improvement from the perusal of this chapter, in the call of Samuel to the LORD, and the LORD's answer, in a way contrary to the usual manner of things; let the Reader behold in the Prophet the type of his Master. Yes! blessed JESUS! I would desire grace, upon the humblest and slightest occasions, as well as the highest and the greatest, to discover somewhat of These. Do I not know, dearest LORD, that all intercourse with heaven can only be opened by Thee? No prophet, no patriarch, no apostle, no angel of light, could have procured for our fallen nature, this blessing. Heaven must have been for ever inaccessible, hadst thou not opened that new, and that living way, by thy blood! Convinced therefore, of this most precious, and soul-reviving truth, oh! let me learn to prize the unspeakable mercy; delight myself in seeking constant communion, and intercourse with my GOD and FATHER, in CHRIST JESUS; and like Samuel, learn to be looking out for such manifestations of thy grace, and glory, as may be contrary to the usual plan of ordinary events; that at an *evening time*, if needful, *it may be light*.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the history of Saul's reign opens, and a sad opening of it is recorded. He is invaded by foes from abroad, and disorders at home, His subjects desert him, and the enemy advances upon him. In this distress he offers sacrifice, and thereby breaks the divine commands. The LORD rejects him from being king; and though the sentence is not immediately executed, yet he is told of the event, and consequently waits its execution. Such is the state of things as recorded in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark with me, the very awful state of an unrenewed mind, in the conduct of Saul. No situation, no providences, however prosperous, in themselves; no elevation in rank, or power, can produce real comfort, or happiness, while the heart remains carnal, and unregenerated by grace. The LORD had given Saul a kingdom: and the LORD had turned him from the pursuit of his father's asses, to the pursuit of government; but Saul, though *another* man, as the scripture terms it, in outward things, remained the *same* man, as to vital godliness. Learn Reader herefrom, that it is not a change of place, or rank, or circumstances, that availeth anything; but *the putting of the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and the being renewed in the spirit of the mind: and the putting on the new man, which after GOD, is created in righteousness, and true holiness.*

Precious JESUS! grant me grace to learn once more from hence, in the view of Saul's profanation of thy Priestly office, how infinitely important must be the view of thy alone offering, and priesthood, in the sight of JEHOVAH; and how rejoiced my soul ought to be, in taking shelter under thy holy censer! Yes! dearest LORD! thou, and thou alone, art a Priest for ever, by oath, and the solemn inauguration of thy GOD and FATHER. Taken from among men, as it concerned thy manhood, thou wast called to this office from all

eternity. And as it relates to thine eternal power and GODHEAD, thine own glorious perfections, and attributes, become the golden altar, on which, and from whence, the saving efficacy of the whole priesthood, derive their importance. From both, may my soul find continual comfort, and confidence. Never, like Saul, may I bring my poor offerings, or fancied peace offerings, without an eye to thy precious, and all-sufficient sacrifice: for it is thou only, dearest LORD, that canst make, or hath made, *our peace in the blood of the cross*. To seek acceptance another way, though with the most costly rites, as Saul did, is to show contempt to thy person, thy blood, and thy finished righteousness; and to call down the vengeance of heaven. But while, through the influence of the HOLY GHOST, my soul is enabled to look stedfastly to thee, and to rely on thy precious, all atoning blood, and sacrifice, for acceptance with GOD, and the FATHER; let me, blessed JESUS, every day, and all the day, be continually coming in thy name, and righteousness, *boldly to the throne of grace, that I may find mercy, and grace to help, in all times of need*.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The history of Israel under the reign of Saul, brightens up a little in this Chapter. Jonathan, the son of Saul, prompted, it should seem, by a Divine impulse, goes forth with his armour-bearer only, to a garrison of the Philistines. He is made successful:—the host of Israel, when informed of it, follows after; and a great slaughter is obtained over the Philistines. In the close of this Chapter, we have a short relation of Saul's family.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE over this chapter, my soul, and mark, in the history of Saul, the sure consequences of rebellion against GOD. The word of the LORD assures us, that, *when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh, even his enemies to be at peace with him*. But, when sinners

neglect and despise the LORD, he can convert their very comforts into crosses. And Saul, though at the head of a kingdom, shall be afflicted, and his crown be filled with thorns.

But, my soul, while remarking, as in this man's history, the sure consequences of sin, remark no less in his history, and in thine own, how gracious the LORD is, notwithstanding all our multiplied transgressions. *The LORD will not retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* By some slender instrument, like that of Jonathan, he will work out deliverance for his people. Oh! my soul, learn to impress upon thy mind those precious things of GOD's grace. And in all thy manifold undeservings, never lose sight of divine love. And when at any time trials and difficulties occur for the exercise of faith, keep a steady eye unto JESUS, that it may be enlightened with the droppings of his grace, as the honey did unto him. And depend upon it, in the strength of the LORD JESUS, it will be found that all difficulties are as nothing. He can, and will make thee more than conqueror, through the sovereignty of his power. All obstacles, in the way to the accomplishment of his holy purpose, will be as nothing, for *there is no restraint to the LORD, he saveth, by many or by few.*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The sacred historian is prosecuting the account of Saul's reign, in this chapter. Every part of his government seems to be with a view to aggrandize himself, and to show his disregard to the LORD. We have here, the relation of a commission the LORD sent him upon, to destroy the Amalekites: his partial obedience to that commission: the LORD's displeasure upon the occasion, and his rejection of Saul from being king, communicated to him by Samuel. The zealous prophet, in his warmth for GOD's glory, doth that which Saul had neglected, and heweth Agag, the king of the Amalekites, in pieces before the LORD, in Gilgal. The chapter closeth with an account of

Samuel's final departure from Saul, and visiting him no more until his death.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause with me over the perusal of this chapter, and mark, in the progress of Saul's history, the certain truth of that awful sentence of the apostle, *that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*. And while we look at the king of Israel under this melancholy character, let us not forget, to gather from the history of the LORD's everlasting war with the *Amalekites*, that there can be no truce in this battle. Grace and corruption can no more join issue, than the iron and the clay in the image which the prophet saw. Put it down, Reader, in the maxims of your life, and see to it that your own experience corresponds to this most certain and unquestionable truth: *the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit*. LORD, grant that neither the writer of this Commentary, nor the Reader of it, may be *debtor to the flesh to live after the flesh: for if we live after the flesh we shall die: but, if we through the SPIRIT, do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live*.

Oh! most gracious GOD! give me to see, and awfully to feel the impression of it on my heart, in the history of the utter destruction of the *Amalekites*: that though the LORD long bears with the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; yet the day, the dreadful day, the tremendous day of judgment, surely cometh as a thief in the night, Oh! precious JESUS, be thou my refuge, my covert, my strong hold, in that day of wrath!

One sweet improvement more would I gather from the perusal of this chapter, before I take my leave of it, and in the sorrow the man of GOD felt for the LORD's rejection of Saul, I would see how suited it is for the ministers of JESUS, *to weep between the porch and the Altar*, and lift up their cries and prayers over the sad ruin of our fallen nature? Did Samuel weep for Saul because the LORD had determined to take from him his earthly kingdom: and shall not my soul weep over the thousands of ungodly sinners, against whom the LORD hath sworn they shall not enter into his heavenly kingdom? Did the events of this short life, as they related to Saul, call forth the affection of the prophet: and shall not the grand concerns of eternity,

as they attach themselves to sinners in the present hour, call forth my sympathy and prayer, that the LORD in the midst of judgment may remember mercy? Oh! most gracious Saviour! from whose distinguishing favor it is, that *by the grace of GOD, I am what I am*: teach me, LORD, *to rejoice with trembling*; and in the deepest sense of those awful judgments which I most righteously have deserved, but which thy mercy hath saved me from; give me a suitable frame of mind to come before thee. Like the prophet *Ezekiel*, I would fall to the dust, crying out; *Ah! LORD GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in this pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem!*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter is the first in the history of David. And as this man forms so distinguishing a character in the word of GOD, in every point of view, as a patriarch, prophet, writer, warrior, king, and above all, as a type of the LORD JESUS, everything respecting him becomes interesting and important. The history doth not open with the birth of David, but takes up the relation with his anointing by Samuel, as king of Israel, and the successor to Saul. Here is related in this chapter, the LORD's sending Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint one of the sons of Jesse. All the sons of Jesse are made to pass before Samuel. David is chosen. Samuel pours the horn of oil upon him: Samuel returns to Ramah. An evil spirit from the LORD troubles Saul. David is sent for, as one that played well upon an instrument, to divert him.

REFLECTIONS

HERE my soul, in the view of Samuel's commission to anoint David king of Israel, do thou learn the infinite importance of singling out thy Almighty David, as thy king and chosen from among his brethren. Fear not all the Sauls which would oppose thee, but boldly put the sacred crown of

thy redemption upon his holy Head; and let the world know that him, whom thy GOD and FATHER hath chosen as thy Sovereign, is thy chosen also. The LORD'S CHRIST, is thy CHRIST; and his anointed, thine anointed from among ten thousand.

And as for thee, thou blessed, holy, Anointed One; to thee it belongs, both by thy natural right, as one with the FATHER, over all GOD blessed for ever, and by thy appointed and acquired right, as Mediator, to reign over thy church and people. Do thou take to thee thy great power, and rule in my heart, and over my whole soul and body forever. Though like David, thou art taken from the lowest state of poverty, so that when on earth thou hadst not where to lay thine head; yet art thou placed above all thy brethren. Thou art he, whom all shall praise: and all thy Father's children shall bend before thee. The FATHER hath solemnly put all things into thine hand, and declared that men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed. Before thee, therefore, would I bow the knee and join with every creature to confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD of all, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The Chapter we are now about entering upon, relates to us the insolence of the Philistines towards Israel, and the challenge made by their champion Goliath of Gath, daring any man in Israel's army to single combat. The consequence of which, we are told, was, that Saul and all his army were dismayed. David coming from his father, on a message to his brethren into the camp of Israel, hears the challenge of Goliath, and accepts it. Going forth, not armed with the common weapons of slaughter, but in the confidence of GOD, he prevails over the Philistine, and kills him. In consequence

thereof the Philistines are put to the rout, and Israel pursues them with a great slaughter. These are the principal matters contained in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the perusal of this chapter, and behold in the character of Goliath of Gath, and his bold and open defiance of Israel, a lively resemblance of that implacable, proud, and haughty foe, the accursed enemy of GOD and man, the Devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. How often hath he stood tremendous to thy view, defying GOD and his Redeemer, to save thee! How fierce and blasphemous have been his insinuations, in tempting thee to fear that his threatenings were but too well founded. And how often, like the whole army of Saul at his approach, again and again, not only for forty days together, but for years, in apprehension, hast thou fled from him, and been sore afraid! And indeed, had a deliverance from his power been left to the accomplishment of an arm of flesh, how sure would have been thy everlasting ruin!

Oh, precious JESUS! thou Almighty David of thy people! Blessed be our FATHER'S mercy, that sent thee to see how thy brethren fared, and to take their pledge! And blessed be thy love, which prompted thy divine mind to come to our rescue, from all the powers of sin and hell! And thrice blessed be the hour when in thine own blood and righteousness thou didst conquer for us all the enemies of our salvation! And now, Almighty LORD, we behold thee as returning from the slaughter of the Philistines, having spoiled principalities, and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphing over them in it. Now, LORD, we behold thee seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and all power thine in heaven and in earth. Go on, Almighty Conqueror, in thine holy war, until all hearts are subdued to the sovereignty of thy grace.

And having wrought out such a glorions deliverance for us, work a still more powerful victory in us. And O lead us on, as the Israelites pursued the Philistines, to all the conquests which thy redemption hath procured, until at length, having under thy banners manfully opposed and subdued all the enemies of our salvation, we follow thee to the seat of the conqueror, where, in an unceasing security which thy complete victory hath purchased, of everlasting joy, we obtain that kingdom which cannot be moved, and where thou last made us kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This forms an interesting Chapter, because it opens that account of the loves of David and Jonathan, which in the after history of David forms so very interesting a subject. Jonathan's heart is won by David. Saul at first seemed to be much pleased with David, but because the women in their songs and dances praised David's victories more than Saul's, from that day forth Saul envied David. This Chapter relates some of the evidences by which Saul manifested this malice towards him, in casting his javelin at him twice to slay him; then proposing to give him his eldest daughter to wife, but afterwards giving her to another; then offering his younger daughter, but with the hope of proving his ruin. Notwithstanding these things David prospers.

REFLECTIONS

I would call upon the Reader, while calling upon my own soul, in the contemplation of this chapter, to pass by all other considerations, to pause over the view of the love of Jonathan to David; to remark its wonderful properties, to stand amazed at the extensiveness of creature love in this man; and then to ask my heart, whether there is not cause to blush in the view of it, when I compare

his love to David to my love to Him, who is David's LORD? Was Jonathan's soul so instantly captivated, so strongly rivetted, and so engaged by covenant to David, as to love him as his own soul; to strip himself of his garments and of his princely robe, in order to cloath David; while I who have so long known the LORD JESUS; have been so often fed, so constantly cloathed, so everlastingly protected, so graciously loved by him, feel such coldness, such deadness, and such little drawings of my heart towards him!

Oh! precious JESUS! *thy love indeed is better than wine, thy favour than life itself.* Thou hast shown it by ways infinitely surpassing the love of Jonathan to David. Thou hast not only cloathed the souls of thy people, with thy robe and garment of salvation, but thou hast made over thine whole soul to their welfare. All the blessings of grace flow from thy boundless, matchless love. And the various ways by which thou hast made the rich discoveries of thy love, all show its wonderful properties. The covenant thou didst make for them in the everlasting counsel of peace, makes known thy love, for thou art thyself the whole of the Covenant. Yes! clearest LORD! thou hast proved it by all thy suretyship engagements; by all thy gracious undertakings; by all thy great accomplishments; by all thou hast done, and art doing, and wilt do for thy people. Oh! dearest, blessed JESUS! add this one mercy to all thou hast wrought, as great a miracle as any; melt my cold icy heart into a love for thee, who hast so loved me, and knit my whole soul unto thee, that I may fear and love thy name. Then will my song correspond with that of David, and I shall say as he did; *I will love thee, O LORD my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my Deliverer; my GOD, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my high tower.*

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The history of David, and Saul's enmity against him, is prosecuted in this chapter. Saul throws off the mask, and openly

commands his son and servants to kill David. Jonathan expostulates with his father on the subject, and for a time obtains a promise, that David shall not be hurt. But his malice breaks out afresh, and he is obliged to flee for his life. Saul pursues him; but his design is overruled, and David again escapes. These are the principal things contained in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT an awful contrast marks the characters of Saul and Jonathan this son! While the Father manifests the malignity of an evil spirit, breathing out nothing but hatred, malice, and death, against a faithful servant, who had gone with his life in his hand, to deliver him and his kingdom from ruin; see how the son's heart is influenced with all the kinder feelings of love, and brotherly affection towards him, so as to love him as his own soul! Reader! remark with me, the precious, blessed properties of distinguishing grace.

But while we admire and praise the friendship of Jonathan towards David, let my soul take wing, and fly to the contemplation of the unequalled friendship of Him, whose love as far exceeds the love of Jonathan, as the light transcends the darkness. In the loves of Jonathan and David there was a congeniality of soul, of manners, of age, and of mind. But in thy love and friendship towards our fallen nature, O blessed JESUS, thou wast *a Brother born for adversity*. Thy love, to us was when our persons were not only totally opposite to thy pure nature, but loathsome; and no congeniality, no one thing to form a likeness, prompted thine infinite mind to such stupendous acts of mercy. Never forget, my soul, that it was while we were enemies, CHRIST *died for us*. And when we come to estimate the acts of JESUS' friendship, how doth all human friendship fall to the ground before it. Thy friendship not only led thee to engage as our surety, to pay all our debts, to supply all our wants, to answer all our demands, to purchase by thy blood and righteousness an inheritance for us; but thou didst give thyself a ransom to deliver us from captivity: didst place thyself in the very state of vassalage in which thou didst find us, and though unconscious of sin in thyself, didst become *sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD*

in thee. Oh! matchless love, unparalleled friendship! Oh! be thou, blessed JESUS, to me ever dear, ever precious; and cause my soul to love thee, who hast so loved me, that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, may be able to separate my soul from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The subject of David's distresses, on account of Saul's seeking his life, is continued through this Chapter. David leaveth Naioth, and flees to Jonathan for counsel. They confer on the best means for David to adopt. A plan is suggested for this purpose, but it fails. They meet by appointment, and it becoming necessary for David to escape for his life, Jonathan and David part with tears.

REFLECTIONS

READER! there is so much loveliness in the character of Jonathan, according as the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to present him before the church, in his conduct towards David, that I think it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to look at him with proper attention: and while we adore the gracious GOD that made him so lovely, we should implore grace to imitate his bright example. How beautiful he appears in this chapter, in his wisdom of discovering the real state of his father's mind towards David, and in his contrivance of communicating the same, unobserved, to the mind of David! How very engaging he appears also, in his sympathizing with David on the occasion, and mingling his tears with his, in the prospect of separation! How lovely in his piety towards the LORD, in so cheerfully looking forward to the sure succession of David to the kingdom, though to the exclusion of himself and his own family, because the thing was of the LORD!

But, my soul, when thou hast taken the fullest, and most leisurely survey of the loveliness, and wisdom, and generosity of Jonathan, turn thy thoughts to the contemplation of thy JESUS, in

whom are hid all the treasures of loveliness, wisdom, and knowledge; and behold that matchless superiority in him to every thing excellent. JESUS is, indeed, *the altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand*. He is the wonderful Counsellor, for guiding and instructing his people in wisdom and knowledge. And he is not only the noblest of all possible examples of mercy, but mercy itself; even *the mercy promised*. Yes! blessed JESUS, it is thy sweet and friendly office to give us counsel in all seasons of perplexity; to impart to us the secrets of thy FATHER'S will, both in a way of providence and of grace: and thou dost indeed sooth us in all our troubles. When on earth thou didst mingle thy tears with the sorrows of thy distressed family. And now in glory, thou still retainest the feelings of our human nature: and when we are driven out and forsaken of all men, thou dost never leave us, nor forsake us. Oh! Precious LORD GOD! when I think of thy matchless love, how infinite, how inexhaustible; that even my ingratitude and forgetfulness of thee cannot wear out. Shall I not in all seasons when viewing anything lovely in the creature, like this of Jonathan, shall I not call to mind thy surpassing loveliness, in mercy, grace, and favour to me, and to thy people? And shall I not, under the impression of the vast superiority, point to JESUS, as the church of old, and say, *this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem*.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The troubles of David are prosecuted in history through this chapter. Being driven from home, and like one banished the land, he visits Nob; receives from Ahimelech, the priest, hallowed bread: and the sword of Goliath, which was there. David hastens to Achish, at Gath; is but poorly received, and full of fears lest the men of Gath should betray him, he feigns himself mad. These are the principal points in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED Redeemer! I cannot behold the show-bread which David craved for himself and followers, from the hand of the Priest, without having my soul led to contemplate thee, thou bread of life, thou show-bread on the Golden Altar, before thy FATHER, as the everlasting food of all thy people. Thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed. Thou hast been the show-bread of thy FATHER before all worlds. As the corn is bruised, and broken, and prepared for nourishment to the body, so, precious JESUS! hast thou been bruised and broken for our sins, and prepared for the durable substance of thy people, from and to everlasting. And oh! the heavenly, the divinely prepared sustenance in thee! Thou art shown forth by our GOD and FATHER as the infinitely satisfying fulness on which thy people may live for ever. Without thee all is empty and unsatisfying. in thee every want is answered. Thy Priests (for all thy people are a nation of kings and priests) enjoy thy fulness. The carnal world neither know thee nor enjoy thee. Oh! precious LORD GOD, enable me by true faith, with all the royal priesthood, to make a special appropriation of thy person and righteousness, with all thy saving benefits, to my soul. I would live upon thee, rejoice in thee, walk with thee, and make use of thee, as David did the show-bread of the sanctuary, upon every occasion. Be, thou my GOD, and acknowledge me for one of thy people. Never like Doeg, to be detained before thee; but, as a free-will offering, may I present myself by the mercies of my GOD a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD, which is my reasonable service. And do thou, dearest JESUS, give me of the bread which is in secret, which the world knoweth not, because it knew thee not, that I may eat and live for ever.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

David's distresses are still continued, and form the subject of this Chapter. He is constrained to leave Achish, and gets to the cave of Adullam. His relations now seek to him: many persons in desperate circumstances join him: Saul's rage against him breaks out with more and more violence: *Doeg the Edomite*, having informed Saul of Ahimelech the priest's kindness to David, Saul causeth the priests of Nob *to be slain, and the city of Nob is destroyed by him. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escapes, and flees to David. These are the principal matters contained in this Chapter.*

REFLECTIONS

HERE, dearest JESUS, in the flight of David to the cave of Adullam, I would pause to contemplate thee. Thou art ever precious, ever lovely, ever endearing, in every possible point of view, in which my soul beholds thee; but when I see thee, as David is here represented, *as becoming the Captain of every poor distressed, discontented, and wretched debtor: oh! how doth my soul long to come for ever under thy banner, and hail thee the Captain of my salvation!*

And in this glorious character, as the Leader and Commander of thy people, do I not behold thee as the gift of thy FATHER to this blessed purpose, to the fugitive, distressed band of poor, ruined, and undone sinners? Do I not view thee as becoming Captain over them, as well as Captain to them! For surely, when thou receivest them in the wilderness of their state by nature, thou regeneratest them by thy power, convertest them from the error of their way, and dost not only cancel the debt of the insolvent, and soften and remove the distress of the afflicted; but take away the very cause of discontent in those who have found but too much reason to

he dissatisfied with the ruined state of their nature, and have fled to thee for peace and content, in thy finished righteousness, and blood-shedding atonement. Yes! thou blessed JESUS! thou Almighty Captain of our salvation! it is thine, with the sword of the SPIRIT, both to conquer for them, and conquer in them. Oh! let thy precious word bring with it convictions of our sin, and convictions of thy all-sufficient righteousness; that thy little army may become more than conquerors through thy grace leading them on; until all the Sauls of persecution and opposition, which hunt for their life, are destroyed; and thou shalt bring them into thy holy mountain, thy kingdom, where thou wilt make them kings and Priests to GOD and the FATHER, for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

This is an interesting Chapter, and it contains some sweet practical instructions to the exercised believer, in his views of what is here recorded in the life of David. Saul is still pursuing him for slaughter; the LORD works deliverance by David for the men of Keilah; notwithstanding which the men of Keilah intended to deliver David into Saul's hand. David retreats to the wilderness of Ziph, and there has an interview with Jonathan; but upon the Ziphites treachery, in inviting Saul to come and take him, David escapes from thence, and retreats to the strong holds of En-gedi.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us pause over the perusal of this chapter, if it be for no other purpose than to remark the gracious care of a covenant GOD over his people; and to observe, that though *many be the afflictions of the righteous, yet the LORD delivereth out of them all.*

But let us further learn from the view of it, how graciously the same merciful LORD supports the trials of his people, and makes their back suited to their burden; that *as their day is, so their strength shall be*. Surely nothing but the LORD's grace could have been found sufficient to have borne up David's mind under such heavy afflictions. And who, thus supported, but must have been constrained to say as he did; *It is good for me to have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes?* if trouble, and the malice and persecution of our enemies, be made the means, in the hand of our most wise and gracious GOD, to bring our hearts to live on him; and if, (as is most probable) without these exercises, our hearts would not be found so closely cleaving to the LORD; oh! who would not wish to be driven out from all creature comfort, that we might experience such sweet and holy enjoyment as David did, in communion with GOD.

But chiefly, from the perusal of this chapter, let us, Reader, eye JESUS. Was not that precious LAMB of GOD represented in all David's troubles? Did Saul hunt David from city to city, and from one place to another; and can we forget, how *strong bulls of Bashan beset him around, until his strength was poured out like water; and his heart, like wax, was melted in his bowels!* Yes! thou dearest JESUS, David's LORD and Son! thou wast exposed to the wrath, both of devils and of wicked men, in the day of thy calamity. Thou didst endure *such a contradiction of sinners against thyself*; and wast brought under oppression and suffering, until that thy life was made an offering, and a sacrifice for sin. But here, blessed JESUS, in the view of thine unequalled sufferings, may I always connect with it the cause. All this was not for thyself, but thy people. In the midst of all, thou wast *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. And when I see thee in these situations of trial and suffering, and behold thee personating thy people, *the heir of all things*, and yet *not where to lay thine head; the brightness of thy Father's glory*, and yet *thy visage marred more than any man*: the wonder, the praise, the adoration of angels, and yet, as thou saidst thyself, *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and the outcast of the people!* Oh! precious, precious JESUS, what love must have enflamed thy heart, that thou shouldest become all this, and

infinitely more than this, even *sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee*. Hail! holy Saviour! gracious LORD GOD, Emmanuel! add one blessing more, and incline every heart to love thee, that *every knee may bow before thee, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.*

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

The history of Saul's pursuit of David, is continued in the opening of this chapter. But, in this pursuit, the LORD brought Saul into David's hand: his followers advise David to avail himself of the advantage; but David refuses. He takes occasion, however, to remonstrate with Saul, by bidding him take notice what he might have done, and how he forbore. Saul seems pricked to the heart, in the relation: confesses his sin to David, and obtains from David, a promise of kindness to his house. They part.

REFLECTIONS

READ, my soul, in the character of this deluded, wretched, and unwise king of Israel, the sad history of every unrenewed man, by nature. Blind to all his own real interest and happiness; and giving himself up to work all malice with greediness. And is not every man in this state, that goes forth to the pursuit of persecution, and regardless of his own happiness. He sees not the light of life. He knows nothing of JESUS and his righteousness, but is full of envy, hatred, and every evil work. Alas! what shall open his eyes, or awaken his mind to the proper apprehension of good and evil?

Read, my soul, in the unwearied persecutions of poor David, the happy state, notwithstanding all outward circumstances, of the godly in CHRIST JESUS. Though cast out, and fugitives, and vagabonds, too frequently, in the sight of men, or, as David speaks, like a flea, or a dead dog, of no value; yet chosen of GOD, and precious. They are

crucified with CHRIST; exposed to the rage and violence of Satan and bad men; and worse than all, to the remains of indwelling corruption in their own nature. But, O dearest LORD, how sweet and refreshing is the thought, *more is He that is with us, than all that are against us*. All the Sauls, which now persecute us, know as he did concerning David, that the LORD hath established his kingdom in the hearts of his people. Let this, O my GOD, be my everlasting comfort under every trial. Poor, wretched, persecuted, and deeply tried, as I may be in myself, yet JESUS will plead my cause, and bear me out through every difficulty. LORD! do thou carry me through all the caves of *En-gedi*, and the mountains, and wilderness state of my warfare; support me under every burden; lighten every care; bear me up under every trial; lead me through every opposition; bring me constantly near thy throne of grace, and finally bring me home to thy throne of glory.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains a great variety of contents, in its relation. Here is an account of the death of Samuel; the character and behaviour of Nabal towards David; the sin-preventing providence of God, in causing Nabal's wife, by her prudence, to avert the intended destruction of Nabal and his house, by David; the death of Nabal, and the wife of Nabal becoming afterwards, the wife of David.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss our review of this chapter, nor close the book which records the death of Samuel, without first paying due tribute to a memory so truly valuable. I would for once methinks pass over the consideration of many other beauties contained in this Chapter, in order to gather suitable reflections from the tomb of the prophet. It pleased the LORD to call Samuel to be his

servant in a day of great departure from the LORD. And the LORD was pleased to call him home at a season when corruption abounded. Surely it was a time when such a man was most needed. Saints and servants of the LORD who are eminent in their day and generation, are the salt, the light, and pillars of the earth. When they are gone, their vacancies form sad gaps in the church. How different a death from that of *Nabal*! while the one dies unlamented, unpitied, disregarded: the name of *Samuel* ever lives in remembrance, and his memory is blessed.

But let us not stop here. Do I not see in Samuel a type of the ever blessed JESUS! Not only as a prophet, but as a priest, a ruler, a judge, a deliverer in Israel? Was Samuel *promised* of the LORD as his very name *Samuel* implied? and was not our JESUS the very *promised seed*, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed? Was Samuel coveted by his mother, and as instantly lent or returned unto the LORD from the womb; and do we not feel our minds in this view, directed to the contemplation of him, who in all ages was the earnestly sought and longed for, *the desire of all nations*, and who was given as a covenant of the people, dedicated to GOD, and consecrated in the service of redemption, from his miraculous birth. Yes, blessed JESUS! the outlines of thy unequalled character thou wert pleased to have marked out in the several servants of thine, which ministered in thy church before thy coming. The early call of Samuel, and his being appointed to the prophetic office; his ministry, his unkind treatment, and rejection by the people; his benevolent labours, prayers, and intercessions for Israel; these, and many other circumstances which marked his life, became typical of thee, and thy divine mission, when for the government, instruction, and redemption of thy people, thou camest on earth as the almighty prophet of thy church, and as the faithful priest whom GOD the FATHER promised to raise up, that should *build him a sure house, and become his anointed for ever*. Oh, blessed JESUS! the gift of our GOD and FATHER *unasked*; and here as in a thousand other instances, infinitely surpassing all the Samuel's thy servants, be thou to me both prophet, priest, and king! Do thou now by the rich anointing of thy blessed SPIRIT, graciously teach me of thyself and of thy FATHER: guide me and lead me into all truth, and when thou hast

accomplished all thine holy will and pleasure concerning me in this my day and generation; LORD, take me home to thyself to behold thy glory, that *where thou art there may I be also*.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

The history of David's persecution by Saul is again opened, and continued through this Chapter. The Ziphites inform Saul against David. Saul goes in quest of him. David is favoured with another opportunity of slaying Saul, but will not avail himself of it. A similar interview takes place to what happened before between David and Saul; after which they depart one from the other.

REFLECTIONS

READER! again the HOLY GHOST calleth us to behold the implacable and unmerciful malice of Saul, and the gracious exercises of the mind of David, in a renewed instance of the evil designs of the one, and the deliverance GOD wrought for the other. Let us obey the sacred call, and pause over what we have read, in order to mark the different dispositions, of these men; and yet more especially to behold the gracious interposition of GOD, in defeating the evil schemes of Saul and prospering the hand of David.

But may we not without violence to the subject, behold in the unremitting persecution of David by Saul, somewhat more than the mere jealousies of nature in the envy of Saul to David, respecting his *succession in the kingdom? Are there not traces to be seen of the still greater envy arising in the mind of the unregenerate, in the view of the LORD's favour towards his people in a spiritual kingdom. Alas! what bitterness do the children of the wicked one manifest to the children of the kingdom? Like the corrupt stock from which they shoot, their very vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. In this spiritual warfare what goings forth of the enemy, like Saul in the*

pursuit of David, are there every day to surprise by ambush, or to take by subtilty? And what Ziphites are there every where to join in the confederacy, to deliver the godly into the snare of the wicked. Ye soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of GOD. Remember your enemies are the enemies of our GOD and of his CHRIST. He will fight your battles. Stand still and you shall shortly see the salvation of GOD. He hath delivered you hitherto, and doth deliver, and therefore trust in him, and he will yet deliver. Ere long the battle will be finished. That promise is absolute. The GOD of peace shall bruise satan under your feet shortly.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

The HOLY GHOST in holding forth to the church the history of David, hath in this Chapter given us a view of this great man in the infirmities of his character. Here are his fears respecting Said, and his want of faith in GOD recorded: his flight to Gath in consequence thereof: Achish the king of Gath, his kind reception of David: gives him Ziklag for a dwelling place. During his residence in the country of the Philistines, David maketh excursions upon the neighbouring states and conquers them, but deceives Achish in the account. These are the principal contents of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Do not, my soul, pass over the review which the HOLY GHOST gives thee of David's want of faith, in the opening of this chapter, without taking home with thee the important instruction it affords, to teach thee where thy strength is, and where is all thy stay. Oh, blessed SPIRIT! I thank thee for the view. Yes, gracious GOD, I see the need of it. If David failed after such distinguishing evidences of

favor; if he, *the man after GOD's own heart*, was led away from his stedfastness; *Oh! how shall I be supported in a trying hour? There is a way indeed by which I shall be more than conqueror; and that is in thee, O blessed JESUS. Thy servant hath from his own experience assured the church, that they which are kept, are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation. LORD, I take occasion from the weakness of David's faith, the HOLY GHOST hath here shown me, I take occasion to bespeak thy grace for every trying hour, and that thy strength may be made perfect in my weakness. To thy precious bloodshedding power would I look; in its divine efficacy would I trust to resist all temptations; and under its sprinkling would my soul come; this, this dearest JESUS, will secure me, and like the holy army in heaven, who overcame by the blood of the LAMB, I shall then be enabled to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

We are hastening to the close of the reign and life of Saul. The Philistines are preparing for a battle fatal to Saul. He is dispirited and dismayed; and instead of looking to the LORD, he betakes himself to familiar spirits; the sad consequence which follows, and the alarms of Saul, are rehearsed in the close of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

IF ever the contemplation of the wicked, in his progress from sin to sin can become profitable to deter from the commission of sin, and to keep back the soul, under grace, from presumption; surely there is not a character in scripture which teaches this more loudly, than that of Saul. Behold him from the moment of Samuel's

anointing him king, to the hour in which the HOLY GHOST hath here sketched his history, and what doth it afford but the very melancholy account of a desperately wicked heart. That heart of Saul was never changed by grace; for though he is said to have had *another* heart from what he had when seeking his Father's asses, when he came to the kingdom; yet not a *new heart created in righteousness and true holiness*. With this deceitful heart of nature, the acquired purple of a kingdom, and the power of a Prince, only furnished means of manifesting what that heart originally *was by nature, and what it ever remained untouched by grace. It only was uniformly making a greater progression and ripeness in evil. Reader! behold in his history how he proposed to himself pleasure in offending GOD; fighting against the gracious hand that had given him a throne; and as one determined to sacrifice every thing rather than that GOD should appoint a successor in his kingdom, who had, unasked, and unthought of, given a kingdom to him. Think herefrom what an awful thing it must be in the wicked to be found fighting against GOD.*

From the view of Saul, let us turn our thoughts to JESUS, whose redemption work becomes the only remedy for all sin, even in his children, who are by nature open and justly exposed to wrath even as others. We read the history of Saul to very little purpose if the sequel of it and indeed every part of it, doth not lead to this conclusion of the apostles; Are we then better than they? Are we in ourselves, and in our fallen state, by nature, less exposed to the same commission of sin? No, in no wise. For the scripture hath before proved all under sin. And GOD hath concluded all in unbelief as well as sin. Well may every truly awakened soul cry out, under the heart-felt conviction of the truth; Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. Here then, Reader! let you and I join issue and rejoice. JESUS is set forth as a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood. He is the salvation and the righteousness of GOD to every sinner that believeth. Oh! LORD, grant us the fullness of grace to believe

the record which GOD the FATHER hath given of his dear Son. And may that precious scripture be ever sounding in our ears, and ever living in its divine and saving influence in our hearts; GOD having raised up his Son JESUS hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

This Chapter makes a digression from the prosecution of Saul's history, to relate an event in the life of David. While Saul was distressed in the approach of the Philistines, and Achish was proposing to take David with him to the battle; the lords of the Philistines objecting to it, David is dismissed with kind marks of respect by Achish.

REFLECTIONS

I HOPE the Reader will feel his soul drawn out with mine, both to admire and adore the faithfulness of GOD, in his deliverance of poor David from the snare into which his want of faithfulness in his GOD had brought him. Surely none but a wise GOD could have found the means to have brought him out of the double danger into which his folly and sin had brought him. Apparently there was no way to escape, but either he must have proved a traitor to his country, or a traitor to his friend. And surely none but a faithful GOD would have given grace to have brought him out, when his own unfaithfulness had so justly forfeited the LORD's favour. But oh, thou dearest LORD! how plainly are we taught by this and every other instance, of thy passing by the worthlessness of thy people, that thou dust this not for our own sake, but for thine own great name's sake and thy glory. Hence, blessed LORD, thou dost manifest thy faithfulness in sending the trial upon the heels of our unfaithfulness. And thou dost manifest thy faithfulness in guiding us through the trial. And thou displayest the riches of thy grace and faithfulness, in making the termination of

it minister to thy glory and our welfare. Oh precious JESUS! in every instance of my poor wanderings and unbelief, and fear, and the like, do thou so mercifully and so tenderly deal by me. And while thou dost compassionate my unworthiness, let thy grace be sufficient for me, and let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness. I lament, dearest LORD, that like David, I have too often thought and feared, that notwithstanding all thy past mercies and manifestations, I should one day be left to perish by the hand of the enemy. But in thy after grace in sending difficulties and hedging up my way with thorns, I have proved thy mercy. I can and do therefore set up my *Ebenezer* in all the proofs of thy love, and find cause to say with David, *I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.*

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

This Chapter becomes very interesting in its contents, for it relates to a period in the life of David, both important, as it proved to him, and instructive to GOD's people. During the absence of David from Ziklag to attend the army of the Philistines, the Amalekites whom David had before scourged, made an incursion upon the city, and had not only set fire to it but carried away the women and children captives. The distress of David's little army was so great upon this occasion, that they talked of stoning him.— David sought the LORD — the LORD answered him — David by GOD's direction pursued the spoilers, overtook them, recovered all his loss, and made distribution among his soldiers of the plunder.

REFLECTIONS

THE HOLY GHOST hath evidently much instruction to convey to his Church, in what is here related of David's calamity; and I would charge it upon the Reader's soul, and my own, to enquire very humbly, what the will and mind of the LORD is.

My Brother! when like David, our want of faith, and the slenderness of our trust in GOD, tempts us to go out of the path of duty, and a shyness takes place between the LORD and our hearts; is it not a blessed mark of grace, that the LORD doth not leave us to ourselves, and to eat the fruit of our own devices? Doth he not mean everything gracious, when he hedgeth up our way with thorns on purpose that *we shall not find our lovers*; but that our minds, being prepared by his secret workings, may be constrained to say; *I will return again to my first love, my first husband; for then was it better with me than now?*

If then, my Brother, after going out at any time full, we are made to return empty: if our house, which we left in peace, we find disordered, as David and his men did *Ziklag*, at our coming home: if the LORD takes away the desire of our eyes with a stroke; removes our creature comforts; breaks down our creature confidences; makes a sorrow to grow out of the very root which we had planted for ourselves, and promised the sure fruit of enjoyment: what shall I say? If nothing but some severe dispensation will bring us back, when all the milder *methods of his love have failed: will you not count that love, nay infinite love, and wisdom too, which administereth the medicine, however nauseous to our proud, and too much pampered stomachs, because nothing but physic will reach our case?*

Oh! gracious, long suffering, long forgotten Saviour, in every view, and at every direction, how doth thy tenderness meet our ingratitude! How oft, like David, have I said; *I shall one day perish* by the hand of one or another! And even in the midst of deliverances have feared the issue? And how oft like him, have I ran to Philistine confederacies, and an arm of flesh, have *forgotten the LORD my Maker, and feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy; and where is the fury of the oppressor?* And hadst thou, dearest LORD! justly, as thou mightest have done, given me up to the pursuit of my own ways, and to the fruit of my own devices; where would have been my portion? But, oh! thou most gracious JESUS! precious Saviour, how thou hast called me home; allured me, and brought me into some *wilderness* dispensation; and there hast caused *the wilderness and the solitary*

place to be glad; and even the desert to rejoice, and to blossom as the rose. Go on, heavenly Teacher, graciously go on, nor spare the rod of affliction, when the wayward conduct of thy poor, ignorant, and ungrateful child makes it necessary. Only, dearest LORD, come thyself with, and in the affliction, that it may be fully blessed, and sanctified, in bringing back my heart to thee; that when, like David, I have wept till I can weep no more; and sorrows, like a flood, poured over me from within and without, and everything like the threatened stoning of the people, oppress me on every side, like him, I may still find grace and faith to encourage myself in the LORD my GOD.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

This is a melancholy Chapter, which relates to us the sequel of Saul's history; the sad termination of a sinful life. The battle between the Philistines, and Israel, in mount *Gilboa*, in which the Philistines are conquerors, and Saul, *Jonathan*, *Abinadab*, and *Malchishua*, his sons, are slain.—Israel possessed by the Philistines; the camp of Saul plundered, his dead body, and those of his sons, carried away to *Beth-shan*: but afterwards rescued by the men of *Jabesh-gilead*. These are the principal contents rehearsed in this Chapter, which ends the Book.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! once more over the sad view of Saul's history, and as thou hast been called upon to mark his progress in sin, and the ripening of his mind in iniquity; here behold, in self-murder, the awful close of a life so evil. Oh! how dreadful to die out of CHRIST, uninterested in him; void of all covenant promises; unregenerated in heart, unwashed in the blood of the LAMB, and without the clothing of the

Redeemer's righteousness. Better to die in a ditch, than to die out of CHRIST. The manner of death is nothing: to die any how, any where, by any means; only to die in JESUS. LORD! give to him that reads, and him that writes, the blessed hope in our death, that living or dying, we are the LORD'S. Oh! for a part in the first resurrection, and then the second death hath no power.

Dearest JESUS! thou art the resurrection, and the life. Thou blessed JESUS, by thy death, hast overcome death, so that death now, by thee, is among the inventory of the believer's treasure. To die in time is gain. LORD, give grace, both to writer and reader, that we may so live, as to add death to our sure account of profit; that *whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all may be ours; for we are CHRIST'S, and CHRIST is GOD'S.*

2nd SAMUEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Several of the observations which were proposed in the opening of the *first* book of Samuel, will meet the Reader at the commencement of this *second*. As was remarked concerning the supposed author of it, whose name it bears, Samuel, though he might be the writer of the first book in part, that is, as far as took place in point of history prior to his death; yet common sense must know that the events recorded after that period could never have been handed to the church by him. And therefore it will necessarily follow that the whole of this *second* book must have owed its existence to some other penman. And perhaps it was on this account that the *seventy* who formed the scriptures into the present order in which they are placed in our Bibles, judged it more proper to distinguish both this and the former under the title of *the first and second books of Samuel; otherwise called the first and second books of the Kings*.

I think it hardly necessary to detain the Reader from immediately entering on the perusal of this *second* book of Samuel, with desiring him to look out very diligently for the signatures of divine inspiration through all the parts of it. If the writer of this Commentary and the Reader of it, are both brought under the teachings of the SPIRIT, and by his unerring hand are led to trace, through the whole of its departments, his well known characters; these will refresh the mind and carry the truest and indeed the only infallible testimonies to the understanding, of authenticity. And the importance of such a discovery is I hope by this time so thoroughly understood by the Reader, who hath kindly accompanied me through the several preceding books of this Commentary, that I presume it can no longer be needful to insist upon it.

With respect to the annals of mankind, in which, as an history, the second book of Samuel is placed, we find the period to be somewhat about 1060 years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The book itself includes the whole reign of David, which continued nearly forty years.

There are a great many sweet and spiritual subjects opened to our contemplation in the several parts of this book; and especially considered as leading the mind to the Person, and Offices, and Characters of the LORD JESUS.

David, whose history it contains, was in many instances so eminent a type of the ever blessed JESUS, that it may well be supposed the HOLY GHOST, (whose office and whose pleasure it is, to be *taking of the things of JESUS to show unto the people*), would not suffer the life of this man to be marked out for the instruction and comfort of the church, without very frequently causing the mind of the Reader to be directed from David's history, to David's LORD. On this feature of the book itself, I would, above all things, earnestly request the Reader to let his eye be fixed. And I pray the HOLY SPIRIT to bless, in a very eminent degree to his view, this most precious part of it. I only take occasion, before I enter upon the commentary of this book (as in former instances) to make a request of the Reader (and in which his own happiness is too highly interested to refuse me); that he will pray over it, and pause over it, in the poor *human* observations presented to his view, for *divine* teachings. Beg of GOD, my brother, to give you *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*; that, in the seeing eye, and the hearing ear, and the understanding heart, (all which are of the LORD) these sacred books of GOD may come home to the mind, not only *in word, but in power, and in much assurance of faith, and of the HOLY GHOST*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The event of the battle between Israel and the Philistines, in the overthrow of Israel and the death of Saul, and his three sons, this

chapter opens with the relation of, as reported to David, by an Amalekite. The sacred historian, gives the account of the distress of David upon the occasion: his anger against the informer, who, thinking to have ingratiated himself with David, boasted of his having slain Saul, and is slain for it. David breaks out into a bitter lamentation on this event, and especially mourns over the death of his beloved Jonathan.

REFLECTIONS

See Reader! in the beautiful conduct of David at Saul's death, how grace enables the believer to stay all enmity, and even to requite good for evil. Depend upon it, nothing but this can accomplish such a purpose; for it is the sole work of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

But let us, in the view of this chapter, go further and remark, that as nothing but grace can throw down all the jealousies of life in our competition with others, so nothing but the same divine principle can reconcile us to our death. Until we know JESUS truly and savingly, we can neither think of death with comfort nor meet it with fortitude, Yes, dearest JESUS! it is thy death, which hath overcome death; and thy blood which hath taken out its sting. Oh! grant me grace ever to be keeping thy triumphs for thy people in view, and never to look at death but with a steady eye also to thee. Thy victory over death, hell, and the grave, is the everlasting consolation of thy people; and death, no more than life, or principalities, or powers, shall be able to separate from thee. *Through death thou hast destroyed him that had the power of death, and hast delivered them who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage.* Oh! thou dearest LORD! give me to see the full privilege of thy triumphs; that my iniquity is pardoned, and my sin covered; that death hath no terrors, nor the grave any alarm; let me hear that blessed voice of thine, and my soul will rejoice in full assurance of faith: *Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death. Amen.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the relation of David's accession to the throne of Hebron, A party however is formed by Abner the Captain of Saul's host, in favour of Ish-bosheth, Saul's son; which became the source of a long contention between the house of David and the house of Saul. David reigns in Hebron, and Ish-bosheth in Mahanaim.

REFLECTIONS

Behold Reader! in the instance of David in this chapter, that the death of one enemy only makes way for the appearance of another. If Saul be dead, Saul hath a son still to persecute and harass the life of David. If the LORD in mercy delivers his people from this or that trial; others shall succeed. *They that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS must, and shall, suffer persecution.* It is, as our adored Redeemer told his disciples, and all have found it, *through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom.* Though David was elected by GOD himself to the kingdom, yet long conflicts he must go through before he gets even a prospect of obtaining it: and when all opposition in the death of Saul seemed for the time to have died away: yet new *Sauls* arose to oppose. Yes! depend upon it, Reader, the chosen of GOD will never in this world be without the opposition and malice of the enemy. It is and must be so. Nay indeed, it forms one of the very evidences of their character. Let you and I therefore mark this down in large letters, for our every day's memorandum; and let those sweet words of CHRIST not only reconcile our hearts, but cause them to rejoice in the blessed testimony. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen ye out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* Blessed JESUS! May I have these sweet marks, and carry about with me these precious assurances of thy love, to help my mind on to a continually rejoicing in thee and thy great salvation.

But let me not dismiss this Chapter before that I have taken from it another delightful lesson. Did David bring up with him, when the LORD appointed him to go up to Hebron to his kingdom, did he bring up with him all that appertained to him, and leave nothing behind? And shall not my soul rejoice in the blessed certainty, that my David, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, my king and my GOD, will bring up to that kingdom he is gone to take possession of in eternal glory, all his followers? Is JESUS now in the Hebron of Hebrons, in the heaven of heavens; and will he be satisfied there, while any of his household are left below? Shall there indeed an hoof be left behind in the spiritual Egypt, in the *Ziklag* country of the Philistines? No, thou dear Redeemer, thou saidst thyself before thy departure, that thou didst only go before to take possession of it in thy people's name. Thou art gone *to receive a kingdom, and wilt return*. Oh! for faith in lively exercise to believe *the record which GOD hath given of his dear Son*. Shortly thou wilt come to take me home to thyself, that where thou art there may I be also. Never, never my soul, lose sight of these sweet words of my JESUS; but let their animating assurance have a living influence upon all thy words, and thoughts, and actions. FATHER, *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. That they all may be one as thou FATHER art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. I, in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in me, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The account of the struggle on the part of Saul's family for the kingdom with David, is continued in this Chapter. A quarrel takes place between Ishbosheth and Abner. The latter makes overtures to David. David's treaty with him. Abner, while attempting to bring

over Israel to David's interest, is slain by Joab. David's distress at this event. These are the principal points related in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

This whole chapter, except what the first verse of it teacheth, serves to show the Reader and Writer what a mass of treachery, deceit, and evil, the human heart is made up of. Alas! alas! what a state is man reduced to by the fall. Oh! blessed JESUS, how is thy glorious redemption-work raised to our adoration and delight, in the contemplation of it; since but for thy gracious undertaking, all mankind must forever have remained under this mass of guilt and ruin. Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

Before we dismiss our review of this chapter, methinks I would have the Reader, as well as myself, pause once more over the consideration of the serious thought induced in the contemplation of the long war between the house of David and of Saul: and let each for himself enquire to which, spiritually viewed, we belong. Then when this point is ascertained, if happily through grace we are of the house and lineage of our Almighty David; let us advance one step further, and examine whether, in the long contests between grace and corruption, nature is waxing more and more feeble, and our better part is renewed day by day?

Reader! depend upon it a real follower of JESUS CHRIST dreads above all things, lest in the end, he should be found mistaken concerning himself in his estimate of an interest in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Are you really, truly, heartily, willing to know? Go before the throne—present yourself now just as you are for judgment. — Are you resting upon any presumptive evidence of what you suppose yourself to have experienced in times past, of awakening, convincing, converting grace; or are your sole hopes founded upon the blessed assurances of JEHOVAH's covenant love and faithfulness solely secured to poor sinners, in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST? If the *latter* be your *experience*, and not the *former*; if self, with all its feelings, supposed enlargements, joys, and the uncertain ups and downs of the soul, be out of the account; and JESUS, the LORD alone, be exalted in the day you present yourself for judgment; this will confirm, in the long war between grace and

corruption, that the house of David is getting stronger and stronger; and that of Saul is waxing weaker and weaker! LORD JESUS! I would say both for myself and Reader, *Search us, O GOD, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in our souls, and lead us in the way everlasting.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

A melancholy relation this chapter hath of the murder of Ish-bosheth by two captains in his band. After they had perpetrated the deed they hastened with the head of Ish-bosheth to David, who so far from approving of what they had done, ordered their execution. These are the principal points here related.

REFLECTIONS

The sudden and unexpected death of Saul's son, while dreaming of an earthly kingdom, may serve to furnish out, both to the Reader and Writer, an important reflection on the sure, but uncertain, coming of our latter end. There is but one security against the evil of that day; and that is, an interest in his blood and righteousness, who by his death hath overcome death, and by his resurrection hath secured the resurrection of his people. That precious, precious scripture, is a motto to be worn in the bosom of the faithful, and to be fixed in the largest characters over the couches of believers; CHRIST *was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.* Thus to be found in CHRIST, is to be found in peace before him. And in this case, sudden death is sudden glory.

Reader! if JESUS be your hope, your trust, your confidence, your rock, you can never be moved. For how can the soul be naked which hath CHRIST himself for his covering? *I know* (says Paul) *whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* What day that might be Paul knew not; but every day he was looking out for it. *I protest*

(says he) *by your rejoicing which I have in CHRIST JESUS our LORD, I die daily.* Blessed Paul! what a happy reckoning did he make of it. And what assurance was founded in it. Reader! let you and I keep JESUS always in view; let us set this precious Redeemer always before us; and depend upon it, living *upon* him, and trusting wholly *in* him, for his atoning blood and justifying righteousness, our departure will be in peace, though the signal be given for our removal without a moment's warning. It is but to close the eyes of the body to this world, and the soul will open them in glory. *Blessed (says JESUS) is that servant, whom his LORD, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with a brighter prospect to David's life and reign than any before. All the tribes of Israel now come to him, claiming relationship, and offering him the whole kingdom. David is anointed. He goeth forth to war; builds a city; receives from the king of Tyre both materials for building and builders; is established in his kingdom; takes to himself more concubines and wives; his children are increased; fights with the Philistines, and is encouraged by the LORD. These things are related in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Before we quit this very instructive Chapter, let us, my christian friend, look at it once more; and while we view the zeal of all the tribes of Israel in anointing David king, let you and I see whether we have manifested an equal readiness to bend the knee to the sceptre of grace before our JESUS, and crown him LORD of all. It is GOD the FATHER that hath constituted him in his mediatorial glory, King in Zion; while, in the fullness of his GODHEAD he is one with the FATHER, Universal LORD over all, GOD blessed for evermore. And in his Almighty hands are the issues of life and death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. Yes! blessed JESUS, thy kingdom is thy

church; thy body, thy fair one, thy spouse: thou art of our kindred, and we of thine, *thy bone and thy flesh*. Thou hast fought, and art still fighting for us all our battles. Thou hast led us out, and brought us in. Thou feedest thy people with thyself, for thou art both the bread of life, and the water of life. And surely the love, the service, the voluntary homage of thy people, when thou hast made them willing in the day of thy power, is thy lawful, just, and proper right. And when thou hast taken away the blind, and the lame, and entered by thine own Almighty arm and power, into the strong holds of Zion; oh! LORD JESUS, do thou dwell there, and make our souls and bodies thy temple of abode. Reader! have you and I thus bent the knee to JESUS? Have we crowned him with the crown of free grace, in ascribing all salvation to him? Is he dear, is he precious, is he the altogether lovely, is he the LORD our righteousness? Dearest JESUS! give both him that writes, and him that reads, grace to say amen: and let every high thing that would exalt itself against his sovereignty be brought down, and every thought *brought into captivity to the obedience and love of CHRIST*.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This is an interesting Chapter, and considered as typically, in some points, referring to JESUS, demands our attention the more. We are here informed of David's intention of bringing up the ark from where it had long been in obscurity, during the troubles of Saul's reign, to David's new city. In the accomplishment of this purpose, David meets with an humbling, and most distressing providence.—His behaviour upon it,—the attempt afterwards renewed, and succeeds,—the joy of David and the people on the occasion,—the behaviour of Michal, David's wife,—his displeasure. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! think how wretched and low must have been the state of Israel all the while they were without the Ark, the symbol of GOD's presence. No doubt many a pious Israelite sighed in secret on the occasion. Oh! my Brother! think what a sorrowful heart-breaking event would it be to this happy land of ours, if for the sins of the people the LORD should be pleased to remove the golden candlestick out of place! Even in the bare prospect of it, the heart trembles! Our sweet sabbaths, our solemn feasts, our gospel privileges, and ordinances; once over! And yet, is not the sin of the land enough to call for these tokens of divine displeasure? Who can consider the GOD of all grace, and the FATHER of all mercies, so continually affronted as he is, but must tremble for the consequences. if the soul of Lot was vexed from day to day by the filthy conversation of the wicked; well may rivers of water run down the eyes of the faithful, because men keep not GOD's law.

But Reader! amidst the awful contemplation of such an event may it be your comfort and mine, that should the LORD *lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*; though we lose the Ark, GOD's people cannot lose him whose symbol the Ark was. Oh! let you and I fetch up the Ark of GOD, even JESUS, to our hearts and to our houses: It is his presence alone which gives a real blessing to ordinances; and without his presence the best of ordinances are nothing. And, O LORD GOD, grant, that neither of us, like *Uzzah*, may presumptuously give a wrong touch unto the Ark, nor vainly think that the Ark of GOD needs our feeble hand to its support. Do thou, LORD GOD, direct all our approaches unto thee, and direct them that they may be after the due order which thou hast enjoined. And then, if the Michals of the present hour despise our joy, and condemn our raptures, let them; it will only serve to manifest yet more whose we are, by the persecutions of the ungodly. And oh! for grace in full exercise, not like David, on this occasion to return *railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing*. May we pass on through *evil report as well as good report*; and in all our lesser trials, seek, dearest JESUS, a portion of thy SPIRIT, that we may *go forth unto*

thee, without the camp, bearing thy reproach; rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for thy name.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This chapter affords a pleasing view of David's mind. His zeal for GOD's honour and glory, prompts him to the desire of building an house for the LORD. He confers with Nathan the prophet on the subject. The LORD at night reveals his will on this occasion, and commands him to communicate the same to David. Upon receiving this message, David goeth in before the LORD, and offers a Most delightful prayer.

REFLECTIONS

I would pause over the perusal of this chapter to admire the blessed properties of grace, in disposing the heart of David to such a frame of thankfulness, and grateful affection to GOD. It is sweet to see the mind brought into this suitable frame, to discern from what source all our mercies flow, to give the author of them all the glory, that while we receive all the benefit, GOD may have all the praise.

But I would pause yet more, to admire the blessed tokens of distinguishing grace, and above all, the Great Author of that grace, whose infinite benignity and condescension shines yet more and more bright (like the heavenly bodies in the darker nights) from being manifested, notwithstanding all the unworthiness of the objects of his clemency. Yes! Great Source and Fountain of all the sure mercies of David! it is from the covenant love, and faithfulness, and grace, given us in CHRIST JESUS, thy ever dear, and ever blessed Son before the world began, that this kingdom promised to David and his seed, is made sure, permanent, and eternal. Even thee, thou blessed JESUS, in thy glorious mediatorial fulness, and finished salvation, art the gift of GOD our FATHER. And no less, the HOLY GHOST, with all his saving gifts and graces, and influences, cometh forth to thy people as the Sent, both of the FATHER and the SON.

LORD GOD! make this sure house thou didst promise to David and his seed, sure to my soul. And amidst all the unworthiness of my heart, let thy promise, like thyself, be my constant comfort and support. Though thou hast said, if the children of the LORD JESUS commit iniquity, and break thy statutes; though they break thy laws; yet thou wilt not break thy promised mercy. Though thou visit our sins with the stripes of men; yet thy covenant wilt thou not break, nor alter the thing which is gone out of thy lips. *Thou hast once sworn by thy holiness thou wilt not lie unto David.* Oh! precious promise of a more precious promising GOD in CHRIST! *Be it unto me according to thy word!*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have a very different view of David in this chapter, from the view we had of him in the former. There we looked at him in his communion with GOD; and here, in his conflicts with men. Here are his conquests over the Philistines; the Moabites, Zobah, thy Syrians, and the Edomites. Here is also, the account of the rich gifts made to David; his courts of Justice, and his officers. So that altogether we see David here in a state of prosperity.

REFLECTIONS

While I behold the victories of David, upheld by the arm of Omnipotence, and the LORD his GOD preserving him whithersoever he went, oh! for grace to look unto the same covenant GOD in CHRIST, that I may go forth against all the spiritual enemies of my salvation, conquering and to conquer; upheld by his Almighty arm, and kept by his gracious power from all danger, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. And, LORD! do thou endue my soul with the same spirit as thy servant David, to consecrate all gifts, and all attainments to thee, the bountiful Source and Giver of all; that both gain and substance may be cheerfully offered unto thee, *the LORD of the whole earth.*

But chiefly, while I read those victories of David, oh! let my soul pass over the review of David king of Israel, and behold JESUS the King of heaven and earth, going forth thus against all the powers of darkness, the confederacies of earth and hell, in the salvation of his people. Yes! dearest JESUS, I do behold thee as the Great Captain of salvation, boldly waging war with sin, with Satan, and the host of foes in our corrupt and carnal hearts. But thy weapons are all spiritual; and thy victories all eternal. *Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for the rebellious, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.* And now, LORD, having slain thine enemies thyself; it is thou which ledest on thy people to the same victory over them, by the sovereignty of thy power. Do thou, blessed JESUS, lead me on, and bring me through, and make me more than conqueror; and in all my spiritual warfare, let me set thee, *the LORD, continually before me, for if thou art on my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter continues the history of David, and is directed to that part of his character which represents the amiableness of his mind, in his kindness towards the house of Saul. Finding, on enquiry, that Jonathan had left a son behind him, David searcheth him out, makes suitable provision for him, and sets him at his own table.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! In the view here presented of David's generosity to the family of Saul, do not fail to remark the sweet and sure properties of grace. Depend upon it, *if a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST he is none of his.* And how shall you and I testify that the Spirit of CHRIST dwelleth in us, but by a conformity to the actions of the Son of GOD? If David, therefore, sought out the ruined family of Saul, and took them into favour, shall not you and I seek out the scattered sheep of

JESUS, and bring them home to his fold? Can I behold one of those precious souls for whom CHRIST died, in circumstances of distress, and feel nothing like what actuated the Son of GOD, in commiserating and relieving the sorrows of our common nature? Surely, I behold in every one of them thine image, blessed JESUS; and methinks I hear thee say, *Inasmuch as ye have shown kindness to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have shown it unto me*, But oh thou David's LORD, from whom David received the very grace which prompted him, and enabled him, to show grace unto others; do thou regard me as the Mephibosheth of the fallen house of our first father. I am, by nature, lame in both my feet, a cripple from my mother's womb: I bow myself before thee, overpowered with astonishment that thou shouldest look upon such an unworthy creature as I am. And wilt thou indeed, dearest JESUS, take me home to thy table? Wilt thou cause me to eat bread in thy presence? Oh! for grace to live *upon* thee, as well as *with* thee; to entrust in thine hands, with full assurance of faith, all the concerns of my salvation. And, while I eat at thy table below, to live in the glorious expectation and confidence of the arrival of that blessed day of GOD, when thou wilt come and take the home to thy table above to be eternally supplied at those *fountains of living waters*, where GOD *hath wiped away all tears from all eyes*.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

In following David's history, we are here again presented with the relation of war. David sent a friendly message to the king of the Ammonites; but he receiving it unfriendly, and treating the ambassadors of David ill, David enters upon a war with him, and entirely defeats the king of Ammon, and the Syrians, whom he had called to succour him.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! What a correspondence do we find, in all ages, in the circumstances of the people of GOD. The LORD said at the fall, that he would put enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; and how evidently do the effects of it appear. In civil, as well as in religious life, what false constructions are frequently put upon the best intentioned actions. And what unjust, and base foundations do men of the world sometimes make, like the children of Ammon against David, to cover over their hatred to the people of GOD.

But principally, against thy gospel, blessed JESUS! how do the minds of all the carnal unite to treat thy gracious offers with contempt, and to abuse thy precious salvation. Is it because thy offers are of no value; or because men need them not? Alas! What but the most consummate blindness, can suggest the one; or the most horrid deception of the mind, could give rise to the other. But oh! thou blessed Redeemer, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, do thou graciously hold forth the sceptre of mercy to my soul! Break down all the strong holds of Satan; give me to see, to feel, to embrace, to rejoice in the fulness, preciousness, and everlasting value of thy rich, free, and finished redemption. And in all the gracious offers thou art making, of peace and friendship (as David did to the king of Ammon) to the souls of poor, ruined, and undone sinners; oh! LORD, accompany thine offers with thy saving power, and make them willing to be saved in thine own way and purpose. This, LORD, I know will be the case of all whom the FATHER hath given unto thee, and whose salvation thou hast purchased with thy blood and righteousness; but, blessed JESUS! cut short this work in righteousness: *Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou as the roe, or the young hart upon the mountains of Bether.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

This Chapter, which is still the prosecution of David's history, exhibits him in so painful a light, that for the honour of human nature, to say nothing of the honour of a child of GOD, we feel distress to add such a page to David's history. But the HOLY GHOST, for the edification and comfort of the church, hath caused it to be written; and we dare not, we wish not indeed, to extenuate, or to soften, a tittle of the whole transaction. Here is shown us David committing adultery and murder; endeavoring to pass off the fruit of his baseful commerce with another man's wife upon the unsuspecting husband; involving his army in the participation of his guilt, and after all, feeling no remorse nor compunction of heart for his crimes.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I make a most serious pause over the perusal of this chapter, and endeavor to gather the improvements from it which GOD the HOLY GHOST plainly intended the church should gather from the awful subject.

See! that the blessed SPIRIT hath suffered nothing to be kept back in the relation. Everything that can possibly tend to give it the most finished representation of infamy and sin is marked in it. And after the enumeration of adultery, with the art and baseness to conceal it; even leading to drunkenness, and to murder; not barely of one, but of many; we discover (and what is in the representation as awful a view as any) the most consummate boldness in sin, rioting in the fruits of it, in the marriage with the accomplice of his former shame, and a total insensibility and hardness of conscience, as if he had committed no evil at all.

And what may we suppose to be the intention of the HOLY GHOST in thus unfolding to the church's view the shame of David? Is it not, Reader, to teach every child of GOD those most useful, however humbling, lessons; that the best of men are but men, and as liable to fall into the worst of sins as the unrenewed and

unawakened. Corrupt nature; in the mass of flesh and blood, is the same in all. That the LORD's people are regenerated only in their better part, their spiritual faculties. The body still continues earthly, sensual, and tending to earth and sensuality. If therefore the affections of the body in the people of GOD do not break out, and show themselves as vilely as in the unregenerate; this is not from any greater purity in their earthly parts than others, but from the restraining grace of GOD. This is one precious design which we may venture to believe GOD the HOLY GHOST had in view, in causing this fall of David to be so particularly and fully recorded.

And there is another we may as confidently suppose intended by it, and that is, to teach the infinite importance of being always kept by sovereign grace. David himself was so conscious of it that he cries out in a fervor of the greatest earnestness, *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.* Depend upon it, my Brother, the withdrawal of GOD's Spirit from a child of GOD, though but for a short space, is the saddest evil in our pilgrimage state. GOD hath other ways in the stores of his omnipotency, of punishing the sins of his children, than casting them into hell. It is only, as no doubt it was in this instance of David, (in his first giving way to the lust of his corrupt nature, in looking wantonly on Bath-sheba) it is only for the LORD to suspend the operations of his HOLY SPIRIT, and the enemy, who waits for our halting, joining with our own hearts, and the world around, soon makes us to fall. And, if the LORD be withdrawn, the heart, like a cage of unclean birds, is open to the admission of every evil. And who knows what a succession of sins, like those of David, treading one upon the heels of another, may follow during the LORD's suspension of the operations of his grace? How doth the heart, as in his instance, become more and more hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Oh! let us, like him, daily, hourly, minutely, if possible, pray, LORD! *take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from us!*

And, is there not a *third* sweet lesson, believers in CHRIST have, to draw from this view of David? Yes! blessed SPIRIT! I venture to assure myself that in thine own most lovely and gracious office, in glorifying the LORD JESUS, thou didst, above every other consideration, design to teach the church, in the fall of David, the

infinitely precious doctrine of redemption by CHRIST JESUS; and that there is *salvation in no other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Oh! dearest LORD, let this view of David serve to impress on my soul this grand truth, in yet stronger and stronger characters. Give me to see, to feel, to be convinced, that if a man after GOD's own heart, (of whom it is said by the word of truth itself, that *save only in this matter of Uriah he turned not aside from anything that the LORD commanded him all the days of his life.* See 1 Kings 15:5), if such a man needed redemption, oh! how infinitely endeared to every poor sinner's view ought to be the person, offices, relations, and characters of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Yes! thou dear Redeemer! with my latest breath, and earliest song, would I chant those sweet words, as the sum and substance of all my trust; *We have redemption through thy blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of thy grace.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former; and relates the method the LORD was pleased to adopt for the recovery of David after his fall. Nathan the prophet is sent from the LORD to David; opens his commission with a parable. David's behaviour upon this occasion. The LORD's mercy; and his judgment in the death of the child which Bath-sheba bore to David. A relation in the close of the chapter of the war, and the event of it.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! give me grace in the perusal of this chapter to gather all the precious instructions thine HOLY SPIRIT mercifully intended, in the publishing such a record for thy church and people. Do thou, HOLY SPIRIT, graciously accompany thy written word with the influences of thy divine power, that it may be profitable to my soul, *for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

And here, first, cause me to learn, from this view of thy servant David, what my nature is, even in its highest attainments. The best of men, if left to themselves, may fall into the worst of sins. So I behold it here, and let the view of it humble my soul to the dust before thee.

In the next place; LORD, teach me also, from what I here discover, that a child of GOD when fallen cannot arise of himself. The first advance towards a recovery must come from thee. The conviction of this most certain truth is enough to make a soul go humbly all his days.

And, blessed GOD, when thou hast wrought these truths in their own living characters in my heart, oh! lead us to see that from the nature of thy blessed covenant, in the blood and righteousness of thy dear Son, thou wilt not leave thy fallen children in their low state, but wilt recover them for thy name's sake, and for thy righteousness sake thou wilt heal them. Thou wilt send some Nathan, some heavenly messenger; nay, blessed JESUS, thou wilt come thyself, and by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, in convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, thou wilt heal their backslidings, and love them freely. And though by afflictions thou mayest bring them down, yet for thine own sake thou wilt not cast them off. Unworthy, LORD, as we are in ourselves, yet in JESUS thou beholdest us with complacency. Though thou visit our offences with a rod, and our iniquities with stripes, yet thy loving-kindness wilt thou not take from him, nor suffer thy faithfulness to fail.

Here then, LORD, let my soul rest. And when I have gathered all these sweet and precious instructions from the relation the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give of David's fall and recovery, in the instances before me; when I have beheld every thing connected with it in a way of improvement, as it refers to his case, and as it concerns my own; let the whole have this blessed effect on my poor, fallen, corrupt, and sinful nature; to endear yet more and more the LORD JESUS to my heart, and to form him there, the one only sure and certain hope of glory. Yes! thou dear IMMANUEL! thou art the LORD our righteousness! for other righteousness the whole race of fallen Adam can have none. *In* thee do I trust; *on* thee do I lean; *to* thee do I come, and *with* thee pray everlastingly to be found. Be thou made

of GOD to me, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that (according as it is written) he that glorieth let him glory in the LORD.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

In this Chapter is related the beginning of David's domestic troubles. Amnon his son ravisheth his own sister Tamar; and Absalom, another of his sons, murders his brother Amnon. David's extreme sorrow in consequence.

REFLECTIONS

Think, Reader, in the perusal of the history of Amnon's gratified lust, how wretched the man that is given up for a prey to his own corrupt passions! Think also, in the sudden departure of his soul into eternity, in the moment of sin and drunkenness, what an awful termination to a life of iniquity; and how horrible his state, closing his eyes in sin, and opening them again in everlasting misery.

Behold, Reader! in the history here presented to thy view of David's family affliction, how sure the words of the LORD are in their accomplishment. The LORD had told him, that he would raise evil out of his own house, and here we see it. It hath been but a short time since David rioted in adultery and murder; and already we find he had gathered the bitter fruits of the sinful tree he planted. Incest and murder already stain his walls, and these, as the sequel of his history shows, were but the beginning of sorrows.

Precious JESUS! what a relief doth the remembrance of thee, and of thy sweet compassion to our nature, afford in the recollection of the sorrows of it! What but the tidings of great joy, which thy rich, and free, and full deliverance from all the sorrows of our nature brought from heaven, could tend to bind up the broken heart under its manifold afflictions! But when my soul turns to the contemplation of my JESUS, and the everlasting remedy he is in himself, and his complete salvation, here in him alone I find a relief

for every sorrow, a balm for every care. Yes, thou sweet Redeemer! my eyes dry up their tears when I consider that every sin, sorrow, and affliction, hath lost its force, and almost its very name in thy gracious sanctification of it by thy blessed, glorious, gracious, and complete redemption. Oh! heavenly LORD! kindly go on to overrule the powers of Satan, and defeat his triumphs over our poor fallen nature, in leading us to sin, by counteracting his malice, and bringing our hearts nearer to thee. Correct, LORD, the angry passions of our nature; let our lusts of uncleanness be subdued; and when at any time the enemy cometh in like a flood, do thou, blessed GOD, lift up a standard against him. Let me behold with the eye of faith JESUS hastening to my relief, and in the innumerable sorrows that I have in my heart, let the precious promises of thy glorious gospel be the comforts to refresh my soul. Make them as good news from a far country; as rivers of water in a dry place; or as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The afflictions of David are not over, and therefore in this chapter we are presented with the preliminary step leading to a new scourge. By the ministry of Joab methods are adopted for a reconciliation between David and his son Absalom. The king permits him to come back, and after some little difficulty a good understanding is established between them.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed JESUS! Let me find grace from thee, dearest LORD, in the perusal of this chapter, to consider how very like to Absalom my heart is, when by sin and shame I have been running away from thee. But how superior, dearest LORD, art thou to the tenderness of the tenderest parents, in calling home thy banished ones to thy presence; for thou seekest them out, and instead of allowing them to return, thou bringest them home, and bringest them in, and takest

them to the bosom of thy love and mercy. Oh! dearest LORD! how often hath sin and Satan made me their captive; and how often hast thou recovered me from their snares. Keep me, blessed JESUS, near thyself, and suffer me to wander no more. Let JESUS *kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.*

In the mistaken tenderness of David to his unworthy son, LORD, lead me to see, and as strongly to feel, the evil tendency of nature's affection, when those affections are striving against GOD. Oh! bring down every proud thought and disobedient lust, which would tend to dishonor my GOD. Let me have strength from thee to pluck out an eye, to cut off a right hand, and do all holy violence to the improper demands of nature, when my GOD and Saviour makes it the mark of my duty towards him. I would be found, dearest LORD, wholly thine; and like *Levi*, not acknowledge my brethren, nor know my own children, which have not observed thy word, nor kept thy covenant. I would bend the knee, and bow myself with my face to the ground, in token that thou art my rightful Sovereign, and that I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds. *Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing, O my GOD, I will give thanks unto thee forever.*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

This chapter opens with the subject of what may be considered as the foundation forming for Absalom's unnatural rebellion against his father. We are here informed of his courting popularity,—his open avowal of his seeking the crown—the party he formed—and his several operations in prosecution of his design. We read also, in this chapter; David's distress upon the occasion, and the sad state to which this rebellion of his son reduced him.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, Reader! over the perusal of this Chapter, and in the contemplation both of the father and of the son, David and Absalom,

learn to observe what nature is, and how much grace is needed to correct and reform poor fallen man. Behold in Absalom the awful consequence of indulging the corrupt and pampered passions of children. Had David, as a king in Israel, followed up the divine law, in punishing him for murder, painful as it might have been to nature, yet perhaps the LORD would then have sent his servant the Prophet to interpose; and Absalom being convicted and convinced of the atrocious sin of murdering his brother, would have called forth mercy in his exemplary sorrow and repentance. At least this effect would have been produced by it, that he could not so shortly after have been found in open rebellion against his father. But, when David in the feeling of the father lost sight of his duty as a king, and took again to his bosom the murderer of a son, can it be wondered at, that the serpent so fostered should sting him, or that the wretch forgiven the blood-shedding of a brother, should so ripen in iniquity, as to aim the dagger at the father! Oh! what hath sin wrought in our fallen nature! What is not the heart of man capable of devising in evil, void of divine grace!

Reader! let us remark in David also, how sure GOD's judgments are, and how certain it is that our sin will find us out. How much more amiable David appears in ascending the hill of Olivet, weeping as he went, than when triumphing in his conquests over Bath-sheba and Uriah! How very gracious the LORD is in condescending to correct his people, in order to bring their hearts home to him, when without those corrections they would wander from him forever.

Precious JESUS! how dear are thy recoveries! Oh! how very sweet, to thy people, are thy many, many redemptions. Yes! dearest LORD, thou hast not only redeemed us to GOD by thy blood; but the everlasting efficacy of thy precious blood-shedding and righteousness, again and again pleads for us, when by our frequent departures, thy corrections for our recovery are rendered necessary, Oh! LORD! grant that such may be the views, both of him that writes and him that reads, (if it be thy blessed will), of all thy tender corrections for our trespasses, that though thou mayest bring us down by affliction, our faith may yet be assured thou wilt not cast us off: though we are, chastened, yet not destroyed. Though in us there is nothing of worth, yet with JESUS there is perpetual merit. He ever

liveth to make intercession; and his blood cleansed from all sin. Now, LORD, would I sing that song, even before I quit this mortal life; and ere long I shall chaunt it loud amidst the heavenly host: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

The history of Absalom's rebellion, and David's distress, is continued through this chapter. Ziba, by a false report against Mephibosheth to David, obtains his master's inheritance. Shimei cometh forth and curseth David. Ahithophel counselleth Absalom.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! learn from this view of David's sweet frame of mind under very heavy afflictions, the preciousness of faith, and the blessed effects of it. No doubt, in David's estimate of life, those seasons were most highly valued by him, when upon a review of them, after the trying hours were over, he could look back and see how graciously the LORD had led him *through* them, supported him *under* them, and brought him *out* of them. And, Reader, do you mark it down in your experience, for I desire never to lose sight of it in mine, that, painful as afflictions are, a true believer in JESUS is ultimately a gainer by every conflict and trial he is called upon to go through. That promise must be sure, *All things, how discouraging soever they may now seem, work together for good to them that love GOD, to them who are called according to his purpose.* And, if our faith be enabled to give due credit to GOD, depend upon it, GOD will give due reward to faith. And to live upon GOD's perfections, his promises, his covenant engagements in JESUS, when all the avenues, as they appear to us, are shut up, by which those engagements can be fulfilled; this is precious faith indeed! Dearest JESUS! grant me grace so to live! May my confidence in thee, my interest in thee, my resources from thee, and my life upon thee, be

always such, that whether, like David, the streams of outward comforts run low, as in this flight of his from his city; or whether the communications of thy grace remit their accustomed flowing; yet, knowing that thou art the same, and the sovereign efficacy of thy salvation admitting no abatement, my assurance in thee may be the same also. And let my song be like the prophet's, that *though the fig-tree shall not blossom: neither fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation.*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The history of Absalom's rebellion, and David's difficulties in consequence thereof, is prosecuted through this chapter. Ahithophel's counsel being rejected by Absalom, and Hushai's accepted, Ahithophel hangeth himself. David receiveth secret intelligence how to act.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let not this chapter pass away from our review, until that we have first gathered from it those gracious instructions, the HOLY GHOST so kindly gives us in it. Do you not behold, in the restraints of Ahithophel's advice, a resemblance of that restraining power of our gracious GOD, over the enemies of our salvation? Would not the Absaloms of the present day, like mad horses, come upon us while we are weary and weak-handed, and tread down and trample us under their feet? And how is it that our enemies are prevented from destroying us? LORD, it is the bridle of thy providence, which thou hast put into their jaws; and thy fear, by which thou overrulest the designs of their hearts. Yes! dearest JESUS! it is thou which, by keeping the reins of government in thine hands, controullest their power; and thou speakest to them as to the proud waves; *Hitherto shall ye come, and no further!* Methinks I hear thee saying now to

my soul, as to the church of *Smyrna* of old; *Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer*: though the devil will cast some of you into prison, it is only that you may be tried; and though you have tribulation for ten days, yet fear not. No! blessed LORD! be thou my Counsellor, my strength, my confidence, and I shall never fear. I know that the devil would, but for thee, cast us (not into prison, but) into hell. And I know that in his prison he would keep thy people until they rotted, and died there. But he dare not: *ten days* only, is his limitation! Oh! keep me faithful unto death, and I shall have from thee, *the crown of life which fadeth not away*.

Reader! let David's troubles, sweetened and sanctified as they were at the river Jordan, and the hill Mizar, bring with them to our view, this gracious conviction; sanctified sorrows are precious things. A real sanctified sorrow, in the present wilderness, can never come too often. JESUS parcels them out to his people from his own unerring wisdom and love; and the cover of every one of them is marked in his own blessed hand: *as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*. Depend upon it, in David's view, when he came to sum up his mercies, those he counted most precious, which had brought with them most of GOD. And in our estimate of real blessings, whether trouble or joy, our calculation will be the same, if so be we know the LORD, as he did. Lead me then, dearest LORD JESUS! lead me as it seemeth best to thy infinite wisdom and love, through all the various paths of the present wilderness state, whether marked from the land of Jordan, or the Hermonites, the hill Mizar. Let the way be ever so intricate, ever so rough or thorny; yet if thou art with me, I know it will be *a right way to a city of thy habitation*. And oh! LORD GOD, fill my soul, my heart, all my faculties, all my powers, with the same love to thee as thou didst David's; for then my very tears, like his, which were his meat day and night, will be; to me, sweeter than the spiced wine of the pomegranate. Then shall the goings forth of my soul, bear a sweet correspondence to his devout aspirations, and my heart will be the echo to his, when he said: *As the hart panteth after the water brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O GOD. My soul thirsteth for GOD; yea, for the living GOD: when shall I come and appear before GOD!*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter concludes the history of Absalom's rebellion, and an awful conclusion, to the rebel it proved. David sendeth forth his armies; gives a charge to his officers to deal favourably with Absalom. Absalom is slain. Victory determines in favour of David; but the king mourneth for his son.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! are you a parent, a father or a mother! And are you yourself a partaker of grace, while those of your household are graceless! If so, you will best be able to enter into a proper apprehension of David's feelings for his son. Oh! the unknown, the inexpressible agonies of the mind, in seeing those whom the LORD hath made near, and dear to us in the bonds of nature, totally void of union in the bonds of grace! Oh! did those pious parents, whom the LORD calls to the painful exercises of nature, in the breaches made by death, in their infant years, did they but recollect the accumulated aggravations of sorrow, which attend the deaths of graceless children, ripened in years, and ripened in iniquity; how would they learn to bless GOD, in those instances of preventing wisdom and mercy! Surely, Sirs! it is far, far better, and a far higher privilege also, to follow infants to their tomb, than have them remain longer with us, to be trained for everlasting misery! What a wound the very thought gives, as it enters the imagination!

But, Reader! what an aggravation to misery is it, when, as in the case of David, the LORD's hand is to be traced in the evils which grow up out of our house, from the children of our own bowels. When David looked round the walls of his dwelling, and beheld the vacancies there made by death, and marked them as divine chastisements, well might he exclaim, O Absalom! my son! my son!

And is there no relief for such a state? *Is there no balm in Gilead: no physician there?* Yes, blessed be GOD, there is both. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! where, but for thee, should balm be found: or what physician, but thyself, could heal such complicated diseases.

Teach me then, dearest JESUS; teach him that reads; teach every poor distressed, exercised soul that believes, to do as David did, after all this series of troubles. Teach our souls to look to thee. And when our *Absaloms*, our *Amnons*, and all our sorrows are multiplied, to look to JESUS, and say as David did; *Although my house be not so with GOD; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. And this is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow.*

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The mourning of David for Absalom, is checked by Joab. David it invited back to his capital. This event is accomplished. A circumstance concerning Shimei, is related. These are the principal matters of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! Was it not a gracious act in the LORD, to cause Joab's faithfulness to be successful in rousing David from the unbecoming grief he had fallen into, by the death of Absalom? And shall not you and I consider that graciousness of our dear LORD to us, when by his faithful ministering servants in the gospel of his dear Son, we are roused to a sense of those things which make for our everlasting peace, before they are for ever hid from our eyes? Methinks I would have all ministers faithful, like Joab in this instance. A warmth and zeal for JESUS, ought to mark all GOD's servants. Soft, easy, cold, and lifeless discourses, do not suit those who stand forth to show men their sins, and to inform them of their danger. That was a solemn charge of Paul to Timothy, and needful to be given to all that, like Timothy, labour in the word and doctrine: *I charge thee therefore, (says Paul) before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering, and doctrine.*

The behaviour of aged Barzillai suggests a very profitable instruction to aged believers. Though he declined going over Jordan to the court of David, yet he had his views directed to go over the Jordan of death, to the court of David's LORD. And so, my aged friend, should be your views. Oh! Sirs! if JESUS be indeed lovely, truly lovely, and desirable in your esteem, will you not desire to be with him? Can the voice of singing men, or singing women, now any longer delight? Can the mere taste of earthly things be important in your regard? What! have you lived thirty, forty, nay, perhaps, threescore years in a sinful, miserable world, and yet not weaned from it. And will you say your affairs, your children, your families tie you to life. *Barzillai* had his *Chimham*. But this son, and perhaps it might be his only one, he gave up to the king. And if *you* have truly given up your own soul to JESUS, surely you can trust your children's with him also. See then, my aged Brother! that JESUS is truly precious; for if so, death will have no terrors. Your dying day, will be your Jubilee day; and like Paul, you will *long to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST, which is far better*; knowing that, when *absent from the body*, you will *be present with the LORD*; and you will labour, as he did, that whether *present, or absent, you may be accepted of him*.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

A new scene of distress to David this Chapter opens with, in the rebellion of Sheba. Amasa is slain. Joab pursueth Sheba. A woman, by her wisdom, saveth the city. An account of David's officers. These are the heads of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! though the perusal of this chapter before us opens a renewed occasion for reflecting on the troubles of David; yet, I pass by the consideration of these things, for the present, in order to direct your attention, and my own, to the contemplation of our

adorable JESUS, in that sweet and most invaluable part of his character of Mediator, which the view of the wise woman in Abel of *Beth maachan* naturally suggests. If it be pleasant to see this mother in Israel, saving a city by her interposition; think, Reader, how very delightful ought it to be, to behold JESUS saving a world, by the exercise of this glorious office. He came in the name of JEHOVAH, proposing terms of peace. And such terms as astonished angels. Not that one of our rebellious Chieftans, like Sheba, should be given up: Not that a thousand, or ten thousand should die to ransom the rest; though that had been an unspeakable mercy. But that He, the gracious, the merciful, the mighty Ambassador would mediate peace, and reconciliation, by the gift and sacrifice of himself. Well might the prophet exclaim, *Wonder O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!*

But, oh! thou precious JESUS! while I fall before thy footstool, overpowered with wonder and astonishment in the prospect of this mercy, I behold, with increasing love and surprise, the manner of thy gracious performance of the work.

Yes! dearest LORD! as my soul gazes on thy sacred Person as the Mediator, fully qualified, and fully prepared, as GOD and Man in one Person, to the office; I look also, until my whole-soul is lost, and overwhelmed in the view, with what infinite wisdom, tenderness, love, and pity, thou earnest to propose the terms, lay the foundation, and complete the whole work, for delivering thy people from *the wrath to come*. Be thou eternally praised; eternally loved; eternally adored, for this thy gracious interposition! My soul, on knees of holy transport, thankfulness, and joy, accepts thee, LORD, with all thy works of grace, desiring in time, and to all eternity, to bless and praise GOD for his unspeakable gift!

Reader! think, if it be possible, how it must grieve his HOLY SPIRIT, when sinners neglect, and despise this great salvation! Think! how unalterable must be their state, whom, in consequence thereof, he leaves to wander and perish!

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

More troubles of David are related in this Chapter. Here are mentioned three years famine in Israel. To implore GOD's mercy, a sacrifice is made, at the request of the Gibeonites, of seven of Saul's sons. A daughter of the house of Saul, named Rizpah, sheweth kindness to the dead. After this, David burieth the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan.

REFLECTIONS

See, Reader! in the solemn events of this chapter, in the giving up the sons of Saul to death, how awfully true that denunciation of the LORD is, of *visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him*. Oh! ye that are parents! let this sad example before your eyes, prompt you to seek grace from GOD, to be kept back from sin; lest the LORD smite the fathers with the children, and both are involved in the evil of their ways.

Precious JESUS! it is impossible to turn to any part in the Bible, or to any subject, or person, or thing contained in it, without finding somewhat that, either by immediate allusion, or in direct reference, points to thee. Everywhere, methinks, I discover thee. And in everything indeed, would I desire to have my soul exercised in the contemplation of thee. For, dearest LORD! that subject loseth all its beauty, all its loveliness, however pleasing in itself, that terminates not in thee. And though the bloody house of Saul is as remote, (and infinitely more remote), as hell from heaven, compared to thee; yet, when I see the ordinary law of our GOD broken, that in their hanging up, they might be suspended betwixt earth and heaven, until that GOD was entreated for the land: how is it possible, not to have my mind instantly led to thee, thou sinners' Surety, and sinners' Friend, who literally, and truly, wast made both sin and a curse for thy people, when thou knewest no sin, on purpose that they might be made the righteousness of GOD, in thee. There on thy cross, blessed JESUS, would I forever fix my eye, unless, indeed, now and then to

follow thee, in the contemplation of thy conquests over it, in thy triumphal entrance into heaven. On JESUS would I forever gaze. In every ordinance, in every providence, in every prayer, in every song of praise; there, there would my ravished soul look, and say; there hangs my hope, my joy, my everlasting security! And on thee, and thy dear Person, do I hang all the glory of my Father's house, and all the glory of my own salvation. Oh! the precious, precious, Person of my adored Redeemer! So sweet, so suitable, so gracious, art thou to my soul, as a poor convinced sinner, that, like Paul, my determination is fixed; henceforth, *I will know nothing among men, but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* And, blessed be my GOD, I hope and trust I can, with the same assurance of faith, say as he did, *for I know him to be the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD for salvation to me, and to everyone that believeth.*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

The prosecution of David's history is interrupted through the whole of this Chapter, in order to introduce his Song, or Psalm of praise. It is not said when David wrote it; but it is said when he spake it, for the title of it expresses that it was when the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and particularly out of the hand of Saul. It contains therefore, from beginning to end, manifold praises for manifold deliverances.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us not dismiss this chapter with all its precious contents from our minds, until that we have duly pondered the blessed things it contains; and as duly examined our own personal interest in them. Can you and I say with the same lively sentiments of praise and love, and gratitude, as David did, The LORD is my rock, my shield, my tower, my refuge, my Saviour. Oh! precious thought, when the soul hath a well grounded assurance of a covenant interest in JESUS.

But Reader! while we seek earnestly for these things, let us learn also from it, how all such as are called to an interest in JESUS, are called also to a fellowship and conformity in the trials of JESUS, and the persecution of enemies. Communion with our Great Head must necessarily subject every member of his mystical body to a participation in suffering. Waves of death, and floods of ungodly men, will compass us about. We wrestle with flesh, and blood, with evil angels, with ungodly men, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the Sauls, and, the Absaloms, and the Shimei's every where around. Oh! for grace to see, and faith to believe, that in GOD'S strength alone our victory must be wrought. JESUS will light our candle; JESUS himself will be our shield, our sun, our hiding place, our refuge.

But principally, in the review of this chapter, LORD give both Writer and Reader to contemplate JESUS, the Almighty David of his people, as conquering sin, death, hell, and the grave; and beating down all the foes of our salvation, which opposed the deliverance of his people. Yes! Almighty Conqueror! thou art all that is here; rehearsed, and infinitely more, to thy people! In thy complete and finished work, when thou camest forth for the salvation of thy chosen, thou didst triumph over all opposition; thou hast spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, nailing them to thy cross. Blessed God! enable me to follow thee to victory, and continually to go forth in thy strength, and in thy name, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only, saying I shall be more than conqueror through thee who has loved me.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

This chapter contains some of the last words of David, and as such cannot but be very interesting. To these words of David is added a list of David's worthies, his mighty men.

REFLECTIONS

How sweet are the last words of dying saints. And how doubly so when they are sanctified to lead to JESUS. Reader! amidst all the trying dispensations in the life of the patriarch David; yet observe what confidence in covenant engagements can do, to give a soul comfort and holy joy. David's troubles were so many, so grievous, and so complicated, that it is quite proverbial when we speak of the man, to speak also of his sorrows; LORD *remember David and all his troubles*. But oh! how enviable the trouble that is sanctified! How coveted the situation which JESUS blesses. He saw the day of CHRIST, like another Abraham, afar off; as a morning without a cloud. He comforted himself in the assurance of the covenant, which was ordered in all things and sure. And he could, and did, take all the consolation of it as the whole of his salvation, and the whole of his desire, whatever outer circumstances in his life arose to exercise his mind.

Blessed JESUS! give my soul, like David, to see thee to be the whole of the covenant; and in thee, and thy finished redemption-work, fix the whole of my desire. Let a throne of grace witness for me, that I would seek life with all its dependencies; life temporal, and life eternal; wholly as David did upon the ground of the Covenant, the everlasting Covenant, through thy blood and righteousness. In all the actions of my life, and with my dying breath, I would say as David; *It is all my Salvation and all my desire*. And oh! thou dear Redeemer! As all my hopes, my expectations, are from thee in thy covenant righteousness, without an atom of any thing of mine to add to it; LORD give me grace to live as I hope to die, in making these my constant study and delight, my songs of rejoicing in the house of my pilgrimage. To JESUS would I daily, hourly come; in him be found. To him would I cleave. With him would I walk; venturing upon CHRIST, resting in him, and hanging upon him. And as it is said, they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, so would I the whole of my salvation. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen*.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

We have, in this chapter, a part of David's history, the date of which is not certain. He is here in a state of trespassing against the LORD, by numbering the people. The prophet Gad is sent to reprove him, and to propose to his choice one of three plagues with which the LORD would chastise him. We have also the relation of the chastisement, and David's repentance.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! with this chapter we close this sacred book of GOD, which brings us in point of historical relation, very nearly, though not completely so, to the end of David's life. Let us not close it, however, until that we have first blessed the LORD for so truly valuable a part of the Old Testament records: and more especially, for that part of David's history contained in it, which bears evident allusion to the Great Redeemer of mankind, of whom, in many instances, David was a lively type. It is a precious thing, and most highly to be valued by the true believer in JESUS, when we are led to see the tenderness and love of GOD our FATHER to the church, in thus holding forth, under such a variety of similitudes, and representations, to the early ages, the prominent features of a redemption, which was, in the fulness of time to be wrought out, and completed by his dear Son. And it is as thankfully to be remembered by the believer, in honour and glory to the HOLY GHOST, that in his blessed office of glorifying the LORD JESUS, he hath so sweetly caused to be recorded, for the exercise of the faith of Old Testament saints, as well as the establishment of New Testament believers, the very many outlines of His person and offices, whose one glorious work of salvation, hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified!

Hail! Holy! Holy! Holy! Undivided THREE IN ONE; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! Blessed be the LORD GOD, JEHOVAH, for all his covenant love, and mercy, in JESUS! and for all the precious records this book contains, of the glorious events of redemption by him. And, oh! thou dearest JESUS, thou blessed Reconciler of a gracious

GOD with poor fallen man! Thou art the Author, the means, the end, the sum, the substance of all true peace in the church, above and below. Give me to see thee, blessed JESUS, as David did, as the gracious Interposer, to stay the destroying angel's hand over Jerusalem. And may my soul go up to the threshingfloor of the poor Jebusite, to offer the sacrifice of thine own blood and righteousness; and these, on thine own sacred Person, the Altar which sanctifieth the gift; that I may find peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. And blessed, forever blessed be the GOD of peace, which brought again from the dead, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, that he hath been entreated for our guilty land, and the plague of sin, death, hell, and the grave, is forever stayed from his Israel. All our peace is made in the blood of the cross; and henceforth, there is now *no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Amen, and Amen.

1st KINGS

COMMONLY CALLED
THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot with greater certainty than mere opinion, determine to whose instrumentality we are indebted for this and the following book of the Kings. It hath been generally supposed that some of the Scribes in the respective ages of the Church, compiled those histories. But there is no certainty on the point. But though we are left to mere conjecture concerning the writer, there can be none concerning the authenticity, or divine authority, of those sacred Books of GOD. For beside the historical part, many sweet passages are here and there treasured in them, which stamp their truth, and display the seal of the SPIRIT upon them.

This book of the Kings, and the second also, which is but a continuation of the same, contain the history of the Jewish Church and nation from the end of David's reign to the destruction of Solomon's temple, comprising a period of somewhat more than four hundred and thirty years, beginning at about 1016 years before the coming of CHRIST, and ending with the commencement of the Babylonish captivity. Solomon's reign comprised a period of about forty years. After the division of the kingdom in the succeeding reign of Rehoboam, the kingdom of Israel, which forms one branch, was continued under the successive government of nineteen kings; and the kingdom of Judah, the other branch, under the government of the same number of kings. But what becomes more immediately interesting in the annals of those different monarchs, is the marked attention which is all along paid by the sacred historian, in the preservation of the genealogy of CHRIST. The prophets Elijah and

Elisha, in their respective ministry, form a very interesting part in both these books of the kings.

I only beg the Reader here, in the opening of this book of the Kings, to be continually on the look out for what the HOLY GHOST is teaching the church in it concerning JESUS, and his gospel. The more hidden and obscure these precious subjects are, the more earnestly should our diligence be called forth in the investigation. It will be an ample reward to labour, if, through divine teaching, we are enabled to discover what the church in those distant periods, was taught concerning the person, and mission of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Depend upon it, Reader, in no age of the church hath the LORD left himself without witness, that the Scriptures testify of him. Vouchsafe, blessed SPIRIT, in this thy gracious office-work of glorifying to take of the things which are here of JESUS, and show both to Writer and Reader. The blessing we implore from thee, O LORD, on the present occasion, is, that *a spirit of wisdom and revelation may be given us in the knowledge of him*; that our souls, by faith, may have a clear apprehension of *the things which are freely given to us of GOD*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

David, in his old age, unable to keep warmth, hath an handmaid provided to cherish him. Adonijah, his son, taking advantage of David's imbecility, usurpeth the kingdom. Solomon, by David's direction, is anointed king. Adonijah fleeth for refuge to the altar. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not overlook, in the melancholy view which is given us in this chapter of poor David's cold and perishing body, what dying worms the greatest of men are; and how sure and certain it is, that death passeth upon all men, because all have sinned! Precious JESUS! what a relief is it to the souls of thy people, that

amidst all the dying circumstances of themselves and the world around, thou livest for ever. Oh! the unknown, inexpressible glory, contained in these words, JESUS CHRIST; *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. And, *because I live ye shall live also*.

How sweet is it to behold dying saints, like David, anxious to provide gracious successors. Particularly dying ministers and servants of our JESUS. Of all the thoughts which lie near the heart of a faithful pastor in JESUS, this must be one of the most anxious, Whom will my God appoint over this household? Whom will the Lord send to go in and out before his people! David's anxiety for thrusting out Adonijah, and establishing Solomon in the kingdom, could not be half so interesting as to a dying, faithful minister, is the concern that the Lord would cast out all the Adonijah's who serve not him, but their own bellies, and send the people pastors after his own heart, which should feed his people in understanding and knowledge. But Reader! amidst the anxious concern of faithful stewards in the household of JESUS, let us comfort ourselves with this pleasing assurance, JESUS hath still the keys, and is still in the midst of the throne to govern. As the church of JESUS, let all his people hope and trust in him. When David dies Solomon shall reign. If he puts out one light he can easily cause another to shine. He hath the stars in his right hand.

But Reader! let us not close the chapter before that we have taken another view of the coronation of Solomon. Surely, as we behold our eyes may well be directed to the contemplation of a more glorious person: for a *greater than Solomon is here*. Yes, dearest JESUS! if Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anointed Solomon king; and if the shouts of the multitude, on this occasion, were so great that the very earth rent with the noise; surely heaven and all its powers must take a part in that unequalled joy, when every poor sinner, such as I am, is by thy almighty grace enabled to crown thee LORD of all. Thou hast on thy head many crowns. The crown of the GODHEAD, being one with the FATHER. The crown of thy GOD-man, thy mediatorial glory. The crown of redemption which thou hast won, and now wearest. The crown of victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. And yet, oh! thou dearest JESUS, is not the crown which the sinner puts upon thy sacred head, when thou

hast not only wrought out salvation *for* him by conquering all his foes; but wrought out salvation *in* him by conquering his own wayward will, which opposed thy government over him; is not this crown precious in thy sight! Oh! LORD JESUS, be thou my sovereign GOD and king! Gladly do I bow the knee before thee; gladly doth my heart, my soul, and all within me confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

David's whole history we are brought to the conclusion of in this chapter. Here is his farewell charge to Solomon, and his death. Solomon's succession is soon followed with the deaths of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei.

REFLECTIONS

READER! after gathering all the instructions from this chapter which the HOLY GHOST graciously intended from it, for the comfort and edification of his church and people, let us direct our views to the contemplation of David; and, having here seen his end in his death and burial, first consider the character of this man as he is in himself; and, secondly, in the light in which he eminently stands in the church, a type and figure of the ever blessed JESUS.

When we consider David in his original obscurity of situation, as the son of Jesse! When we behold him brought forth and placed in a state so high and exalted! When we view him in all his private life, and public usefulness! When we see him in his most exalted seasons of piety! and when we behold him no less in his falling into sin—What a wonderful character, taken together, doth he appear! The most extraordinary perhaps that ever the LORD brought forward from among the sons of Adam. No doubt, eminently intended to be held forth as a monument in the church; that his most astonishing heights of devotion might comfort, encourage, and animate the people of GOD. And no less that the sad falling into sin, from which almighty

grace recovered him, might encourage poor penitent transgressors to hope in his mercy, in and through JESUS.

But, when we have duly pondered over the character of David, as he was in himself, I would beg the Reader to look at him yet more leisurely and attentively, as he stands in the church, a type and figure of our ever adored Redeemer. Here he comes forward in a more eminent manner, and challenges our more serious consideration.

Chosen of GOD from among the sheepecotes, and from the lowest obscurity, how doth he prefigure Him who was taken from among the humblest of men, and set up in the councils of peace from everlasting. And if David was the man after GOD's own heart, who can overlook in him the type of JESUS, JEHOVAH's elect, in whom his soul delighteth; the man whose name is the BRANCH, and concerning whom a voice from heaven proclaimed him GOD's well-beloved Son, in whom his soul was well pleased? Did David fight the battles of the LORD; did he conquer Goliath, and the armies of the uncircumcised Philistines? and did not JESUS obtain the victory over all the enemies of our salvation? Was David anointed king over GOD's people contrary to the wishes of Saul, and all the expectation of Israel? and was not JESUS crowned king in Zion in direct defiance of Herod, and all the expectation of the people of the Jews, who declared that they would not have this man to reign over them? Did David make his way to the throne through a series of persecution, affliction, and distress? and who can forget the sorrows, persecutions, and oppositions, dearest JESUS, by which thou didst purchase the crown of redemption, before it was put upon thy sacred head? Was David surrounded with his worthies, the captains, and elders of Israel; and what a noble army of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, followed the LORD JESUS? Was David the sweet psalmist of Israel, and did he compose songs for the sanctuary? And what songs of salvation hath our JESUS taught his people, both in the temple service below, and in the realms of bliss above, when the redeemed of the LORD shall come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever! Hail! blessed JESUS! thou hast the key of David; thou art both the root and the offspring of David! David's son after the flesh, and David's LORD and GOD in the divinity of thy nature. Truly, LORD, many kings have

done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Oh! may the history of all thy servants lead my soul to thee. They shall lay on thee all the glory of thy Father's house; and on thee would I lay all the glory of my salvation!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This chapter opens with the relation of some of the first events which took place in the beginning of Solomon's reign. His marriage with Pharoah's daughter. GOD's appearance to him in a dream. His choice. And the chapter concludes with an account of his sound judgment, in deciding a matter of controversy between two harlots.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! how precious the testimony the HOLY GHOST hath given in this chapter to Solomon, that he loved the LORD! wilt thou, merciful GOD, shed forth a portion, and let it be as large a portion as my Soul can find capaciousness to admit, of the same heavenly principle in my poor heart also. Oh! dearest JESUS! give me grace to say, though, like Peter, a thousand actions seem to have denied it, LORD, *thou knowest all things! those knowest that I love thee.*

And wilt thou, HOLY SPIRIT, visit me in the visions of the night! shall mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may be occupied in thy word! will the FATHER of mercies come! will the LORD JESUS come; agreeably to that promise, and make his abode in my soul? Doth GOD indeed speak to me? Doth he graciously say, *Ask what I shall give thee?* Precious JESUS! give me thyself; for, having thee, I shall possess all things. LORD, it is not thy salvation only I desire; but thee. Not thy gifts only, but thyself also: not thy grace only, but thy person too: not that I may have life only, but that thou mayest be my life, and my portion forever. Yes! dearest JESUS! my soul through thy blessed teaching me these sweet lessons, my soul cannot rest short of anything but thyself. Since thou wert first pleased to look upon me, and speak to me, and show me thyself, my heart is not my

own; thou hath drawn it up to heaven; and now, LORD, keep it forever, and give me thine. And since GOD my FATHER, and all his fulness is in thee; all joy in thee; all happiness in thee; I desire no happiness but thee. Witness for me, ye ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who are the heirs of salvation; JESUS is my all, and in all. Whom have *I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us Solomon's splendour and greatness, An account of his princes; his twelve officers; the peace and extensiveness of his kingdom; and of his great wisdom.

REFLECTIONS

IN beholding the greatness and majesty of Solomon, as this chapter represents him; his riches, his courts, his retinue, his servants, and more especially his great wisdom; I desire to ascribe all due praise and glory to the LORD GOD of Solomon, in distinguishing his chosen with such marks of his love and favor; and to bless so bountiful a GOD in having given such power unto men. But from the court of Solomon, and all his grandeur, my soul desires rapidly to take wing, and flee by faith to the court of heaven, and behold JESUS in the midst of the throne, as possessing all power in heaven and in earth. What was Solomon in all his glory compared to him who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind? Nay, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed in point of beauty like even the lilies of the field. But thy throne, blessed JESUS, as one with the FATHER, in the nature of the GODHEAD, was and is thine, from everlasting, and so must be to all eternity. And as the mediator, thou art in full right of the throne forever and ever. Methinks the thought of Solomon's court, prompts my soul to contemplate with the eye of faith the unfailing splendors of thine.

Yes! heavenly King! my soul beholds thee as king over all; GOD blessed for ever. I see thy princes like Solomon's. I view thine officers whom thou hast appointed over thine household, to give thy people meat in due season. I behold thee encircled with all the innumerable host of angels; the spirits of just men made perfect; the noble army of martyrs; the glorious company of apostles; the venerable host of patriarchs; the sacred band of prophets; the multitude which no man can number, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB; the church above triumphant; the church below still militant; all Judah and Israel, and the nations that are saved by thy blood: all! all! are of thy court, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it. To thee then, King of kings, and LORD of lords, do, come to hear thy wisdom, to see thy glory, to adore thy name, and to bow my knee before thee, as my Saviour, my king, and my GOD.

Oh! then blessed JESUS, do thou maintain thy kingdom in my heart. There reign, there rule, there govern; there give out of thy fulness and of thy wisdom. And while the services of every creature, the praises of every angel, and the love and affection of every redeemed soul, become thy just revenue; oh! LORD GOD, let the poor worm that is now looking up to thee partake of thy bounty, and be enabled to give to thee of thy praise; till from living under the grace of thy courts here upon earth, thou shalt call me home to live eternally under the more immediate view of thy glory, and the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in thy courts above; where the city hath neither the need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the FATHER doth lighten it, and thou dearest LAMB of GOD, art the light thereof. Amen! Amen!

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter the congratulations of Hiram, king of Tyre, which he sent to Solomon on his accession to the throne,

Solomon's answer. Hiram furnisheth timber at Solomon's request to build the temple. An account of Solomon's workmen and laborers for the service.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over what we have read in this chapter, and in the view here afforded us of such workmen as Hiram's servants, behold how striking a representation it bears to numbers in the present day, to whom abilities of nature and of art are given, but to whom perhaps is given no grace! how many possess the ordinary gifts of the SPIRIT, who know nothing of his gracious work upon the heart! how many minister in holy things, who are yet no partakers in the spirit of holy things! of all the awful scriptures to this amount we meet with in the word of GOD; none can exceed in terror that declaration of JESUS: Many will say unto me in that day, LORD! LORD! have we not prophesied (that is preached) in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils; (that is perhaps have been made instrumental to others in the delivery of the word of salvation, by which the strong man armed is cast out of the soul) and in thy name done many wonderful works. And what can be more wonderful than to behold sinners awakened and converted through the instrumentality of a preached gospel? And then, saith JESUS, will I profess unto them, "I never knew you:" that is, perhaps never knew them in a way of vital union, their own souls never having been savingly brought into fellowship and communion with the LORD JESUS. Oh! Reader, what an awful consideration, to have been made helpful to the salvation of others, while uninterested for our own. To be daily ministering in the temple without a real connection with the LORD of the temple!

Let us turn our thoughts from the contemplation of a state so dreadfully alarming, to the consideration of the reverse side of the subject, and in the happy, the inexpressibly happy state of the souls built upon the same foundation as the apostles and prophets are, which is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the chief corner-stone; look up to our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, with an humble hope that he is our portion. Yes! dearest JESUS! I would say for myself, and all thy people, thou art the foundation of all my hopes, all my desires, all

my wishes, and all my joys. GOD, my FATHER, of his infinite love laid this foundation. On thy glorious person, as the GOD-man, the whole structure rests; thy blood and righteousness is the grand cement which unites and keeps it eternally together; and in thee the whole building, thy church, which is thy body, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the LORD. Come, then, blessed JESUS! carry on, complete, adorn and finish, the work in my soul; let thy mercy be built up forever, and let the top stone of the spiritual building be brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This chapter furnisheth a number of interesting particulars concerning the building of Solomon's temple. The time it took in building until it was finished. In the earlier part of this service the words of the LORD came unto Solomon with promises concerning it.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and while beholding the vast design of Solomon's temple and the greatness of the work in the accomplishment of the building, behold that a greater than Solomon is here. Was it not, dearest JESUS, upon the foundation of infinite love that thou with the everlasting FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, didst lay the foundation of the temple, which is thy body, and reared and completed the whole work of our redemption? Not indeed in temples made with hands; not in the limitation of time in seven years, or seventy times seven; but from everlasting. Yes! LAMB of GOD, who wast intentionally slain from before the foundation of the world: thou hast built the temple of the LORD, and thou hast borne, and must for ever bear, all the glory. Everlasting praises to thy dear name for the unspeakable mercy.

While I behold the temple of Solomon, and figure to my view the piles of cedar and the wedges of pure gold! oh! lead my soul beyond these outward adornings, and these outward things, to the

contemplation of all that inward glory which thou hast, by thy one glorious undertaking in redemption, wrought out and accomplished for all thy people. Thy person, thine offices, thy righteousness, thy gifts, thy graces; all precious JESUS which are thine, and of thee, and in thee; these are the true temple both of Jew and Gentile, both of bond and free; both of the church militant and the church triumphant. Here in thee may my soul find a temple eternally to dwell in, and do thou, dearest JESUS, from an union with thee by thy SPIRIT, make me a living temple in which JESUS may everlastingly dwell, until the building of this house shall be taken down, and my soul shall be called to *the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. And oh! thou blessed, holy, gracious JESUS, when thou shalt have brought me home with all the church to fill thy courts above, and to surround thy throne, there shall I behold the streets of the city of the new Jerusalem of pure gold, infinitely surpassing all the splendour of the golden floor in Solomon's temple. There cherubims will not be of ornament, but of reality. And there the workmen will forever have ceased from their labours, and have entered into their rest, as our GOD hath done from his. But chiefly, and above all, JESUS himself will be there with GOD our FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST; and no temple will be needed there; for the LORD GOD Almighty, and the LAMB, are the temple of it. In the glorious expectation of this great day of GOD, do thou, blessed JESUS, give me daily to be beholding my sure foundation in thee, and my soul's complete resting upon thee, that as a lively stone in the spiritual building of thy church and people, *I may be growing up unto an holy temple in the LORD, for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT*.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

To the building of the temple, succeeds in history, the building of Solomon's house, which this chapter records: likewise, the house of Lebanon, and of the house of Pharaoh's daughter. Here is the

relation also of the works of Hiram, and of the vessels Solomon made for the house of the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

MAY we not gather instruction from the view of Solomon's house, and the house of the forest of Lebanon, and from the riches with which he adorned the temple! Surely the house and the forest, may serve to teach us how JESUS and his people dwell together. Here JESUS certainly visits them. Here he secures and defends them! And as the windows are both ornamental and useful; is it not through these that that holy, that fair one, looketh forth at the windows, and showeth himself through the lattice? And as JESUS looketh in upon our house through the windows of ordinances, and through the lattices of his kind means of grace; do we not look in also, through the same, to him? Reader! do you not know what that means, when the soul is going out after him in desires, when in reading his precious word, singing his praises, attending at the service of ordinances, we send forth the soft, but earnest breathing of the soul, that we love him, long to see him, be with him, and like children at the windows of a prince, look in to catch if it be but a glimpse of the king in his beauty! Oh! dearest LORD! what a gracious Sovereign art thou! Thy wonderful condescension, is not barely manifested in sending out thy servants at supper time to call us, from the mere looking in at the windows, to come in and to sit down with thee; but thou comest even to the door of our hearts, and there invitest thyself in, to sup with us, and we with thee. Come then, LORD JESUS, refresh my soul continually with thyself; thy love is better than wine.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This is a most beautiful chapter. It contains the dedication of the temple. Solomon's blessing of it: his prayer: his sacrifice of peace offering: his dismissal of the people with joyful hearts.

REFLECTIONS

SOLOMON! I would honour thy memory with great honour, for the view which the blessed SPIRIT hath been pleased to give me of thy ministry, as set forth in the dedication of the temple. Surely, never didst thou appear so truly great, as in this instance, where thou art represented so truly humble. Thou hast shown herein, a dignity well meriting imitation: and manifested, that the most supreme station any mortal can be advanced to in life, is to minister as the servant of JEHOVAH.

But while I behold Solomon thus honoured of his LORD, I would pass over all thoughts of the servant, to contemplate the Master. Thou, dearest JESUS! art formed to eclipse all creature excellence. Even Solomon's temple was but a faded glory, had it not been for the representation it made of thee, and of thy redemption. Oh! precious structure, the temple of thy body! Oh! sacred building, not made with hands. United to the GOD-head, the foundation is eternally sure, and all the blessings contained in it, endless blessings to our souls. Here, dearest LORD! in thee I see security from all evils whensoever, or wheresoever, any poor sinner who feels and knows the plague of his own heart, directs the eye of faith to thee for salvation. Though he trespass against his neighbor; though he trespass against his own soul; though he transgress against the LORD his GOD; and though he be carried away captive by his spiritual enemies, far from the land of his fathers; yet, if from thence, his whole heart and his whole soul be directed to JESUS, JESUS will hear from heaven, the habitation of his holiness and his glory; for he hath said; *Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am GOD, and there is none else, beside me there is no Saviour!* Help me then, dearest JESUS, to have mine eyes and my whole heart eternally fixed on thee. It is thy gracious office to know all my circumstances, to direct all my ways, to observe, to pity, to regard, and still to love me in every state and every case. Oh! LORD GOD! let not only my eyes, but the eyes of all poor sinners, whose redemption thou hast purchased with thy blood, be gazing upon thee with holy longing, fervent waiting and continual desire: and even under the most discouraging circumstances, even if, like Jonah, I am tempted

at any time to exclaim, *I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes*; yet, like him, to have faith still to say, *I will look again towards thine holy temple*. Oh! let that precious experience in thy blessed word be mine; in which it is said; *they looked unto him and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter relates the gracious circumstance of the LORD's second appearance to Solomon. An interview takes place between Solomon and Hiram. Solomon's yearly sacrifices are also mentioned in the close of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

CHIEFLY, and above everything related in this chapter, let my soul ponder over the wondrous condescension of GOD to Solomon, in what is here said of this *second* manifestation to him of his grace and love. And while I mark the tender mercy so shown, let me not forget that *such honour have all his saints*. Yes! blessed JESUS, though not equally splendid, yet equally certain, equally gracious, are thy visits. For thou hast left it upon record as if to silence all doubts and unbelief, that *he that loveth thee shall be loved of thy FATHER*, and thou hast added in that assurance, *I will love him, and will manifest myself to him*. Oh! wondrous love! oh! matchless grace! LORD how is it that thou dost manifest thyself unto thy people, and not unto the World!

We are not astonished, O ye carnal men, that you should gaze with such amazement as ye sometimes do at the followers of our JESUS! that we are (as David said) a wonder, to many is not so strange, since we are a wonder to ourselves. That we are born from above; that GOD condescends to acknowledge us for his children by adoption and by grace; that JESUS is not ashamed to call us his brethren; and the HOLY GHOST makes our bodies his temple; when

we think of these things, and consider our high calling; when we look within our hearts, and behold such coldness, deadness, and the want of affection to him, who hath so loved us as to beget us by his glorious redemption and his FATHER's grace to such an inheritance, oh! how passing in wonder must be the love of GOD which passeth knowledge!

My brother in JESUS! you I address, who profess to live in the hope and faith of these precious, these distinguished privileges! think, I charge you, (and while I charge you I desire to feel the full force of it upon my own heart) think, *what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!* Was the LORD thus gracious to Solomon? Did he appear to him twice? Did he solemnly charge him to flee from idolatry, and a breach of his holy covenant? Oh! then, let us consider the infinite importance of living to him who hath purchased our redemption with his blood; whose we are, and to whom we belong. If under the Old Testament dispensation of types and shadows, GOD was so jealous of his honour; can you suppose that now the whole is confirmed and sealed to us, as it is in the New Testament revelation of his blood, that he is less jealous of his honour, or that he will give his glory to graven images? Oh! my brother! if the LORD hath manifested himself to our hearts, and the grace of GOD hath appeared unto us, let us never forget what that grace teacheth, and what high claims are upon us; namely, that *denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

An interesting relation is given, in the opening of this chapter, of a visit made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, drawn by the report

of his great wisdom. Solomon's riches are again noticed in this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! added to the view we have taken in this chapter of Solomon's wisdom and greatness, as a shadow of him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; are we not led by what we have read to behold in this Queen of the south, thus coming to Solomon, a picture of the whole Gentile church coming to CHRIST? Was it not a promise of our covenant GOD concerning him, that *Gentiles should come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising?* And in allusion to the same blessed and glorious event, did not the LORD JEHOVAH promise that *the multitude of camels should cover him; the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; they from Sheba should come, they should bring gold and incense, and show forth the praises of the LORD.* And how is the mind overpowered in the contemplation, when we behold these great predictions accomplished in the first fruits of the wise men from the East coming to CHRIST in the moment of his Incarnation; and now in the dispensation of the fullness of times the LORD gathering together in one all things in CHRIST?

But Reader! while our souls are deeply impressed with the contemplation of the stupendous blessings and mercies in JESUS; shall we not advance one step higher in the wonderful subject, and look at JESUS himself thus gloriously shadowed forth in the several striking features of Solomon king of Israel? As far as the excellencies of Solomon go, they were surely descriptive of Solomon's LORD GOD, and Saviour. And here (though not in the infirmities of the man) as we read the relation (but in the wisdom of the king) we are constrained to cry out in the representation, and say, *a greater than Solomon is here.* Yes! blessed JESUS; as the LORD sent by the hand of Nathan to David, and at the birth of Solomon called him *Jedidiah*, beloved of the LORD; so by a voice from heaven at thy gracious entrance upon the work the FATHER gave thee to do, thou wert declared to be the true Jedidiah; the beloved Son of GOD, in whom the soul of thy FATHER was well pleased. And thy wisdom hath not only called forth the whole earth to admire and adore; but

all the powers of heaven join to acknowledge thee to be the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to everyone that believeth. Thy kingdom was but faintly represented by the peaceful reign of Solomon; for of the increase of thy government and peace, there is, there can be no end. Well may every true believer, like the Queen of Sheba, and yet in higher notes of gratitude, love and praise, exult and say; Happy are thy redeemed ones; happy are thy servants who minister in thy great name, and stand continually before thee! And blessed be the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, who hath constituted our JESUS the Solomon of his people, and hath given him an everlasting kingdom, and a dominion that ruleth over all. LORD! hasten thy kingdom, and thy glory; take to thyself thy great name, and rule and reign forever.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

A melancholy account is here given of Solomon's fall. His many wives and concubines, in his old age, lead him into idolatry. The LORD's displeasure. Solomon's chastisement, and death. An account of his successor in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the fall of Solomon let us learn what human nature is in its highest attainments. Who that beheld Solomon in his dedication of the temple; who that heard his sweet and gracious prayer on that occasion; who that contemplated the LORD GOD in his condescending visits, and revelations, and promises, to him; would ever have conceived the thought that this wonder of wisdom, this devout, highly favoured servant of the LORD, should have apostatized to such an extreme length, as not only to drown his body in filthy lusts, but sink his soul into idolatry. Oh! sad instance of human depravity! *Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon!*

But Reader! when you and I have duly pondered over Solomon's history, let us look at our own. *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!* LORD! give we to see, and feelingly to acknowledge, that by nature all men are the same. All equally prone to evil; and all, but for the blessed influences of preventing and restraining grace, subject to the same sin and condemnation. Oh! dearest JESUS! let a deep sense and conviction of this truth lead my whole heart to thee! LORD! *keep thy servant from presumptuous sins, that I may be innocent from the great transgression.*

But principally, and above all, blessed LORD! let the view this chapter holds forth of Solomon direct my soul to the clearest and most settled conviction, that as all have sinned, and come short of thy glory; so nothing but thy precious blood and righteousness can be the sinners refuge, and the sinners salvation. Yes! blessed JESUS! do thou fix and engrave in my heart this most unquestionable truth. It is thou, and thou only, whose finished work in redemption hath made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. May it be my happy portion to be found in thee, having redemption in thy blood, the forgiveness of all sins, according to the riches of that grace, whereby we are made accepted in the beloved!

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, succeeds to the kingdom. He begins his reign in refusing the old men's counsel, and follows that of young men. Ten tribes of Israel revolt. The chapter concludes with an account of Jeroboam's idolatry.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a sad page for the most painful reflection doth the HOLY GHOST give us in the view of Rehoboam's folly and Jeroboam's sin! what a train of evil is induced by the fall! what is every man by nature but blind, ignorant, wayward, and perverse! Reader! have you

ever remarked how sinners, like Jeroboam, work all uncleanness with greediness? Like soldiers in Satan's army; they enlist under his banner; they wear his uniform; they volunteer in his service; they clothe themselves with his armour, and wield the weapons of sin, enmity and malice. And unless recovered out of the snare of the devil, if living and dying in his service, their end must be destruction, and their wages everlasting death.

Precious, precious JESUS! what everlasting thanks hath my soul to offer to thee, thou great and glorious captain of my salvation, in that thou hast, at no less expense than thine own blood and life, brought me out of his slavish ranks, and made me free indeed in thy service. Oh! LORD! give me grace to reverence thy temple, thine ordinances, thine house of prayer, thy sabbaths; and never more, like Jeroboam, set up in my poor heart any idol of abomination. Let every imagination be cast down, and every high thing that would exalt itself against the knowledge of GOD, be taken away, and let every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST. Be thou, dearest LORD, everything to me that is precious; and do thou reign and rule in my heart, *the hope of glory!*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

A prophet cometh to Beth-el. Jeroboam, in opposing him, hath his hand withered; which at the prayer of the man of GOD is restored, The prophet himself for his disobedience is afterwards slain by a lion. Jeroboam still continueth hardened.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! pause over the perusal of this chapter, and contemplate in what a variety of views thou mayest gather spiritual improvement from it under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching.

In the awful character of Jeroboam, learn the truth of that solemn scripture; *though favor be showed to the wicked; yet will he not*

learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

In the character of the false prophet, grown old in sin as well as years, what an alarming representation is held forth to what a desperately wicked state men may advance, who though ministering in holy things, never feel their power, and live and die unconscious of their influence.

In the character of the man of GOD acting with such faithfulness in daring the impiety of Jeroboam, and yet falling under the slender temptation of the deceiver, may we learn what a mixture of faith and unbelief makes up the characters of the LORD'S followers.

Where then, blessed JESUS, under all these views, where shall we direct our thoughts for perfection and for comfort but to thee? Thou art indeed holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Here then, dearest LORD, in thee and thy complete righteousness, may my soul direct her sole regard for acceptance and for favor. All altars, sacrifices, worship, doctrine, government, ordinances, and services, which look not to thee are alike false. But in thee all true sanctuary service finds acceptance. As a nail fastened in a sure place by the master of assemblies; on thee, thou precious Lamb of GOD, which takest away the sin of thy people, would I hang my life, my hope, my confidence, my all!

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

In this chapter begins the history of Israel and Judah in the division of the two kingdoms; so that attention should be paid in the reading to distinguish to which the subject belongs. The chapter opens with the relation of the affairs of Israel under king Jeroboam, and concludes his reign. The latter end of the chapter relates to the affairs of the kingdom of Judah under Rehoboam, and the close of his reign.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE we have reason to shudder in beholding the sad consequences of our fallen nature, in an example so truly dreadful as that of Jeroboam; and while I would for myself and Reader pray for grace to lay low in the dust of self-abasement in a conscious sense, that if we differ from him it is grace alone that hath done it; I would pause over the beautiful account that is given of the man of GOD, and pray that the LORD in mercy to the present hour would grant his church many, many *Ahijahs*. Blessed JESUS! I would say, send forth faithful ministers who will neither fear the frowns, nor court the smiles, of any man; but speak the whole truth as it is in JESUS, and keep back nothing that may be profitable to the alarming of sinners, the comforting of saints, and to the building up thy people in their most holy faith.

But while I would thus look up and beg a blessing for a faithful ministry, shall I contemplate the servant and forget the master? Shall not the view of Ahijah lead my soul to thee, thou great Prophet and Priest of thy people? Yes! blessed JESUS! if I forget thee let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. Thou art indeed a faithful high priest! and thy faithfulness and truth in making manifest thine and thy father's laws, which our whole race have broken, have been the blessed means, through the influence of thy HOLY SPIRIT upon our hearts, of turning thy people from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to thee the living GOD. Yes! dearest JESUS! thou art a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched, and not man! and thou hast not only proclaimed to us our faults, and by the influence of thy blessed SPIRIT convinced us of sin, but thou hast in infinite mercy constrained us to thy love, and turned our hearts back again. LORD JESUS! break down all our idols! take away all our false refuges of lies! do thou sit, blessed JESUS, as a refiner and purifier of silver; and purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. For then the promise is sweet, and will surely be fulfilled; *then shall the offering of Judah be pleasant to the LORD as in the days of old, and as in former years*. Hasten, blessed

JESUS! the accomplishment of this glorious end; purge away all my dross, and take away all my sin.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The history of the two kingdoms is again carried on through this chapter. The former part of it relates the history of two kings of Judah; Abijam and Asa. And the latter part of the chapter records the history of two kings of Israel; Nadab and Baasha.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE I read of the miseries of war, and behold in the succession of kings, like what is here represented in this chapter, one rising up to the destruction of another; how sweet and gracious a relief is it to my mind, to contemplate him of whom the prophet, ages before he came, thus delightfully predicted the features of his character; *Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind; and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of great rock in a weary land.*

All this, and infinitely more, blessed JESUS, art thou to thy people! Thou art a king indeed under whose government thy happy subjects live in peace and everlasting security. And thou art a covert and hiding place; a sanctuary and refuge; a fountain indeed of waters, even living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

In thee, and under thy gracious reign, whatever enemies arise, thou lightest all our battles, and makest thy people more than conquerors through thy grace enabling them. And oh! when I consider how secretly and securely in the union with thy person, and by virtue of thy finished redemption, thy subjects are eternally safe from all the possibilities of danger; how doth my soul rejoice, and my heart is made glad. Yes! blessed JESUS! I can and do speak to my soul in the sweet words of thy prophet, and enter into an heart-felt participation with the church of old of all its blissful properties; *Sing*

O daughter of Zion; shout O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments; he hath cast out thine enemy. The king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter relates nothing of the history of Judah but wholly concerns the kingdom of Israel. Jehu comes with an alarming message from the LORD to Baasha. His ruin and death; the reign of his son Elah; the conspiracy of Zimri; the division of Israel after the death of Zimri between Tibni and Omri; the beginning also of the reign of Ahab; and more especially the rebuilding of Jericho which fulfilled the curse of Joshua.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the reading of this chapter, and carefully mark the dreadful end of all the workers of iniquity! and what doth the history of all ungodly men furnish, whatever rank or situation they move in, but sad examples of the same. Under what striking images and similitudes doth the word of GOD represent them. They are said to be captives and slaves, the servants of sin, and that cannot cease from sin. And how do their lives give evidence, to the reality of such figures! For what is the wretched effect of carnal pursuit in the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, but the hire, the wages, the sure reward, in the sorrow that must follow? And are not all characters of this description, however diversified in their different occupations and pursuits, treasuring up unto themselves sure misery, here in this life not unfrequently recompensed to them, and endless sorrow in that which is to come; and are not these like the covenanted wages of the hireling and the servant, which he expects and hath a right to, in the termination of his labour?

Blessed JESUS! how refreshing is the thought to thy people, that thou hast brought them out of the service of Satan, and made them free in thy service. Thou graciously didst search for them in their haunts of sin, when, like others, they were children of wrath, and were wandering far from thee, on the same mountains of iniquity, and vanity, and worldly enjoyments. And now, having brought them, by the illumination and conviction of thine HOLY SPIRIT, into the bond of the covenant, thou preservest them from falling into those depths of sin which swallow up the ungodly. Dearest JESUS! be thou my Guide, my Counsellor, my Keeper, and my supreme joy; then sin shall not have dominion over me, nor the vanities of the world draw me into perdition. Having *put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, I shall put on the new man, which after GOD, is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter, for the first time, introduced to us, that eminent prophet and servant of GOD, Elijah. He comes to Israel, prophesying of a long season of drought. He is hidden of GOD, and fed by ravens. Afterwards he sojourneth with a widow, at Zarephath: works a miracle to supply her and household with food: and raiseth the widow's son, when dead.

REFLECTIONS

IN contemplating the character of Elijah, as represented to our view in this chapter, what an illustrious example doth he stand forward, of the noblest faith! With what confidence do we see him going in before the idolatrous king of Israel, to tell him, that for his impiety, GOD had shut up the heavens, and their influences! With what confidence in his GOD doth he proceed to hide himself by the brook, where there could be no sustenance, but what should be sent to him miraculously! With what cheerful resignation doth he remove to Zarephath, when the brook became dry; still depending for his

daily supply from the same resource of faith! And while he knew, that Jezebel was feasting the false prophets with luxuries, at her table daily, how delightfully doth Elijah feast himself on the product of the barrel of meal, and the cruse of oil, under the favor and smiles of the LORD? And yet, if possible, still more, when by the alarming visitation of his hostess' son's death, the LORD seemed, for the moment, by this breach, to have made a breach in her affection to him, and all his peace and comfort; how truly glorious doth the man of GOD then appear, in the exercise of a faith almost unparalleled. And,

Reader! what shall be our improvement in this view of the prophet? What indeed, should it be, what ought it to be, but to look more stedfastly than ever we have yet done, unto all-precious JESUS, who is the Author and Giver of faith! Was it not the SPIRIT of CHRIST which was in the prophets, which did signify to them the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow? The HOLY GHOST, by his servant the apostle Peter, hath graciously taught the church that this was the case! And may we not, from the same blessed authority, conclude that it must have been the same SPIRIT of CHRIST in the prophets, which led them on to such glorious deeds, as are recorded of them in his holy word? And shall we not then, under this precious assurance, look up to JESUS, all-gracious JESUS now, and beseech him to give us the like precious faith, through the righteousness of GOD our Saviour? Yes! thou Almighty Author and Finisher of our faith, to thee would I direct mine eyes, beseeching thee to grant me such measures of this blessed principle, in the view of thy servant the prophet here set forth, that when called upon in public, I may be bold for thy truth, and when retiring into private, I may live by faith upon thee, thou Son of GOD, when all creature comforts, like the brook, shall dry up. And, LORD JESUS! grant that I may be the follower of them, who now, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. And being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, may we lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset thy people, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS!

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us the further history of Elijah. The time being arrived for his appearance again before Ahab, the LORD commands him to go on this embassy. An account of this interview. Elijah demands a decision between the prophets of Baal and himself before all Israel, who is the GOD. The day of determination. The LORD'S answering by fire. Israel convinced. Baal's prophets destroyed. And the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD pass over, methinks, many other considerations which this sweet chapter holds forth to view, to behold in the prophetic character of Elijah what a wonderful degree of faith the LORD GOD had given to him for the arduous service to which he was called. What firmness and magnanimity were manifested in his whole conduct! When the LORD commanded him to show himself to Ahab, not a word of request to be spared the unpleasant embassy, but an instant readiness to obey. And when in the first interview with Ahab the monarch accused him with being the troubler of Israel; with what zeal did he refute the charge, and return it home upon the king. Reader! shall not you and I, in the contemplation, look up and bless the great author and giver of such faith, and pray for a portion of the same blessed SPIRIT? But let us pass over these lesser instances of this most wonderful gift of GOD in the former part of Elijah's conduct, to behold him in the exercise of it, when singly and alone he stood at mount Carmel, opposed by 450 persons. Oh! what confidence must he have had in GOD as the GOD of Israel, that the LORD would answer by fire, consume the sacrifice, and dry up the water, when in the fulness of the SPIRIT'S influence upon his heart he commanded to drench the whole in such a way as should call for one miracle upon another, to prove the LORD faithful. Who that reads this history of Elijah but must rejoice in beholding the great blessedness of faith which is capable of producing such things. And who but must be led to bless the great author of the principle itself, who both

implanted that grace in the heart, and so graciously crowned it with divine approbation!

But Reader! while looking at the servant, let us look higher also, and contemplate the master. Yes! blessed JESUS! it is thou which art the sole author and giver of it. And therefore to thee would we ascribe all the glory. Had it not been for thy gracious undertaking, such is the human mind by nature, universally speaking, that not one spark of faith could ever have been kindled in the breast of any. Here every man is the same, without any predisposition, or inclination to believe. Nay, with every prejudice against it.—The water poured over the sacrifice of Elijah did not tend to damp the materials more than the prejudices, darkness, and natural hatred of our hearts tend to damp all divine impressions. Shall I not then, blessed JESUS, adore the riches of thy grace, in that thou condescendest to kindle a flame of faith in my heart, when everything that pride, ignorance, self-righteousness, and an unconscious state of my own condition, and thy suitableness as a Saviour, stood in opposition against it? Blessed JESUS! everlasting praise to thy dear name, like the sacrifice of the prophet, the fire of thy love and mercy hath descended from heaven and consumed all. And my soul hath been constrained to say not only, The LORD he is the GOD; but that the LORD is my light, my JESUS, my salvation, my GOD and Saviour for ever.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The event in the destruction of Baal's prophets calling forth the anger of Jezebel, Elijah fleeth to the wilderness of Beersheba. The LORD comforts him there. He returns by GOD's command, and anoints Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! over this chapter, and take another view, not less profitable to our souls, though less to the prophet's honour, than

what we regarded before in the conduct of Elijah. In the former chapter we beheld him, indeed, *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. But here we see him, and human nature in him, shrinking at the bare apprehension of fear, and running away from the post of duty, as if Elijah's GOD could no more save. But Reader! let me charge it upon my own heart, while I earnestly and affectionately recommend it to yours, let neither of us lose sight of the sweet and blessed lesson the HOLY GHOST most graciously holds forth to our view, in the contemplation of the short-comings of his faithful servants. When we see a prophet thus shrinking with fear at the threat of Jezebel; or an apostle, like Peter, at the charge of a servant maid; for what doth the example serve in either case, in such eminent followers of the LORD, but to teach us how far short the highest characters are from perfection; and that they, as well as we, stand in need of the same justifying righteousness of the LORD JESUS, whose holy life is the only righteousness which comes up to the standard of the divine law. Yes! dearest, blessed JESUS! most fully we are hereby taught, and our souls rejoice in the contemplation, that none but thou canst justify thy people. *In thy name, O LORD, would my soul rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make my boast.*

Let us, Reader, also gather another sweet lesson from this chapter; and in the precious assurance the LORD gives his prophet, that while he thought himself the only one left of the LORD's servants, there were seven thousand; let us take comfort that even now, in the present dark and degenerate day, there is still *a remnant according to the election of grace*. Yes! Reader! though it be but a remnant, and a small remnant, yet JESUS hath said; *Fear not little flock, it is your heavenly FATHER's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*. JESUS will preserve it. For it is the FATHER's gift; it is JESUS's own purchase; and the conquest of his SPIRIT's grace on the heart; and therefore it must be preserved, And however small, or inconsiderable in the eyes of men, yet when the whole come to be brought together in glory, it will form *a multitude which no man can number*. *In my FATHER's house, (saith JESUS) there are many mansions*. LORD! grant, if it be thy blessed will, both to Writer and Reader, to be found among that multitude.

Lastly. Reader! let both of us from this chapter be very diligent while reading the call of Elisha, to see that we make *our calling and election sure*. Oh! for grace to discover the preventing, unexpected, unmerited and sovereign call of GOD! Dearest JESUS! do thou pass by, and cast thy mantle upon us: thou LORD GOD of the prophets! do thou give Us the yielding, willing heart, to follow thee at thy call. And do thou grant that we may leave the oxen, the cares of the world, father and mother, and all creature enjoyments, and like Elisha, run after thee whithersoever thou goest; and like Ruth, to Naomi, may resolve to live with thee, and to die with thee, convinced that *to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain*. Oh! for faith, precious faith to have JESUS for our portion; for in him *we have all things*.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This chapter relates more to the history of Israel as a nation, than to the government of the church. It informs us of a battle between Syria and Israel, in which the Syrians are worsted. Ahab doth not avail himself of his victory, for which he is reproved by the prophet.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the perusal of this chapter ministers to our minds two very opposite reflections; but both such as may be rendered sweet and profitable under the LORD'S teaching. It is hardly possible to look at Ahab in the determined hardness of a corrupt heart, which neither the fear of man nor the mercy of GOD proved sufficient to subdue, but with the most painful consideration on the awful state of the wicked. To what an extent of power must Satan have reigned and ruled in this man's mind! Deaf to all danger: to all the alarming providences of GOD around him! Deaf to all the calls of grace and mercy: neither moved by the alarms of Benhadad's army, any more than as it concerned temporal safety: nor moved by the gracious

message of GOD, though twice repeated, and as often followed with the promised deliverance: we hear nothing of his expressing any sense of his undeserving; nor of his thankfulness for the great and unmerited deliverance. Having eyes and seeing not; and having ears, and hearing not; neither regarding the works of the LORD, nor the operations of his hands.

But how blessed is it, in the midst of all the unworthiness and continued provocations of Ahab, and of his people, to see the LORD still saving his Israel and remembering his covenant-mercy. Oh, LORD! let these precious tokens of thy love comfort my soul, amidst all mine unhallowed and soul-distressing departures I am continually making from thee. Oh, Holy FATHER! let me never forget that tender, that unparalleled love of thine, who, though thou knewest I should be a transgressor from the womb, still didst not keep back thy Son, thine only blessed Son, but gave him up for my salvation! Oh! most precious JESUS! cause my soul to hang for ever on thee, in the contemplation of thine unheard of mercy, when for my sake thou didst endure the cross, despise the shame, and art now sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. And oh! thou HOLY GHOST, the Comforter! for ever blessed be thy matchless love to me, in that thou hast condescended, in defiance of all my carnal enmity and hatred to the ways of salvation, which by nature my whole frame was full of, to become my teacher, and to make me willing in the day of thy power! Oh! LORD GOD! JEHOVAH! now reign and rule in all, and over all my affections, that while, like Ahab, men of the world go down to their houses heavy and displeased, I may come to Zion with Songs of everlasting joy upon my head, with all the redeemed of thy people; and sorrow and sighing may flee away forever.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The history of Ahab still continues a melancholy, because a sinful history; to the end. Here he is presented to us as coveting his

neighbor's vineyard. By Jezebel's stratagem he succeeds. Elijah is sent to him with an awful message from GOD.

REFLECTIONS

IT is impossible to behold human nature, as represented in such characters as Ahab and Jezebel, but with the most humiliating pain and sorrow, from our connection in the general mass. When I consider that, by nature, we are all alike children of wrath, enemies to GOD by wicked works; oh! how humbling is the view! But when, through grace, our souls are brought to look at the rock whence we are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence we are digged; oh! how precious, how inestimably precious is that mercy, which is so distinguishing. Never, blessed JESUS; never, I beseech thee, dearest LORD and Saviour, suffer me to read of such awful characters in thy sacred word, without feeling the blessedness of that question of thy servant the apostle, applied and brought home to my soul; *Who maketh thee to differ from another: and what hast thou which thou didst not receive?* And, LORD! suffer me to ask another mercy from thee: while beholding the miseries of our nature, the sufferings of the oppressed, and the cruelty of their oppressors; oh! give me to behold the virtue, the efficacy, the merit, the power, the all sufficiency of thy precious blood, in cleansing from all sin. Here let me gaze on thee and thy cross, until my whole soul goeth forth in the most ardent faith and dependence upon thee. LORD! impress upon my mind, in yet stronger characters, thy eternal excellency. And let my dying moments bear one uniform correspondence with my living conviction; that salvation is in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

In this chapter, some account of the history of the kingdom of Judah, which hath not been taken notice of during the five preceding

chapters is again revived. After a three years peace between Syria and Israel, war is sounded afresh, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, joins Ahab, king of Israel, in the battle at Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab is slain. Ahaziah succeeds him. Some account of Jehoshaphat's reign.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not close this first book of the Kings without taking with it into our minds the many gracious lessons the great author of it evidently intended that the church in all ages should gather from the records contained in it. In passing over the lives, the actions, and pursuits of the several successive monarchs it holds forth to view, we behold, though diversified by various characters, one general subject, though here and there it may be a page a little less stained with evil, of the dreadful effects of pride and ambition. In general a total departure from GOD. The *form* indeed with some kept up, but *the power of godliness* wanting. For though we make some exceptions, as in the instance of Solomon in the former part of his reign, yet after all allowances to soften the shades of the history, what is the whole picture but a perspective of fallen man exercising the long-suffering and patience of a most gracious covenant GOD.

In the lives of the few faithful servants and prophets of the LORD, raised up to minister in holy things amidst the general corruption, how delightful it is to read that the LORD hath not, and will not, cast away his people whom he foreknew. The period promised shall come. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Successive ministers in his church shall arise to keep alive the remembrance of this great event. And with an eye to him, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed, the LORD will have his heart engaged for Israel, from one end of the year even to the other end of the year.

Blessed JESUS! thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Stedfastly would I fix my eye on thee while passing through the several ages, and the reigns of those monarchs in Israel and Judah. And when I behold thy church oppressed, thy worship despised; idols desecrating thine altars, and impious men profaning thy sanctuary; I would be consoling myself with the assurance that in the worst of times thou hast a seed that serve thee;

and while thy faithful ones are discouraged, as if none were left to call thee blessed, many a thousand yet thine eyes regard, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. *The glorious LORD therefore will be unto his people at all times a place, of broad rivers, and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars; neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge! the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us!*

Hail! then, thou blessed LORD GOD, JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! the gracious almighty covenanters in redemption. All scripture joins issue in this, and all the faithful rest secured in the mercy, that the LORD is bringing home his church through the wilderness of this world to glory; and whether evil men, or devils, rise up in confederacy against it, or whether by terrible things in righteousness the LORD is pleased to work, that period is ripening, and will unfold its blessed fruit in the very moment already appointed; *The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*—Amen.

2nd KINGS

COMMONLY CALLED
THE
FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

AS this *Second* Book of the Kings is but a continuation of the same subject as the *First*; it may not be amiss to remark, that the same general observations, which were proposed to the Reader's consideration in the opening of the *former*, will be proper to be kept in remembrance at the entrance on *this*. The Reader of discernment, whose mind is under divine teaching, will discover in this, as in the preceding book of the Kings, many precious things contained in it, beside the history itself: which, to an awakened, and enlightened understanding, will abundantly tend to satisfy him, both of its divine authority, and of the gracious design of the HOLY GHOST, in causing it to be written, for the comfort and edification of the church in all ages.

Indeed there is one circumstance, and that of great note, to be attended to, in the perusal of the *second* book of the Kings, with which *the first* hath not such immediate connection: namely, that the greater part of the prophets, whose writings are placed at the end of the Bible, ministered to the church in their respective ages, during the period which this second book of the Kings records; that is from the days of *Uzziah* to the time of the Babylonish captivity. All from *Isaiah* to *Zephaniah* (*Ezekiel* and *Daniel* excepted) exercised their ministry during the years this second book of the Kings compriseth. It will be a point of no small importance, to the help of the pious Reader to keep this in his recollection, while going over this book of GOD.

In regard to the period of history contained in the second book of the Kings, it includes somewhat about 340 years; carrying on the history of the church from the death of *Ahab*, to the death of *Jehoiachim* which brings down the age of the world to between five and six hundred years before the advent of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And as, by so much the nearer the circumstances of mankind are seen to approach to that one glorious era, which alone gives importance to the history of man; everything in reference to it, must be found to rise in importance also. I would therefore beg the Reader to have his attention the more awakened as he prosecutes the history, that he may catch here and there, if possible, some precious glimpses of JESUS. For if, from the earliest dawn of revelation, in the days of the patriarchs, the great Covenant Head of his church never left himself without witness, but frequently (as if to manifest how much he longed for the period of his becoming man for the redemption of his people) he showed himself to the faithful; surely, as that period drew nearer, it might be reasonably supposed, that he would now and then give a glance of his lovely Person, or (as the church beautifully expresses it) *from behind the wall of our nature look forth at the windows, and show himself through the lattice*. In this book, if I mistake not, several instances of the kind occur. Happy will it be, both for Writer and Reader, if their discoveries correspond!

I only, upon the present occasion, as in the former, desire to send forth my poor labours, accompanied with the humblest prayers to him, whose blessing can alone make them profitable, that both to him that writes and him that reads, this sacred book may be blessed. Vouchsafe, gracious GOD! to instruct both by it, in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with relating a circumstance of sin in the conduct of Ahaziah. Elijah is commissioned to send an awful message to him. The king, in consequence, commands the prophet to appear before him. His messengers are destroyed. Ahaziah dieth, and Jehoram succeeds him in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, awfully behold, in the sad example of Ahaziah and his captains of fifty, with their fifties, how sin hardens the heart, and renders men ripe for punishment! See in them thine own picture by nature; and, but for grace, how justly the features would be marked still. To what a desperate length should I have run, had not the mercy of my GOD interposed, and stopped me in my daring career! Enlisted under the banner of sin and Satan; wearing his livery, and equipped with his armour, bow readily in those days of unregeneracy, should I have contended with his faithful servants, and from ignorance, malice, and deceitful lusts, have dared to oppose all that was gracious. Blessed JESUS! at what expense of love, of grace, of mercy, and of blood, hast thou redeemed me, and made the deadly weapons of opposition fall from my hands.

To whom but thee, thou HOLY ONE of Israel, who hast made our peace in the blood, of thy cross, shall I ascribe this great salvation? Yes! blessed JESUS! thou, and thou alone, as thy FATHER'S precious gift to poor sinners, art the sole deliverer of the captive; for thou hast indeed taken away the captives from the mighty, and the prey of the terrible thou hast delivered. And now, LORD! what is the language of my heart, but like the poor submissive suppliant at the foot of Elijah, I would say to thee, as he did to the prophet; *let my life, I beseech thee, be precious in thy sight.* Oh! JESUS! thou Man of GOD, thou Man at GOD'S right-hand, who art fellow to the LORD of Hosts; again I say, as he did, let my life be precious in thy sight! Haste then, come down quickly, O LORD, and let my soul live before thee. So shall I

live to thy glory while here below, and to thy redeeming praise when thou shalt take me to thyself above.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This is an interesting Chapter, in that it contains the history of the removal of Elijah to heaven, and of establishing Elisha as his successor in the prophetical office upon earth: the dividing of Jordan; healing the waters: the children mocking Elisha, torn and destroyed.

REFLECTIONS

I PASS over all lesser considerations in the perusal of this chapter, to behold with all suitable thankfulness to the LORD, as the gracious author of the mercy, thy happy privilege Elijah, whom thy GOD was pleased to take to himself in glory, without passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Thou wert indeed an highly favoured servant of our LORD! no doubt as Enoch, so Elijah, found the translation by faith. For nothing but GOD'S covenant love and grace in CHRIST JESUS, *could either have first procured heaven, or have opened a way of translation thither. In this believing view of JESUS, and by faith in his blood and righteousness, all the faithful have lived, and died as they lived, in the exercise of it. In this most dear and holy name I would hail thee, thou prophet of my GOD and Saviour on this happy departure of thine. And though now so many ages have run out since, yet in the faith of him who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever; I would bless the LORD JESUS in the recollection of his grace and goodness toward thee. At the same time praising his most holy name for all his departed servants, who while passing through the grave to their home in glory, were not less beloved, neither less happy, but found in the same complete and finished salvation; the same entrance being abundantly administered unto them, into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.*

But let not my meditations end here. Do I not behold in the servant some of the faint outlines of the master? Shall I see the prophet Elijah going up by a whirlwind into heaven, and shall I not recollect that the LORD GOD of the prophets ascended visibly into heaven in the presence of his apostles, attended with angels to grace his triumph? Yes! precious LORD! thou risen, ascended, and exalted Redeemer, my soul would take her flight on the wing of faith to the mount of Bethany, and gaze on thy blessed person, until that I followed thee to the right hand of power, and beheld all things put under thy feet! And surely the distinguished mercy manifested to the prophet Elijah in this instance, was principally with a view to show to thy church under the Old Testament dispensation, that such would be thy glorious triumphs when thou hadst conquered sin, death, hell, and the grave; and hereby opened thy kingdom to all believers.

And was not this Elijah a type in many other similar situations wherein a servant might be supposed to mark out the features of his LORD. Was the prophet poor, and was our JESUS rich? Did he go in the strength of the LORD's sustenance forty days and nights to mount Horeb? And was not JESUS led up of the SPIRIT forty days into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil? Did the widow's cruse multiply under Elijah's ministry by the word of JEHOVAH? And shall I not call to mind, blessed JESUS, how the loaves and the fishes multiplied under thine own Almighty hand, to give bread to the people in the wilderness? Did the LORD so far honour his servant as to raise the widow of Zarephath's son; and shall I overlook him who by his own power called from death the widow of Nain's son; and as a confirmation that he was GOD, brought up Lazarus from the grave, and will at the last day raise the bodies of all his saints, because he is the resurrection and the life? Oh! precious LORD of all thy people, I would bless thy holy name in all I read of thy ministering servants, of grace and mercy manifested to them. And in all I behold of miracles wrought by their instrumentality, I would ever be looking unto thee as the cause. Thou art the author and the finisher. By thee kings reign, and princes decree justice. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and the faithful in all ages, have acted under thy commission, and in thy name. To thee they bend the knee, and now

the whole army of them, both in heaven and earth, joyfully confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We are here presented with some account of the reign of Jehoram, In an enquiry concerning a quarrel between Israel and Moab, Elisha is commissioned with a gracious message from the LORD to Israel. The Moabites are conquered.

REFLECTIONS

I stay not to remark all the interesting things which this chapter contains; otherwise I might charge it upon my soul to admire and adore, what I have read of grace and mercy transcending iniquity and undeservings. But I pass over; for the present; the consideration of all these, important as they are in themselves, to contemplate JESUS: most beautifully shadowed forth in the prophet's prayer, being answered in the time of the morning sacrifice. How sweetly was the prophet's mind prepared for the expectation of this mercy when the HOLY GHOST; whose office it is to glorify JESUS, poured out of his blessed influences through the medium of this minstrel. But how glorious an object is it thus to behold in ages so remote from the hour of the Redeemer's sacrifice, its blessed efficacy in bringing down all needed blessings.

Pause, my soul; I charge thee pause, and say what upon earth can impress thy mind more in token of the infinite importance of the redemption by JESUS's sacrifice, than that JEHOVAH, in so many instances; made even the hour when in after ages that sacrifice was to be offered memorable, in the pouring out of his mercies. Did the LORD GOD appoint the morning lamb, and the evening lamb, a standing daily memorial of his lamb slain; and did all his faithful servants eye JESUS in their morning and evening oblation? And wilt not thou, my soul, now thy JESUS, thy GOD and Saviour, hath by that *one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; wilt thou not

eye him in all thy poor presentations of the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Precious JESUS! grant me to look on thee continually. Thou art the only sacrifice for sin. Thou art the only lamb of GOD for a burnt-offering. The golden altar of thy divine nature, on which the sacrifice can alone be offered; and the everlasting High Priest by whom all can be presented. Thou, thou art the sum and substance of all. Oh! Holy FATHER! having boldness to enter into the holiest by his blood; behold I come in his name, making mention of his righteousness, even his righteousness only. Covered under his complete, all justifying robe, and washed from all impurities in his blood: let me enter into the sacred retirings of the LORD GOD. Yes! most gracious, indulgent FATHER! the remedy is of thy own providing; it is thou, blessed be thy glorious name, thou who hast *reconciled all things to thyself* by JESUS CHRIST. Look, holy FATHER, upon the face of thine anointed! and say, Canst thou deny me any mercy while I ask it in thy dear Son's name? And blessed, forever blessed, be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for having left upon record that sweet scripture to confirm those well grounded assurances in JESUS's name and work; *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this chapter the prophet Elisha is again introduced. He multiplieth the widow's oil. A son is given her. The child dieth. Elisha raiseth the child again. At Gilgal he healeth the poison in the pot. He feedeth an hundred men with twenty loaves of barley and ears of corn. These are among the contents.

REFLECTIONS

How lovely is it to behold in this *great* woman of Shunem, (as she is called) the blessed fruits of real piety. Reader! if we love JESUS, we cannot but love his people. *This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth GOD love his brother also.* She did not

say to the prophet; *be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding, the things are not given which are needful to the body.* But, like another *Lydia*, her language was; *If ye have Judged me to be faithful to the LORD, come into my house, and abide there.* And shall I not constrain thee, thou blessed JESUS, as oft as thou passeth by, to turn in unto me, that we may eat bread together? And be thou not as a way-faring man, that tarrieth but for a night; but I would constrain thee to continue to the breaking of the day: and do thou, dearest, honored LORD, do thou make thyself known to me *in breaking of bread and of prayer.* And though I have nothing to provide thee; nothing, like this *Shunammite*, to give thee, (as the *bed*, and the *table*, and the *stool*, and the *candlestick*;) yet, when thou comest, thou wilt bring all things with thee; and thou thyself wilt be all things to me; light to my darkness, a rest for my wearied soul to repose upon, and *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all my glorying may be in thee, O LORD!*

My soul! do thou learn from this great woman, *another* sweet lesson. While men of the world, *from* the world are seeking their portion, and would rejoice at the offer of being spoken of to the king of an earthly court; oh! for grace, like her, to see the happiness of dwelling among that people, whose distinguishing character it is, that *they shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.* Yes! blessed JESUS! I would be spoken for to thee indeed, and count it my chief joy to be of thy people.

And lastly, before I take my leave of this precious chapter, let me look up to thee, thou blessed Author and Finisher of faith, that thou wouldest give me a portion of the same precious spirit, which this *Shunammite* possessed in so large a degree. Is it possible, dearest JESUS, that I can thus read of a woman, who lived in ages so remote from thy coming, acting faith upon covenant promises, to such an extent as really to receive her dead child, by virtue of it, raised to life again; and yet who live so many ages after thou hast wrought out and completed thy salvation, possessing all thine exceeding great and precious promises, doubt and fear, and too often call in question, the certainty of them? Oh! for grace to believe the record GOD the FATHER hath given of his dear Son. LORD! I would pray, above all things, give me faith, that I may be a patient follower of

them *who now through faith and patience inherit the promises.*
LORD! make me faithful unto death, that I may obtain *that crown of glory which fadeth not away.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The interesting ministry of Elisha is continued throughout this chapter. The prophet healeth Naaman, the Syrian, of his leprosy. He refuseth the gifts and rewards of the Syrian. Gehazi, his servant, taking them, is in judgment smitten with the leprosy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! though I have already detained you, as we have passed through this chapter, with several suitable reflections, as they appeared to my view, and arose in my mind, yet I would call upon you before we close the book, to gather up a few more of a spiritual nature, which I pray the LORD to make profitable.

If we have been reading the history of Naaman's leprosy, as a matter remote from ourselves, and simply no other than a transaction which occurred in the annals of Israel, many years since; we have lost all the gracious designs which the HOLY GHOST had in view, in causing such *a* memorable event to be recorded. Reader! you and I, and every child of Adam, bring with us into the world the leprosy of sin. *Behold!* (says David) *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Are you, Reader, sensible of this? Do you know it? Do you believe it? Oh! then, I say as the captive maid in Syria; Would to GOD you were with the Prophet that is in Samaria, even the LORD GOD of the prophets, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, for he would recover you of your leprosy!

And, Reader! do not come, as the Syrian did, with chariots and horses; do not seek with gifts and rewards to purchase redemption. Our JESUS is too rich to need our gold; too gracious to accept anything from his creatures. He hath a fulness, a suitableness, an all-sufficiency in himself; and his precious blood cleanseth from all

sins. Dearest JESUS! behold I come to thee. No Naaman, no leper at the foot of the mountain; no Ethiopian can need cleansing more than I the cry of my soul is, *Lord! if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!* Oh! then put forth thy gracious hand; put forth thy sovereign grace in my soul, and pronounce the healing word, *I will; be thou clean;* and immediately my soul shall be healed. And healed by thee, like Naaman, my soul will be fully convinced that there is no GOD in all the earth, no other name under heaven given among men, whereby sinners may be saved! Oh! for grace to know with Paul, now that *we are washed, that we are sanctified, that we are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD.* And shortly we shall *then* come to sing that song with all the congregation in heaven, who were once leprous as ourselves, but have been cleansed in the same laver of redemption; *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The account of the ministry of Elisha is continued yet further through this chapter also, as in the former. He causeth iron to swim. He discloseth the king of Syria's counsel. He smiteth his army with blindness.

REFLECTIONS

IN the perusal of this chapter, methinks I would behold the prophet Elisha with the greater attention in the several interesting services here recorded of him, by way of having my soul directed, with more awakened earnestness, to contemplate the grace of his heavenly Master. Surely it is refreshing and comfortable, and highly encouraging to the souls of the faithful, when we see the gracious condescension of the LORD in the employment of such men. What a series of servants the LORD hath called forth in his church! And to what a noble, employment have they been called! And when we call to mind the cause of their ministry; and more especially their

Employer; how is the mind overpowered in the contemplation of that love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge. He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.

But is it possible, my soul, to look at these, even all of them, though of the highest order, and pause a moment in the review, without having all the finer affections exercised, and called forth in the contemplation of thee, thou blessed JESUS, thou Prince of prophets, thou LORD of all thy faithful apostles, and of the innumerable host with which thou art encircled on mount Zion, where, as a Lamb that hath been slain, thou still appearest to manifest the everlasting nature of thy priesthood, and the eternal efficacy of thy redemption! Oh! precious LORD GOD! how do all prophets, priests, and kings sink to nothing before thee! Be thou my unceasing meditation! Teach me, LORD, to behold thee so as to have all my soul's affections drawn out after thee, and unto thee. Oh! for grace to behold the LORD always before me, and to set him on my right hand. May my eyes, by the lively exercise of faith, gaze upon him with unceasing, and increasing, delight, until he shall come to take me home, to behold his glory in one full blaze of everlasting day; and never, never more shall I then take off my ravished eyes from beholding his beauty. *Make haste, my Beloved; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The ministry of Elisha is continued through this chapter. The prophet, in the midst of dearth, foretelleth an immediate, and incredible plenty. An unbelieving lord treating the prophet's

prediction with contempt, Elisha foretels his death, which accordingly takes place.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us in the view of this siege of Samaria behold a lively emblem of the soul's distressed state by reason of sin. Alas! what a famine, not of bread and of water, but of all spiritual comfort, ease, or satisfaction. In the contemplation of the unexpected deliverance is not JESUS and his great salvation beautifully represented! how graciously discovered! how unexpectedly found! the soul of the sinner, like the leprous man while going from one tent to another, in the discoveries of JESUS's love can hardly be brought to think it real. How is it, LORD! he continually cries out, as he enters into the enjoyments of salvation, how is it dearest JESUS, that thou hast manifested thyself unto me and not unto the world.

But oh! Reader, let us also learn from the awful history of the unbelieving lord, what everlasting dangers sinners are exposed to, and what everlasting horrors they must ultimately fall in; when neither the gift of the FATHER in his dear Son, nor JESUS's love in the free-gift of himself, can work upon the hardened heart to believe unto salvation. What aggravated misery will that be to the unawakened, unregenerated heart, to have lived under the sound of the gospel, but never regarded its gracious calls! to have seen, like this unbelieving lord, the plenty and fulness of redemption, but never to have partaken of it. Oh! dearest, blessed, precious JESUS! add a blessing to all thy finished work, and give me not only to see and to hear with the outward means, but to taste and enjoy the blessed inward power of thy saving truth to the salvation of my soul!

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The history of the Shunammite, which was in part given before, is prosecuted yet further in this chapter. Her land is restored to her. Here is also a short relation concerning Hazael, the Syrian. This

chapter also contains an account of Jehoram's wicked reign, and of Ahaziah his successor in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over our review of this chapter, for many are the gospel instructions we may take home to our own hearts under the HOLY GHOST's gracious teachings. In the restoration of the *Shunammite's* land, let us recollect with holy joy that our JESUS hath effectually secured our inheritance, notwithstanding there hath been for many a seven year a famine and poverty indeed in our souls. JESUS our king will restore the whole, and infinitely more than we lost, by the apostacy of our first Father, Yes! thou dearest LORD, thou hast accomplished the redemption of all our mortgaged possession, and it is thou which will finally put us into the enjoyment of them again; thou art indeed thyself our inheritance, our portion, our joy forever.

In the account of Hazael, Reader, let us not overlook the general character of all men by the fall. That you and I perpetrate not such crimes, is not from any difference in nature, but wholly from the preventing and restraining grace of our GOD. Oh! blessed JESUS, teach me by such views how to appreciate thy great salvation more and more, and with the greatest thankfulness of soul, give thee all the glory, that I am kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation. And Reader, let the view which the HOLY GHOST hath here given us in the character of Hazael, when by a change from an humble station to the highest, the seeds of iniquity were thus ripened, and brought forward to the production of its deadly fruit, Oh! let it teach us how much wiser and more gracious the LORD is than we are ourselves, in choosing the lowest stations for his people, to keep them from evil. Yes! dearest LORD, I thank thee for the very place thy wisdom hath appointed me. I know it must be the best because thou hast ordained it. Thy love, as well as thy wisdom, was in it. Bring me therefore, LORD, according to thy promise, as a poor, blind, ignorant creature, in a way that I knew not; leave me not to my own understanding, but give me grace to be always committing my ways unto the LORD, and to acknowledge thine hand in all; for thou hast said thou wilt direct my paths.

One thought more, Reader, before we quit this chapter, in that precious account which is given us concerning Judah, that *the LORD would not destroy Judah for David's sake*. Oh! the blessed thought! oh! the soul-reviving consideration, amidst all the discouragements of sin, and the feats of unbelief! Judah's LORD still lives, still reigns, and the efficacy of his blood and righteousness is of everlasting duration. Learn, my soul, henceforth to live out of thyself upon this covenant GOD in CHRIST. In him is all thy fullness and sufficiency. And in so improving and using CHRIST, according to GOD the FATHER's gift and design concerning him, all happiness and security must be found. In thy name, blessed JESUS, would I rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness may my soul be exalted.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the anointing of Jehu: his slaughter of Joram: the death of Jezebel, and the relation of her being eaten by dogs.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful view doth this chapter afford of the miserable end of Ahab's race! and how is the mind struck in the contemplation, that a family such as his was in all its branches, should sell themselves to work evil with greediness. It is hardly possible to go through the review of what is related in these histories of Ahab and Jezebel, and their household, without being again and again prompted, as we prosecute the history, to exclaim from whence arose such determined resolute impiety!

But we read the history of Ahab to very little profit if it doth not serve to lead the mind further than to the history of a single person or family, and not to behold in it the outlines of wicked and ungodly men in all ages. In the dreadful opposition Ahab made to the GOD of Israel and his prophets, do we not behold the representation of all the Ahabs of every age, in their avowed hatred and opposition of the

blessed gospel of the LORD JESUS? Do not some of this description of men seem as if every faculty was in league against the LORD JESUS? Their hearts boiling with implacable bitterness; their ears resolutely stopped to all the grace of the gospel; their voices uniformly raised against it. Despisers of divine things, haters of GOD and of his CHRIST! *Oh! my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united.*

But, Reader! how sweet to the view is JESUS after looking at human nature, and human wickedness, in such awful characters! and farther, how increasingly so is the view of JESUS under these considerations, when we are enabled to trace our preservation and upholding from such awful examples on ourselves! Yes! dearest, almighty JESUS! it is to thy preventing and restraining grace we cheerfully ascribe all the praise and the glory. Truly must I say (and, Reader, do you not the same?) by the grace of GOD I am what I am! that I have been, that I now am, and that I feel confidence for the future I shall be kept; on my bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, would I give the whole glory to the adorable Redeemer. It was JESUS who committed to his FATHER his church for this blessed purpose in the close of his ministry, and just before his death. And it is to this one source the preservation of his people must be everlastingly ascribed. *Keep* (said the gracious Redeemer as he placed his dearly purchased flock in the hands of the LORD) *keep, Holy FATHER, through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* And hence under the unquestionable evidence of this great truth, would I cry out with the apostle, and say, *Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten to this lively hope all his people, who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

In following up the commission Jehu had received from the LORD for the destruction of Ahab's house, we are told in this chapter how

he caused 70 of his sons to be beheaded. He destroyeth, the worshippers of Baal. But yet himself, the close of the chapter relates, departed not from the sins of Jeroboam.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause a moment over the perusal of this chapter, and, in the character of Jehu, mark the possibility of possessing great gifts, and great appearances of zeal for GOD's service, without any real possession of vital godliness. A man may cry out, as Jehu did, *Come, see my zeal for the LORD*; but if that zeal be truly put to the test, it will be as Solomon saith; *as the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise*. Let a man profess what he will, void of regeneration, yet all his performances spring from himself. A pool of water, when the rain descends plentifully, will swell and look large, but having no source, when the sun and the drought come on, it dries up. Oh! blessed JESUS! let all my zeal for thee and thy glory, arise from that well of water which thou hast promised, and which is from thyself, springing up unto everlasting life.

In the total overthrow of Ahab's family, mark, I beseech you, the sure termination of the ungodly. The LORD hath said in his covenant engagements, that he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him! Reader! do not forget; the same promise which becomes sure to the believer, because of the faithfulness of GOD, makes his threatenings to the unbeliever, equally sure and certain. The LORD is not slack (saith *an* apostle) concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. The day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night. Precious JESUS! where, in that tremendous day, would my soul find shelter, had I not thy righteousness to justify, and thy garment of salvation to cover me. Let a throne of grace witness for me, that now, even now I plead this, under all the accusations of conscience, the deceitfulness of a corrupt heart, the charges of Satan, and the threatenings of the broken law of GOD. And in that hour, when GOD shall arise to shake terribly the earth, then shall I plead it with full assurance of faith; nothing fearing any condemning sentence from my Judge, while standing secure in the justifying righteousness of

GOD my Saviour, and triumphing in the covenant promises of my FATHER's sovereign grace. Lord JESUS! let the view of the treachery and deceitfulness of man's heart, as in the instance of Jehu, lead me to be everlastingly suspecting my own. And let a perfect conviction that thou, and thou only, art the righteousness of thy people, make me more and more earnest to know thee, to love thee, to live to thee, to walk in thee, to act faith upon thee, and to rejoice in thee as my portion, in time and to all eternity. Precious, precious LORD JESUS! even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The sacred historian in this chapter is relating the affairs of the kingdom of Judah. Athaliah destroys all the seed royal; one only escaped the general massacre, which is Jehoash. At six years of age Jehoida anoints him king. Athaliah is slain.

REFLECTIONS

IT is delightful to observe how the LORD, in the worst of times, hath his servants ready to execute his gracious designs. He hath a Jehosheba to hide when matters render it necessary; and a Jehoida to bring forward his chosen according to the counsel of his own will. Reader! how truly profitable is it thus to trace the LORD's hand in all his doings! And how encouraging, in all our intricate circumstances, to remember whose government we are under.

But, Reader! may you and I pass over the court of Judah in the history of Joash, and contemplate the LORD JESUS brought forth the lawful King of his people, against all the usurpation and tyranny of sin and Satan. Behold JESUS, showed to us as the King's Son, the rightful heir of all things, by whom JEHOVAH made the worlds. Behold him in the glories of his Person, being the brightness of his FATHER's glory! Behold him as the great Covenant-head of his people set up from everlasting, although hidden, and his name secret through the several intermediate ages, until the fulness of time,

appointed of the FATHER for his being revealed as a Saviour unto Israel. Contemplate him in all the Old Testament promises, types, and prophecies! See him in his convention with the FATHER for the purposes of redemption, when he stood up, like Joash, before the people and became our Covenant-head and King. Trace him in his incarnation, life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and glory! And what is he now? Surely he is the same. He stands in his temple as Joash stood by the pillar, as the manner was, to confirm the covenant, of which he himself is the whole sum and substance for his people, and to his people. He comes to us revealed in all his written word. He makes discovery of himself in his blessed gospel in all the suitableness of his precious offices, relations, and characters. He is JEHOVAH's Standard and Ensign for his people, implying that he maketh war against all treasonable usurpations (like Athaliah's) for his people, and maketh them more than conquerors, through his grace and love, leading them on to victory! Hail! blessed, holy, gracious, all-powerful JESUS! my soul would shout aloud, and I would clap my hands in testimony of the greatest joy, that JESUS reigns. Be thou, dearest sovereign, LORD and Master, be thou my GOD and King; and let all enemies which would rise up in treasonable rebellion against thy princely government, like Athaliah, be laid hands upon, without the temple, and slain before his face. Amen Amen.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the history of Jehoash's reign and death. He governed well during the life of Jehoiada, but after was led away from his uprightness. His death was induced by the treachery of his servants.

REFLECTIONS

READER I would wish for myself, and, if the LORD pleases, may he graciously make it profitable to you also, in the review of

this character of Joash, to consider what instructions we may gather from it considered with an eye to gospel times, and to the blessed redemption believers have in the LORD JESUS. When we see what a sad conclusion the life of Joash had, to so promising a beginning, it ought to induce inquiry into the circumstances of spiritual declensions, and the sad cause why it is that some who seemingly set out fair for the kingdom, flag and tire by the way. The apostle Paul, as the penman of the HOLY GHOST, hath plainly assigned the reason in his third chapter to the Church of the Galatians; where he calls them foolish Galatians, because having begun in the Spirit, they afterwards thought to be made perfect by the flesh. When souls shift the foundation of their faith and hope, and leave their first love, leave JESUS, and seek a partial justification before GOD in their own works, they soon find leanness in their souls. Reader! I charge it upon you, if you know anything of CHRIST, desire to know nothing *but* CHRIST. Make him what he really is, the Alpha and Omega of your salvation; the Finisher as well as the Author of it; and you will do well. Did you not renounce everything of your own, and what was in yourself, when you first came to JESUS, and would you now take somewhat of your own to purchase CHRIST? Did JESUS give life to your soul at the first, when by his SPIRIT he quickened you; and must he not give life still? Having *begun* (saith the apostle) *in the Spirit are you so foolish as to seek to be made perfect in the flesh?* Oh! thou blessed, blessed Source of all our hopes and joys; thou precious JESUS, be thou all in all to the souls of thy people! Here, LORD, I beg once for all totally to renounce myself, and as I first came to thee guilty, poor, and wretched; so, LORD, I would come still. Blessed be thy name, for that thou hast taught me to know the plague of my own heart, and to see and be convinced that in myself, after all thou hast bestowed upon me, I am no more worthy now, than when thou didst pass by and *beheld me in my blood, and bid me live*. Yes! dearest LORD, I desire to lie low in the dust before thee in token of my nothingness and unworthiness, while hanging upon thee the full assurance of my salvation. And, LORD, let it be my daily desire to exercise every act of faith upon thee, to undertake nothing but in thy strength, and to seek acceptance only in thy blood and righteousness. And oh! may I know thee with increasing joy under

that blessed character whereby thou art revealed to thy people, as *the LORD our righteousness*; being convinced that thou art made of *GOD*, to us *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all my glorying may be in the LORD.*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The most interesting part of this chapter is that which contains the death of the prophet Elisha. We have heard nothing of this man of GOD for some time. Here we are introduced to his history afresh, and the relation of his death. Here is also an account of the wicked reign of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. A remarkable circumstance is related of the revival of a dead man by being cast into the sepulchre of Elisha.

REFLECTIONS

I PASS over every other consideration, which the perusal of this chapter affords, to take the larger, and more attentive review of the dying moments of the man of GOD, Elisha. No doubt the recollection of the wicked reign of Jehoahaz and Joash; the infinite clemency of a most gracious GOD, notwithstanding showed to such impious monarchs and their people, and the deliverances wrought out for them by the LORD; no doubt these contemplations would open a large door for improvement. And indeed, I pray the Reader not wholly to pass them by. May the HOLY GHOST sanctify them to the soul both of Writer and Reader. But I pass the more quickly over those things, to take a more deliberate view of the dying prophet, which this chapter records. And as with this chapter, the life and ministry of Elisha terminates, methinks I would gather up, from the fragments of a life so illustrious, and so highly honored, somewhat to contemplate to the honor of the saint, and yet infinitely more, to gather therefrom in reference to the Saviour.

And shall I, blessed SPIRIT of all truth, shall I humbly venture to ask, while lying low in the dust before thee, is there not somewhat in

thy servant the prophet Elisha, which forms a resemblance, however imperfect and far short of the original, to the person, character, and offices of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? Didst thou, blessed SPIRIT, graciously design that thy church should be led to such a contemplation! Look then, my soul, while waiting the HOLY GHOST's teaching, look to Elisha, and see whether he was not intended to shadow forth somewhat of JESUS, in his life and ministry!

A double portion of the Spirit was promised Elisha at the river Jordan, when entering on his prophetic office, on the departure of Elijah. And was it not at the same river the HOLY GHOST descended on the Person of the LORD JESUS, at his entrance on his ministry, when *the SPIRIT was given to him without measure*? Did Elisha divide the waters hither and thither with the mantle of Elijah, in testimony that the LORD GOD of Elijah was with him: and are not the waters of death, and the depths of destruction dried up, and a passage made through Jordan for CHRIST's ransomed to pass over, by his robe of righteousness, which forms the justifying covering and mantle of all his people before the LORD JEHOVAH forever? Did Elisha work miracles; heal the waters, and cure the barren ground by the cruse of salt: and hath not our JESUS healed all the springs of bitterness in us and our corrupt nature, and by the salt of grace, and the covenant blessings, his precious and finished redemption work hath wrought in us, and for us; hath he not brought in such everlasting healing to the nations, that henceforth, JEHOVAH himself hath said, and confirmed it with an oath, *There shall be no more dearth, or barren land, for in CHRIST JESUS his people shall be saved with an everlasting righteousness, and shall be neither ashamed nor confounded, world without end*! Did Elisha multiply the pot of oil, raise the Shunammite's son; restore the poisoned food to wholesomeness; feed an hundred men with twenty loaves; cure Naaman, the Syrian, of his leprosy in mercy, and fasten it on Gehazi in punishment: and did he those great deeds in the name of the LORD? Yes! all these and many more, in confirmation of his commission, in whose name he acted; and, like another Moses, was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But as for thee, thou blessed JESUS, thou, as a Son over thine own house, and as the LORD and Sovereign

of Elisha, to whom he, and all that went before, and all that followed, ministered to thy coming; thou hast indeed in an endless perpetuity of miracles, not only during the days of thy flesh upon earth, but now in the everlasting possession and exercise of thy glory in heaven, still carrying on the same gracious and blessed designs in the accomplishment of thy redemption. The widow's oil which the prophet multiplied, might indeed shadow forth the oil of grace, which thou art dispensing, by thy SPIRIT, upon all thy people; but oh! how weak a representation of the fulness, by which thou art forever supplying the impoverished state of the insolvent, and the wretched. Elisha, by thy command, did raise the Shunammite's dead son. But thou, blessed JESUS, art raising millions of dead sinners to a new and spiritual life, which are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Elisha to manifest the power and grace of the GOD in whose name he acted, might be permitted to convert the poisoned broth into wholesome food. But thou, Almighty JESUS, in thine own power, and by thine own sovereign mercy, hast converted the very poison of sin into streams of salvation: by death thou hast destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and hast delivered them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. Hail! holy, blessed, precious, LORD JESUS! LAMB of GOD who hath all power in heaven and in earth. Not one or two only of widowed women, leprous Syrians, or famished men hath thy grace and mercy been manifested to by the ministry of thy servants, but millions of souls and bodies of thy redeemed, amidst all their poverty, leprosy, and famished state of endless ruin, but for thy gracious interposition, hast thou restored to life, and health, and joy, and liberty. *Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.* Here let me bow down before thee thou LORD GOD of the prophets, Elisha's GOD and Saviour, *in whom, and through whom, and for whom,* all his ministry was exercised. And in the view of his life, and indeed of all thy servants who shadowed forth thy coming, may this one gracious truth be fully brought home to the soul, and made blessed both to him that writes, and him that reads, that to him, even to JESUS, gave all the prophets witness, that through thy name, dearest LORD JESUS, *whosoever believeth in thee, shall receive remission of sins.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

This chapter brings some consolation, to the mind in the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, in relating to us the good reign of Amaziah. He is slain, however, by a conspiracy; and is succeeded in the kingdom by Azariah. Here is an account also of the reign of Jeroboam king of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the ruined state of Israel, which this chapter presents to thy view, the sure consequence of sin and the evil thereof. Whoever hardened himself against GOD, and prospered?—Is this Israel whom the LORD brought out of Egypt; carried him on eagles wings; rained manna from heaven for his food, and gave water from the rock to his thirst; led him by a pillar of a cloud by day, and sheltered him in a pillar of fire by night? Is this the same? Alas? *how is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed!*

But behold also, my soul, the bowels of mercies of Israel's covenant GOD. The LORD saw the affliction of Israel. And will not the LORD send deliverance to his people? Yes! blessed be his name. The deliverance is only in him. He hath sent a Saviour, and a great one, and he hath delivered them. Oh! for grace to receive JESUS, to believe in him, to rest upon him, and on the bended knee, in transports of rejoicing, to bless GOD *for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The history of Israel and Judah is carried on through this chapter. And this is the period in which the prophets Hosea and Isaiah exercised their ministry. Here is a succession of several kings both in Israel and Judah.

REFLECTIONS

READER! can you review the successive history of these kings without emotion! Is there not here enough to teach any man, and every man, the folly, emptiness, and unsatisfying nature of all human greatness void of the grace and favor of GOD? Is this all the history of greatness that these men were born, that they began at such a period to reign, that they reigned so long, did evil for the most part in the sight of the LORD, and at their death were succeeded by others! Alas, alas! if this be the only arithmetic of human greatness, who would covet the envied purple, or look with longing desires to be among the higher ranks of this life.

Blessed JESUS! how sweetly in this instance, as in every other review of the present circumstances of human life, doth thy person, and our interest and relationship in thee, appear. Allied to thee, dearest LORD, thy people are royal indeed; for they are begotten of GOD the FATHER, the king of heaven, and earth, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: they are the children and brethren of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST; and by the HOLY GHOST made partakers of the divine nature, married to JESUS, and entitled by him to all the portions and revenues of royalty, and to a crown of glory hereafter that shall endure forever. Reader! pause and contemplate their privileges! Behold! See, even now, amidst all the disadvantages of their earthly state, though poor in outward circumstances, and the world owns them not, but their mother's children are angry with them; yet are they still but like the heirs of a kingdom in disguise, going home to glory, and each one of them bears the features, and resembles the children of a king. Their spiritual clothing, like the king's daughter, *is all glorious within*. The imputed righteousness of their husband and their LORD, is royal apparel indeed. Their provision in spirituals is all heavenly, being the bread of GOD which came down from heaven, the flesh and blood of JESUS; they ride moreover in the royal chariot of the LORD JESUS, the pillows whereof are silver, the bottom thereof gold, *the covering of it of purple, and the midst thereof paved with love*. They have a royal guard also to

attend and guard their persons, angels being their ministering servants, and the LORD himself their GOD, their glory.

Think, then, ye humble followers of the humble and lowly JESUS, think of your high privileges in him, and his lawful right, who is *the LORD your righteousness*. And if ye are indeed *a chosen generation, royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*; *show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*. Live as children of the LORD. And seeing that *ye have received a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve GOD acceptably with reverence and godly fear*.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter is wholly spent in recording the evil reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. The close of the chapter brings in a relief to the mind the introduction of his son Hezekiah, who succeeded him.

REFLECTIONS

How painful a thought is it to behold in this history of Israel and Judah the sad proofs of a fallen state! whether we read of one king or another, the general features of all are the same; All have sinned and come short of GOD's glory! But with what increased distress do we behold in the priests of GOD, as in this awful character of Urijah, the dreadful apostacy of mankind! and in the end, what must be the awful consequence. Begin at my sanctuary, saith GOD in his judgments. And if judgment begin at the house of GOD, what must the end be of them that obey not the gospel of JESUS? For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Ye ministers of JESUS, think of these things. And dare be zealous for GOD's honour and glory, though it expose you to the hatred and anger of men.

But how is my soul relieved from contemplating such a king as Ahaz, and such an High Priest as Urijah, in calling to mind the prophet's commission when sent to Ahaz to proclaim to him the

approach of that hour, when the LORD would fulfil that promise of raising up to himself a faithful priest, who should do according to what was in the heart of the LORD. Precious JESUS! thou art indeed a priest upon thy throne. And all the impiety of Ahaz, and the worthlessness of Urijah, I would lose sight of in thy faithfulness and truth. Thou art the very one which the LORD gave as a sign to Ahaz: thou art IMMANUEL, GOD with us, GOD in our nature, the hope of glory! Blessed assurance! for, as GOD the work of redemption is neither too great, nor too heavy, for thee; and as man, GOD dwelling with us, and being one in our nature, thou wilt be on our side, and both accomplish and render effectual the salvation thou hast undertaken. So that we may cry out, *If GOD be for us who shall be against us?* It is GOD that justifieth, who-is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD. Nothing therefore shalt be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to the history of the kingdom of Israel. Hosea's wicked reign is recorded, and which terminates the Israelitish kingdom; for the captivity takes place in the destruction of Samaria, after a period of about 260 years. A mixture of religions takes place also on the event of the captivity.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter, and behold the awful visitations of GOD upon his own people. Well may every truly awakened soul take part in what he reads here, and tremble lest, for the wickedness of our own land, the LORD should send similar judgments. Are we better than they? (saith the apostle upon an occasion not unlike this) No, in no wise. For he hath before concluded all under sin. And though from the relation GOD the FATHER stands in to his people in his dear Son; though from the

ransom he hath received from our Almighty Surety, the everlasting welfare of the regenerate is secure; yet for the honour of his holy name, to prevent the abuse of his covenant-mercy, and for the holiness of his nature, GOD will correct (and to what extent who shall say) the unhumbled state of his people in their sins and transgressions.

Reader! are you a real follower of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Hath the HOLY GHOST convinced you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? Hath he led you to the precious JESUS for the whole of your salvation? And if so; can you be unmoved in the view of the present state of the church in this highly favoured land, and behold the languishing condition of Zion among us, unconcerned. How did holy men of old feel on such occasions? *My flesh trembleth* (saith one of them) *for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments! for these things* (saith another) *weep, mine eyes run down with tears. When I heard* (saith a third) *my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones.* Are you unmoved! Oh! for grace from him who hath the residue of the SPIRIT, to be earnest in prayer with him for his sparing mercy!

Precious JESUS! where shall we flee, to whom shall we come, but to thee? We are indeed a guilty, sinful land, a wretched, unworthy people. We are sadly gone away from thee. We are a race of evildoers, children that are corrupters. We have sinned, what shall we say, O thou Preserver of men? But, LORD, help us to return, Let thy grace induce, in all ranks, a spirit of reform. Oh! thou exalted Prince and Saviour! pour out thine ascension gifts of repentance, and remission of sins. Bring us before thee, looking with an eye of faith to thy blood, beholding thee as the Lamb that hath been slain, and wearing thy Priesthood still. And oh! be thou very jealous for this land, and heal thy people. Come, gracious LORD, return to thy people with pardons to bless, with grace to purify, with love to allure; and draw our hearts unto thee. And let us hear those soul reviving words; *I am returned to the British Jerusalem in mercy.* Then may our souls answer to the words of thy grace, and say; *Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. The LORD will not retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again. He will have*

compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the account of Hezekiah, and his good reign. His destruction of idolatry. A further account of the captivity of the people of Israel. The chapter, after this, returns to the relation of the history of Hezekiah. Jerusalem is besieged by Sennacherib.

REFLECTIONS

THERE are many improving observations which arise out of this chapter. In the first place, I would call upon the Reader to remark with me, that though Hezekiah is said to have been the best of all the kings of Judah, yet Hezekiah was not without his afflictions. We see in the very midst of attempting the reformation of the people, and the abolishing of idols, the LORD permits an idolatrous prince not only to come against him, but for a time to succeed. Reader! it is so, it must be so, in the life of grace. Faith must be exercised, that it may be more precious than gold that perisheth, JESUS saith, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. LORD! I would say in answer, spare not thy rebukes, nor suffer thy child to be spoiled for want of the rod, when thy wisdom seeth it necessary. But oh thou, most blessed LORD, give me the penetrating eye to discover, under all the frowns of thy providence, the sweet smiles of thy love. And let my faith be always alive, in full exercise, to be looking forward to that happy period, when thy child shall leave the school of learning, to rest in thy bosom in the full enjoyment of the knowledge and perfect love of thee, forever.

I would learn, in the next place, from the trial of good king Hezekiah, that, as this world is not the believer's home, so his

security from trial is never over, until he arrives safe at his FATHER's house. My soul, was it not a precious mercy in the LORD, to take off Hezekiah's mind from all confidence in creatures, when he was thus feelingly taught to put no confidence in princes? Poor Hezekiah thought to buy the friendship of the king of Assyria with a present, and therefore sent him the silver and the gold which he had for this purpose. It is very true the children of GOD consider, or ought to consider, gold, silver, and precious stones, as objects of no value; and would gladly part with them, if this would make carnal men less angry. But, the LORD will not allow any temporizing. How often would my soul have purchased peace with the wicked at almost any rate, if I might enjoy JESUS unmolested! But this is the believers motto: *If any will live godly in CHRIST JESUS he shall suffer persecution.* This should wave in the standard of the Christian in his holy war. Dearest, blessed JESUS! hast thou said; *in the world ye shall have tribulation?* And hath my foolish heart, in order to stand fair with the world, sought a shelter from it? Oh! my LORD, henceforth let the world frown, so thou but smile: let the Rabshakehs of the present hour utter their reproaches, and pour forth all their contempt, so thou but grant me that unspeakable blessing: *In me ye shall have peace.* By faith in thee I shall overcome the world; and from confidence in thee I shall rejoice; and my joy no man take from me.

In the last place, Reader, let you and I learn from this interesting chapter, to hold our peace, and in our patience to possess our souls, when for a moment the ungodly seem to triumph. It is but a *seeming* triumph, and like the crackling of thorns under the pot. Yes! blessed JESUS! my soul would wait at thy footstool in silence, and in patient waiting would I be found. I know there is One at the mercy-seat, whom the FATHER heareth alway. There I rest my ground of acceptance only in JESUS. He will plead my cause, and bring me forth in the path of righteousness, for his name's sake. Oh! the relief my soul feels, even in the waiting. Heavenly LORD thou hast fulfilled, thou wilt fulfil that promise: *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up*

with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

This chapter relates the effect Rab-shakeh's blasphemy had upon the mind of Hezekiah, when it was reported to him. He sends to desire an interest in the prayers of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's answer. Sennacherib sends a renewed message of insolence to Hezekiah. The king goes up into the house of the LORD, lays it before the LORD, and prayeth. The LORD, by his servant Isaiah, comforts him, and sends an angel to the destruction of the Assyrians. Sennacherib is slain by his sons.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the opening of this chapter we take part with Hezekiah in his affliction, and feel the commiseration of the believer in the view of his sorrows, and desolate circumstances. Behold him in the close of it, and how doth the faithful soul rejoice in the LORD's deliverance of him out of all. And is it not, dearest JESUS, in all the circumstances of thy people. Without thee, and beheld, only as they are in themselves, what poor, defenseless, oppressed, persecuted creatures are they, bent down under the hand of every foe. But when JESUS appears in their cause, oh! how precious is it to behold their strength in the LORD, and in the power of his might.

What an awful character is this impious monster, this Assyrian monarch! And yet what is he more than all the haters of GOD, and his people. Satan reigns in their hearts; they are scoffers, despisers, blasphemers, sworn foes to GOD and his CHRIST. And their name is legion, for they are many.

Blessed JESUS! how sweet is it to be taught of thee! How precious thy salvation! How great thy mercy in gathering sinners from the service of Satan to thy kingdom. LORD! grant that, like Hezekiah, trouble may lead my heart to thee; in all my afflictions to

cast my burden upon the LORD, who hath promised, to sustain me. I would spread all before thee, O LORD, and wait in faith thy deliverance, for thou art my strength, and my song, and art become my salvation.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This chapter prosecutes the history of Hezekiah. He is visited by sickness; he seeks to GOD in his affliction: receives a gracious answer in the lengthening of his life. His prayer: the LORD's answer. His death; and successor in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a series of delightful instructions open to our view, in looking at Hezekiah on his supposed death-bed. The greatest favorites of heaven are exposed, in common with others, to the humiliation of the grave. But oh! how different their state! and who is it hath made it so, Even thee, thou blessed, blessed JESUS. It is thou which hast converted the chambers of the grave into chambers of peace and safety. By thy death thou hast overcome death. And by thy finished salvation thou hast delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hail! O thou glorious, great I AM, who art the resurrection and the life.

Reader! let you and I listen to the sweet, swan-like note of the dying Hezekiah. He laments that he shall see the LORD no more in the land of the living; that he shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. But Reader! you and I know that, when believers exchange by death the outward courts of GOD's house for the inner temple of his glory, we shall see JESUS as he is; we shall awake up after his likeness, and be with him forever. We leave, indeed, the inhabitants of the world when we drop off this earthly tabernacle. But is this matter of regret, to exchange this world for the upper; earth for heaven; sinners for saints; and evil men for

angels and the spirits of just men made perfect? Chiefly, thou precious LORD JESUS, independent of every other, and indeed to the exclusion of every other, thy presence alone is better than life itself. Thy person, thy salvation, thy glory, and the heaven of heavens, thou givest to the souls of thy people; what a happy exchange do they make that die in thee, O LORD JESUS? Oh! for faith in lively exercise, when thou shall give the signal for my departure; when that solemn, glorious hour shall come, and I hear thy precious voice; *The master is come and calleth for thee*. Oh! for faith to mount up with holy joy and rapture inconceivable, and like the patriarch of old, may the last and most precious word that shall hang upon my dying lips be JESUS, as I utter the same words as he did; *Into thine hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth*.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The reign of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, is contained in this chapter; and an awful reign of sin it is. He is succeeded by Amon his son, such another awful character as the father. His death is also recorded, and Josiah his son succeeds him in the kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark, I beseech you, in the character of Manasseh, the evident truth of GOD's holy word, that the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son. Grace descends not from father to son by natural generation. But what a gracious GOD had Manasseh to do with! Oh! how lovely and encouraging is it to poor sinners, to behold such monuments of mercy placed in the church, as if to tell men that there is mercy with GOD that he might be feared. Yes! precious JESUS! thou art the FATHER of mercies; and thou art the mercy promised; thou art indeed, and ever wilt be, JESUS. In that lovely name all mercy is contained. Thou art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof.

But Reader! while we look at Amon the son of Manasseh, in the very moment our souls feel all possible encouragement in the grace vouchsafed the father, is there not enough to induce trembling, when we behold the hardened state of the son. Like the two thieves on the cross. Who can contemplate that sight without a mixture of joy and terror: Both so near JESUS, and yet the one as unconscious as the dead; while the other manifests forth so illustrious an evidence of the highest faith and truest repentance. Oh! thou, blessed author and finisher of our faith and salvation, grant, if it be thy blessed will, both to Writer and Reader, suited grace to profit by such striking examples. Let everything tend to lead our hearts to thee, for of thee cometh our salvation. LORD open our eyes, unstop our ears, that we may no longer be uncircumcised in heart and spirit; but make us altogether what thou wouldest have us to be, and *work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure.*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

We are brought acquainted in this chapter with Josiah, the good king. Many of his pious deeds are recounted. The book of the law is found by Hilkiah. Shaphan reads in it before the king. Josiah's pious weeping in the rehearsal. He sendeth with humbleness to inquire of the LORD. The LORD's answer.

REFLECTIONS

READER! are you young in years! behold the loveliness of early piety. What can afford a more interesting sight than to see our youths in the first days of their strength, asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to join themselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant which cannot be broken, and like Josiah, of whom it is said, *that while he was yet young he began to seek after the GOD of his Father.*

Reader! are you aged, or advancing towards the middle of life, and yet unacquainted with salvation, living without a saving

knowledge of the LORD JESUS! Oh! that GOD the SPIRIT, from your reading this delightful account of Josiah, may awaken your heart, and open your eyes to the love and glory of the Person and righteousness of JESUS, that now today, while it is called today, you may seek the LORD GOD of your fathers, before the night cometh when no man can work.

Precious JESUS! let the same impressions of grace which wrought upon the mind of Josiah, be in me. LORD, make my heart tender; give me to humble myself before thee: let my soul be bowed down in the dust in the contemplation of my own vileness, and the iniquity of the land, that when thou comest forth in judgment, thou mayest, blessed JESUS, be my strength, and the security of thy people in the day of visitation. And oh! LORD, grant that in thy blood and righteousness my soul may find an everlasting hiding place, both from the afflictions of this life and the terrors of the world to come. Yes! precious JESUS! on thee do I call, to thee will I come, by thee shall I be saved, for thou art my strength, and my song, and art become my salvation.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

Josiah conveneth all Judah to the hearing of the book of the law of GOD, which Hilkiyah had found in the temple. This chapter relates the circumstances of this solemnity. The King reneweth the covenant of the LORD, and prosecuteth the destruction of idolatry.

REFLECTIONS

How interesting to good Josiah appeared the law of GOD! With what peculiar delight did he convene all the people to attend the reading of it! And with what holy joy did he celebrate the passover, and renew the covenant GOD had made with their fathers. Think, Reader! I charge you what should be your joy and mine in receiving the gospel, the precious, blessed gospel of the ever blessed GOD!

How should we delight to attend the public assemblies, and gather others to attend also! And if the mere celebration of the paschal feast in commemoration was so interesting, which after all was but a type of better things, founded upon better promises, how should our joy burst forth at the feast of CHRIST our Passover, and with what holy rapture should we attend JESUS at his supper! Oh! thou LAMB of GOD! oh! thou who art both the Passover, the sacrifice, the High Priest, and the golden Altar on which the sacrifice was offered! Be thou my joy, my sacrifice, my righteousness, the whole of the covenant, and my all in all. Let it be said indeed, that surely there never was holden such a passover, as when CHRIST was sacrificed for his people. And never was my soul really, and truly feasted, until by happy faith, I ate of his flesh, and drank of his blood, by which I have eternal life abiding in me.

Let us not take our farewell of Josiah without gathering one improvement more from the view the HOLY GHOST is pleased to give of him. Though it be not always becoming to cull out the shades of good men, yet if the soul be led to improve such views as show the universal imperfection of nature, in order to lead to JESUS, then we may not only with safety do it, but also derive much advantage from it. Yes, blessed LORD JESUS! wherever I look, to whomsoever I direct my attention, I find frailty and imperfection mark them all. But in thee I behold all perfection, all glory. Oh, then! on thee let my soul unceasingly look. Let me behold thee as GOD my FATHER beholds thee; and as far as a poor finite creature can imitate infinite delight, let my ravished soul say in humble breathings, this is my beloved JESUS in whom I am well pleased for salvation. I count all things else but dung and dross that I may know thee. Be thou my joy and my portion forever.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

The ruin of Judah is nearly arrived. Jehoiakim rebelling against the king of Babylon, to whom he had been tributary three years, is

ruined. Jerusalem is taken. Some account of the evil reign of Zedekiah.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT an awful representation is made in this chapter, and, indeed, in the whole history; (for all the world is but one and the same volume) of sinners! Could one suppose it possible, was it not ascertained by fact, that men should brave the divine power, and, as it were, defy the Lord by the most determined perseverance in sin. See, my soul, in the destruction of Jerusalem, the sure and inevitable consequence! The wages of sin is, and must be, death, Oh! Lord Jesus, cause me, in the view of it, to flee to thee for refuge, and let me hear thy voice saying, Oh! Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found.

Reader, behold Jerusalem thus ruined! see the people carried away captives. See how the Lord permitted the very heathens of the earth to scourge his people! Who, after this, will take confidence while in sin. O Lord! be gracious to thy land. For Jesus sake be not wroth very sore, neither do thou remember our iniquities forever; but be jealous for thy land, and heal her backslidings, we beseech thee.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

Jerusalem is again besieged. Zedekiah is taken, his sons slain and his eyes put out. The close of the chapter relates that Jehoiachin, who had been long captive in Babylon, was brought out of prison by the kindness of the king, and set at his table.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we are brought to the final close of Judah's history as a kingdom in this Chapter; and therefore let us pause over the subject, and in beholding the desolated state of Zion as a church,

take up the lamentation of the mournful prophet and say, *How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!*

And as we pause and behold the desolation, let us look back at her former felicity, and ask the cause of her present ruin. Beautiful for situation, *(said one of old)* the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion. *Here was not only the royal city of David, but the holy city of our GOD, even David's LORD. It was the LORD that founded Zion, (saith one that answereth the messengers of the nation) and the poor of his people shall trust in it. But where is she now? The LORD hath cast down Zion in the day of his fierce anger.*

And wherefore hath the LORD done this to Zion? Alas! alas! because Zion hath forsaken her GOD, therefore is she gone into captivity, and her kings and priests with her. But will the LORD cast off forever? Will he be no more intreated? Is his mercy clean gone forever? And will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure?

Reader! connect with this view the precious redemption by JESUS. Behold him who came for the recovery of Zion, not merely from the captivity of Babylon, but from the more dreadful captivity of sin and death. Look at JESUS in the accomplishment of redemption, opening the doors of confinement: bringing the prisoners from the prison, and them that sat in darkness out of the prison-house. Yes, blessed JESUS the SPIRIT of the LORD was upon thee, and thou hast come to make a thorough change in all the circumstances of thy people; and not merely to bring thy captives, like Jehoiachin, from the prison to thy table, but to exchange their prison-garments to the robes of salvation and glory. Thou wilt bring them all home to thy house; thou wilt raise up the tabernacles of David that are fallen down, for according to thy promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, even the new Jerusalem, *wherein righteousness shall dwell forever.* Hail! thou holy, blessed, LORD JESUS! Hail thou Almighty conqueror of all the foes of our salvation! Shortly thou wilt come to take all thy banished ones home, and the ransomed of Zion shall return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Even so, come LORD JESUS. Amen.

1st CHRONICLES

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE penman of this Book of GOD is generally supposed to have been *Ezra*, the scribe. *And if so, it must have been written after the return of Israel from the Babylonish captivity; at a period of somewhat more than 500 years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

The records here made are very extensive, leading back the Reader to the time of Adam, and treasuring up the several heads of families, in a direct line from our first parent unto David and his descendants, by way of ascertaining the lineage of JESUS; and carrying on the history of the church long after the captivity, including upon the whole, a period of about 3600 years.

This part of the sacred writings, seems to have been written with an eye to the preservation, in the minds of the people of GOD, of the promised seed of the woman, in whom all blessings were to be centered. The HOLY GHOST hath been graciously pleased also to record in this book, several interesting particulars referring to the church, which had either been omitted in former histories, or but in part noticed. As the Gospel of the beloved apostle, John, which was supplementary to the other memoirs of the blessed JESUS, contains many most precious things of CHRIST, which the other Evangelists had not noticed: so the Chronicles may be considered supplementary to the foregoing records of the church; and, over and above, several precious observations are set down, which the former writers had but slightly regarded, or wholly passed by.

But what I would most earnestly press upon the Reader's mind, as I have indeed in every book of GOD we have already gone through the review of, is the looking out for JESUS. It may happen, from such distant periods of the church as the opening of the

Chronicles refers to, we may not be able to make such full discoveries, as the history nearer to Gospel-times may furnish: yet this, methinks, should be only made an occasion for greater and closer investigation, that we may not overlook the LORD JESUS in any part of his word, conscious that He is in and through the whole. Reader! let me charge it upon your heart, and may the HOLY GHOST sweetly influence the same earnestness in my own, that our minds may be led out to seek for JESUS in every page and every chapter of this, as well as all the other books of GOD. And, as we are commanded by our LORD himself, to search the scriptures, because they testify of him; let us never overlook a single passage. The book of Chronicles will be found, not simply the record of endless genealogies, but a faithful account of generations, wholly with an eye to Him, who was made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Blessed Author of this divine treasury! give both to Writer and Reader, as they prosecute the holy volume, increasing views of Him, to whom the whole Bible ministers; that, in whatever part we traverse, being graciously guided by thy blessed illumination, we may be sweetly instructed in his knowledge; and truly possess and enjoy that life eternal, which consisteth in knowing GOD the FATHER, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The genealogy of families, from Adam to Abraham, forms the contents of this chapter, containing a period of nearly 2000 years.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter, and mark the several important instructions it contains. What a subject of wonder, of humiliation, and of praise, is here! What wonder is opened to our contemplation in the astonishing succession of so many generations! What multitudes have sprung from one stock! And what an immense

and incalculable congregation will it be, that shall; at length, be brought to stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, when not one, from Adam to the consummation of all things, shall be found wanting. What *humiliation* also, is in the subject of the genealogy of mankind, when we call to mind, that the whole race is alike polluted and fallen: *All have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD. There is none that doeth good, no not one.* And what a subject of *praise* doth this furnish, in beholding the long-suffering and patience of the LORD, in preserving the race of men from father to son, notwithstanding the universal depravity of all!

But, chiefly and above all, while we admire and adore the divine goodness and mercy in his condescension to the sons of men, think, Reader, of the everlasting love of GOD to our nature, in the provision made for the recovery of man from the fall, by the gracious interposition, benignity, and love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Oh! how highly ought we to prize the genealogy of Him, after the flesh, who came *in the fulness of time, to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore perfect order among all the works of GOD.* Hail, thou holy, blessed, precious JESUS! Thou wast indeed free from the taint of the fallen race thou camest to redeem. Thou wast *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* And how precious the thought, that thy righteousness, and thy blood, are the effectual source and cause of all our mercy. Blessed be our JESUS, that amidst all the dying circumstances of all generations, *thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever.* Though all things perish, *yet thou remainest:* and though we all *wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture are we changed, yet thou art the same, and thy years do not fail.* Give us, precious JESUS, to rejoice in the everlasting duration of thyself and thy kingdom, and to look beyond the grave with this assured hope, that because *thou livest, thy people shall live also.* Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The former chapter having, in a short and cursory way, dispatched the history of all ages before Israel; this chapter gives us the relation of what the Book of Chronicles hath chiefly in view, the history of the children of Israel leading to CHRIST. The genealogy in this chapter is carried down as far as the time of David.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the quick succession of persons and families, as recorded in this Chapter, how feelingly are we taught the littleness, and even nothingness, of human nature. So that at every verse we are prompted, in the language of the Prophet, to exclaim, *Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?* But oh! how precious amidst all this is it, to behold JESUS, *who is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*

But again, how is the mind humbled in the consideration, that though the several generations this Chapter records lived but as it were a day, yet in that day how numerous their transgressions? Though this stock of Judah was at length to produce the holy seed, and in the intermediate state was to possess, in several branches of them, both royal and priestly honours; yet we find they all partook of the same common stock of a fallen nature, of whom it is with truth said, *there is none holy, no not one.* And wherefore were they preserved, why are their names recorded with such precision and exactness? Was it not, blessed JESUS, because they all pointed to thee, ministered to thee, and in thee fulfilled the purposes of their generation? Did not the LORD JEHOVAH, concerning every one of them, say, *Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.* There is life in the root; salvation in the stock; even JESUS folded up in the seed, in whom all the family should be blessed? Oh, grace! oh, mercy! oh, wisdom! *How unsearchable are thy judgments, O LORD; and thy ways past finding out.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the genealogy proceeds in relation in the family of David. Here are recorded an account of his sons, of his successors in the kingdom, and of the descendants in his family after the captivity.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is hardly possible to read the genealogy of David's race without connecting with it our recollection of David's sorrow in his children. What a grief were many of his branches! Well might he say, *Although my house be not so with GOD!* And what is the relief to a sorrowful parent in the contemplation of the degeneracy and impiety of his offspring but what David found; GOD's covenant love in JESUS. Oh, my brother! if you and I can say as he did, then Shall we find the supporting consolation he found! *Yet (saith he) hath the LORD made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*

Reader! let us indulge one sweet thought more over this Chapter. We behold here the succession of David's children, and we know that that succession led to JESUS after the flesh. Oh! then, let the recollection direct our thoughts and our affections to him, (in whom the genealogy of David centered) even to all precious JESUS. *To thee, thou blessed LORD JESUS, would my soul direct all her contemplation! On thee would I fix my longing eyes! In thee shall I find the sum and substance of all desire. With thee would I eternally dwell; and from thee draw all my joy. Thou art both the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* And while the SPIRIT and the Bride say, *Come;* and all the pressing invitations of thy holy word call upon me to come unto thee, do thou, blessed JESUS, add thine own gracious call, saying, *Surely, I come quickly;* then will my soul echo to thy voice, and with an holy fervor of desire answer, *Even so, come LORD JESUS. Amen.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The history of the genealogy is prosecuted in this Chapter. Here is the posterity of Judah registered, which forms the most illustrious, as well as the most numerous, of all the tribes of Israel. There is an interruption in the register to introduce the prayer of Jabez, which though forming a chasm in the genealogy, yet makes the Chapter itself the more interesting.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is a sweet thought, in the contemplation of what is here recorded of the tribes of Judah and of Simeon, to recollect that GOD is the GOD of all the families of Israel, both then, and now, and forever. Yes, blessed LORD GOD, JEHOVAH, thou hast loved with an everlasting love, and thou changest not; therefore it is, the sons of Jacob are not consumed. And oh! how glorious is it, to see the eternal security of this love founded in the person, and established in the perfect obedience, righteousness, and salvation of thy dear Son, the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Reader! let us in the character and conduct of Jabez, learn those sweet lessons which, in a gospel sense, and with an eye to JESUS, are afforded us in his example. It is but little that is said of Jabez: but that little opens vast improvement. Though more honourable than his brethren, though so remarkable for his piety, so steadfast in his trust on a covenant GOD: yet how short a relation is made of him among men? How delightful the thought in the breast of the believer, whose life is hid with CHRIST in GOD! However unknown, unobserved, unnoticed, by the world, yet eternally secure, and eternally happy in JESUS! Jabez prayed not to an unknown GOD; not to one uncertain to hear, and uncertain to answer; but to Israel's GOD, a GOD in covenant with his chosen from everlasting. And what was the burden of Jabez's prayer; Oh! that thou wouldest bless me (said he) indeed: that thou wouldest enlarge my coast; that thine hand might be with me; to keep use from evil, that it might not grieve me. And is not this a gospel prayer in JESUS? What is it to be blest

indeed, but to have our sins cancelled in the blood of CHRIST: for how can I be blest indeed until my sins are forgiven, and till I have redemption in JESUS'S blood, according to the riches of GOD'S grace? How will my coast be enlarged, until that CHRIST hath made me free, and enlarged my heart, and mouth, and lips, to the praises of his name? And how shall I be kept and secured everlastingly in this freedom, unless He that pardons still upholds, He that redeems continues still to preserve, and He that sanctifies still shines in upon me, and takes not his HOLY SPIRIT from me? Oh LORD! thou that didst hear and answer the prayer of Jabez, hear me, and grant my request, for all these spiritual blessings in JESUS! Bless me, my GOD, and make me truly happy indeed, by making me all that thou wouldst have me to be in JESUS; that He may be my portion, my hope, my joy, my life, my salvation, in time and to all eternity.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The genealogies of Israel in the tribe of Reuben, and also in the tribe of Gad, form the principal subjects of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not hastily pass by the view which this chapter affords of distinguishing grace, in the removal of the honor of birthright from Reuben to transfer it to Joseph, and placing Judah above all his Father's household. Evidently here was fulfilled the dying Patriarch's blessing, when he said, Judah! thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, and thy father's children shall bow down before thee. But oh! how sweet and precious is this view of Israel's family, when beheld with an eye to CHRIST. Truly, thou blessed JESUS, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; for every knee shall bow before thee, and every tongue confess that thou art LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

Reader! let you and I seek for grace, that we may not, like the Reubenites and the Gadites, set up our rest on this side Jordan. No!

dearest LORD JESUS, it is thou that art the rest, wherewith thou wilt cause the weary to rest, and thou art our only refreshment. Be thou, LORD, my rest, my joy, and my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Prosecuting the genealogy of Israel's son, the tribe of Levi is made the subject of this chapter, and particularly with an eye to the priesthood, in the person of Aaron and his sons.

REFLECTIONS

Who can ever read a portion of scripture concerning the priesthood, without having his heart secretly and sweetly led forth to contemplate the LORD JESUS in his priestly office? Who can behold the sons of Levi, as offering to the LORD an offering in righteousness, without connecting with it the glorious representation of Him, who made his soul an offering for sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of GOD in him? Who could look at Levi or any of his order in their priestly garments, and overlook JESUS there represented: who *wears a vesture dipped in blood, and ever liveth to make intercession for his people*. Hail! Almighty Priest of a *better covenant, established upon better promises*. We see in them that *the law made men high priests which had infirmity*: But thou, O blessed JESUS, wert consecrated with an oath, *by Him that sware and will not repent, that thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*. LORD, help me to come under thy censer, to be interested in thine offering, thy blood, thy sacrifice. Take, blessed JESUS, my cause, my person, my poor offering, all that I have, and all that I am, into thine own gracious hands, and let me be presented in thy most precious offering. Sure I am that I shall be eternally and everlastingly safe, because thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners; and sure I am, that thou canst, and thou wilt, save all that come to GOD by thee, since thou hast, by the one offering of thyself once offered, *for ever perfected them that are sanctified*.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The same subject is prosecuted through this chapter, namely, the genealogy of Israel. Here is contained the register of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, and Ephraim.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to trace the subject of the genealogy of men, in the succession of fathers and sons, through so many generations, without feeling the mind drawn out and exercised in the contemplation of the insignificance of man in all his boasted strength and power. Well may every one exclaim with the apostle, in the view of it, *for what is your life? it is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away!*

But, Reader, is there no relief to the mind under the exercise of such humiliating views of human life? Is there no resource, no comfort, no asylum, or house of mercy, to take shelter in, from the universal wreck of our poor dying and dead nature? Oh thou, precious, ever-living, and life-giving JESUS! Oh! thou who hast proclaimed thyself, and proved thyself to be *the resurrection and the life*; who hast said, and confirmed it also by the most palpable evidence, that *he who believeth thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in thee, shall never die*: dost thou ask me, dearest JESUS, as thou didst the sorrowful sister, whether I believe this? Yes yes? thou Almighty LORD, *I do, I do believe!* Blessed be thy name, it is thou which hast given me to believe. And do thou at all times *help mine unbelief*. The consciousness that thou livest, and that because thou livest all thy people shall live also, bears up my soul above all the dying circumstances of myself, and a world around me. Though this body of mine goeth daily down to the grave, yet in thee, my soul for ever liveth, and shall never die. Thou art the Author of life, the Restorer and Maintainer of my spiritual life, and thou wilt, by and by, be the Perfecter of my eternal life, both soul and body together. Hail then, thou glorious, gracious, lovely, and loving LORD JESUS! *Thy love is*

better than wine. For though wine may comfort the heavy heart, yet no wine can raise the dead: but thy love hath done both. And when flesh, and heart, and all things shall fail, *thou wilt be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This chapter takes up the subject of the genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin. In the preceding chapter, we had the introduction to this register of the Benjamites. Here it is again prosecuted and completed.

REFLECTIONS

IT forms no small improvement in the perusal of this chapter, and indeed in the review of the whole registry of Israel, to remark with what honour the illustrious tribes of Israel, are handed down to us in the word of GOD. Here are names with whom, by frequent reading, we may become familiar, who lived and died in ages so remote from the present, while thousands and tens of thousands among the great ones of the earth, who made splendid appearances in their day, no doubt, *their very memorial is perished with them.* Think, Reader! what a succession of men and monarchies have passed on through the world, of whose remembrance not a vestige remains. While those families, even the least and most inconsiderable, because they were the Israel of GOD, are had in everlasting remembrance.

But chiefly, Reader, from this view, let you and I be led to consider the vast importance of having our names written *in the book of life.* Think, Sir, of that awful day, at the audit of GOD, which John describes as he saw it in vision; and which will one day certainly be realized: therein he tells us he saw, *the dead both small and great, stand before GOD. And the sea gave up her dead, and death and hell delivered up their dead. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

Revelation 20:12-15. Oh! precious, precious JESUS, that last delivered thy people from the wrath to come; give me, dearest LORD, to rejoice in the pleasing, glorious hope, that my name, worthless as it is, is written in heaven.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter sums up the subject of the registry of Israel. The Levites are taken notice of. And particular mention is made of Saul and Jonathan's stock.

REFLECTIONS

It is impossible to read this Chapter, and connect with it, in our remembrance, that this opens a new history of the Church after the desolation of the Babylonish captivity, but with very interesting feelings. Let the Reader figure to himself the desolated view of Jerusalem and Zion plowed as a field. The people returned to their beloved city, and finding the whole in ruins. The Prophet Jeremiah, the mournful Prophet, only in contemplation of what it would be, cried out, *How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow that was great among the nations!*

Reader! Pause over the sad picture! See what sin was capable of effecting. And if GOD so punished Israel, what security hath any other nation? If GOD spared not the natural branches, what shall a grafted instock expect in rebellion?

Blessed JESUS! thou glorious, all-prevailing Intercessor, be gracious, LORD, we beseech thee to our land. Say, *LORD*, concerning us, *I am returned to Jerusalem in mercies*. And when thou returnest to bless a land, thou comest with grace to pardon, grace to sanctify, grace to bless, grace to deliver, grace to renew, grace to heal, all our diseases. Oh, then, blessed JESUS, come with all thy quickening, reviving, comforting presence, and say unto us, *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be any more termed Desolate; but let the nations of the earth call us the Holy People;*

the redeemed of the LORD. And let us be called, Sought out; a city not forsaken.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The history of the genealogy of Israel being finished, the book of Chronicles now enters upon the history of Israel as a people. In this Chapter we are carried back to that part of Saul' s history which terminated with his death, with the events that followed, from the men of Jabesh-gilead.

REFLECTIONS

WHO can read the history of Saul, and behold the dreadful end of such men, but with trembling! How dark the night of so promising a morning! But what must the termination of such conduct be, which in direct defiance of better knowledge, against conscience, against all the feelings of honour, justice, and humanity, rushes on the most desperate deeds, what must the end be but darkness and despair? He who murdered the priests of the *LORD* is deserted by the *LORD*, and dies by the murder of his own hands! He who abandoned his dearest friend, who fought his battles and saved his crown, is himself abandoned by all friends, and his very carcass stripped and insulted by his open enemies. My soul! rejoice with trembling! Look wholly to JESUS. Fear to thyself on any occasion. Be jealous of every earthly honour, lest like Saul's, it should be unsanctified. Oh! precious Redeemer! keep me near thyself, keep me humble, keep me low, keep me, *LORD*, lest I fall; for they only are safe who are *kept by thy power, through faith, unto salvation.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

As the preceding Chapter related to us the account of the death of Saul, this takes up the immediate part which follows in that history, in the elevation of David to the throne. The Chapter closeth with an account of the names of David's worthies.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over the view which this Chapter affords, of the exaltation of David to the throne, and see whether we do not behold in it a figure of the exaltation of CHRIST to the right hand of power, when he had by himself purged our sins, and when forever be sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Doth not your heart say to JESUS; as the men of Israel did to David, *Thou shalt feed thy people, and thou shalt be Lord over them.* And do you not also say so from a consciousness of the same cause, that you are of CHRIST's bone, and of his flesh. Oh! how doubly delightful is it, *first* to see JESUS reign, and *next* to consider our relationship in him. And wilt thou not, blessed JESUS; say to thy people as is recorded in thy words, *to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my FATHER in his throne.*

In the contemplation of the worthies of David, I would pray for grace to become the worthy follower of the Lamb, in the regeneration, that when the Son of GOD shall come encircled with his holy army I may have grace, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. LORD make me the patient follower of them, *who now through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter, in prosecuting David's history, treats of the companies that came to join David, and the augmentation of his army.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE we behold David thus surrounded with his worthies, let our thoughts take wing and fly away to the contemplation of David's *LORD*, now attended with his redeemed ones around the throne which is above. Yes: thou Holy and Exalted Saviour! we may, by the eye of faith, look within the veil, and see thee encircled with all the chosen race of worthies, that have followed thee, and been of thine host, from all ages. The glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all, all, praise thee. And worthy art thou to be praised, thou Holy One of Israel!

And think, ye redeemed ones on earth, whom the *LORD*! hath gathered from among men, and made kings and priests unto GOD and the FATHER,—think to what high honour ye are called, in that ye are a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*. Oh! sound forth *the high praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who were once afar off but are now brought nigh by his blood: who were once not a people, but are now the people of GOD: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*. If the worthies of David are thus registered in the Chronicles, think of the high honour of the worthies of JESUS, made worthy in his worthiness only, in having their names written in heaven. If David's warriors are thus spoken of with such honorable testimony in the book of GOD, recollect your dignity, ye soldiers in the holy army of JESUS, whose names are *in the book of life*. *Rejoice in the LORD alway, and again I say, rejoice. The LORD is at hand*. Yet a little while and JESUS will appear *to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all that believe*. And then the Son of GOD will be seen surrounded with all his throng, and not one, even the humblest and least of his redeemed, will be found wanting,

Haste, my beloved, and until the day break and the shadows flee away, be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us the circumstance of David's fetching the Ark of GOD from Kirjath-jearim: the death of Uzzah, for his presumption on that occasion; in consequence of which, the Ark is left at the house of Obed-edom.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the perusal of this Chapter, how precious the ark of GOD was in the sight of all Israel, and learn from hence how infinitely precious he whom that ark represented ought to be to all his people.

Learn, moreover, how vastly interesting to have his presence brought home to the soul, that JESUS may be formed in the soul *the hope of glory*. But learn, moreover, with what reverence and godly fear the *LORD* is to be approached in holy seasons of ordinances. In the instance of *Uzzah* I would have my whole heart impressed with a deep sense that a trifling frame of mind, or an unbecoming confidence of spirit, is no part of the liberty belonging to the gospel of JESUS. Never, my soul, I charge thee, never dare go to any holy ordinances, as the unthinking horse rusheth to the battle. But *LORD*, grant me *that preparation of the heart, and that answer of the tongue, which are both of thine own giving*.

Learn, my soul, from the conduct of David on this occasion, how to be humbled under his Almighty hand, and never dare to be displeased with GOD, when at any time his providences seem to intimate his displeasure with thee. But let me love the hand that smites, from a conviction that it is from love his chastisements came. And chiefly, and above all, let me have grace to behold in the

blessing of Obed-edom's house for the ark of GOD's sake, how highly interesting it must be to fetch home JESUS

from every ordinance, every event, every Providence, in his word, and by his grace, to my house, my family, my heart. There, blessed JESUS, do thou take the full, the entire possession. Drive out all other things, all the buyers and sellers out of thy temple, and reign there, and rule there, the lord and sovereign of every affection.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

We are here again introduced to the acquaintance between Hiram, king of Tyre, and David. We have also, an account of David's family and of his victories.

REFLECTIONS

READER! learn from the view given us of David in this chapter, that the highest state of earthly glory, is neither secure from corruptions within, nor from fightings without. Even David hath fleshly lusts which war against the soul. And even David's security under the blessing of the GOD of Israel, shall not exempt him from furious battles with the Philistines on every side. *They that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution.* Reader! if you be CHRIST's, do not expect much ease, or uninterrupted enjoyment. But see to it, in all your conflicts, that you fight under the LORD's banner. Remember what David saith, speaking of JESUS: *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make their boast.* Go forth, therefore, as he did, *in the strength of the LORD, and make mention of his righteousness, even his righteousness only.* And Reader! suffer me to add one thought more. As David waned for the sound of a going in the mulberry trees: so let you and I watch that *still small voice*, of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which, like a voice from *behind* or *within*, saith, *This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right-hand, and when ye turn to the left,* And to what is this direction pointed, but unto thee, thou blessed JESUS, for the HOLY

GHOST is unceasingly glorifying thee, for thou art the way, and the truth, and the life. In thee and thy finished salvation, we shall overcome and be more than conquerors through thy love, wherewith thou hast loved us.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

This chapter finisheth the subject of the bringing up the ark. It is performed successfully and with great joy. But Michal, his wife despiseth David for his dancing before the Ark.

REFLECTIONS

OBSERVE, Reader, how grace had wrought upon the mind of David since the breach of Uzzah. He no longer feels displeasure at GOD. His displeasure is at himself. He confesses our GOD made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after due order. He now sets himself to prepare a place for the ark of GOD, before he presumes to bring it home. My Brother! depend upon it grace will always induce such effects. To justify the LORD in all the LORD's appointments: Thou hast done right; and we have done foolishly. And not only to justify but to approve: It may be painful, it may be galling to flesh and blood: but it is the LORD that appoints, and therefore it must be right. And still more to cleave to GOD as a friend, though his frowns seem to look like an enemy: to kiss the hand that smites, and to believe and be perfectly satisfied, that while the LORD exercises the authority of a sovereign, he never loses sight of the FATHER and the friend: JESUS, the Son of his love, still lives, and his covenant righteousness still pleads. JESUS is, and will be, still JESUS; this is faith, for this gives glory to his holy name. And it was thus David prepared for the reception of the ark, and thus in faith and holy joy he brought it home, and the LORD blessed him and Israel in the service.

Reader! let us learn from hence the many sweet things it contains. Oh, JESUS! give us grace to prepare a place for thee, even

the best place in our affections, the chief and whole room in our heart. LORD JESUS, do thou occupy and fill all! Then under the influence of thy sweet SPIRIT, we shall go forth to meet thee, to receive thee, to embrace thee, and to bring thee home with holy transports of joy, though all the Michal's of the present hour despise: let them despise, so thou smile. Like the church, when I have once found him whom my soul loveth, *I will hold thee and not let thee go, until that I have brought thee into my father's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me; for there wilt thou show me thy loves.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter contains an account of the finishing work, in bringing up the Ark to the Holy City. David's gifts to the people in consequence thereof, and the Psalm of praise David delivered upon the occasion.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the perusal of this chapter, and behold the earnestness with which David entered upon the service of the sanctuary, when the *LORD* had blessed him and the people once more with the symbol of his divine presence. Observe with what holy joy he celebrates GOD's praises. How often he repeats in song the glories of the *LORD*, and the wonders of his grace. And how earnest he is that all the people should partake in the mercies of JEHOVAH. And when thou hast paid all due attention to David, and the children of Israel, in their joy and thankfulness over the ark of the *LORD*, then, my soul, turn thyself to behold him whom that ark represented, and think, if it be possible, what a vast increase of mercy thou hast to bless the *LORD* JEHOVAH for, in that thou art called in happier times, than to the symbols of the *LORD*'s presence, for JESUS himself hath tabernacled among men in substance of the flesh, and hath wrought out and completed eternal redemption by his blood and

righteousness. Hail! thou holy, glorious, gracious, precious EMMANUEL! Oh let my soul be everlastingly rejoicing in thee, I would indeed sing unto thee; I would sing Psalms unto thee; I would for ever glory in thy holy name, and be talking for ever of thy wondrous works. And no less to thee, in my Redeemer's name and mediation, would I look up with thankfulness, O FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort! Thy everlasting love, and grace, and mercy first raised up JESUS, and gave him for a covenant to the people. And it is the same unchanging love, and grace, and mercy which accepts poor sinners in him now, and makes them forever blessed. *Arise, O LORD, into thy rest, thou and the Ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout with joy. Oh! let thine HOLY SPIRIT so graciously take of the things of JESUS and show them unto us, that every knee may bow before thee, and every tongue confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

This is a most interesting chapter, in that it brings before us a gracious interview between the LORD and his servant David, at throne of grace. David felt his heart prompted to build an house for GOD. He is forbidden to do it, but is told that his son shall. The chapter closes with his prayer and thanksgivings.

REFLECTIONS

READER! observe how truly lovely and graceful a devout heart appears in the highest of characters among the sons of men. How much greater doth David shine in this chapter, when going in before the LORD under such a self-abasement of soul, than the mightiest earthly monarch before his army. The way to true greatness is in the path of humility.

Observe how condescending the LORD is, for the comfort and encouragement of his servant. And depend upon it, such is, and such

will be the graciousness of the *LORD* to all his people. That sweet promise is a volume to this amount. *It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer: and while they are speaking I will hear.*

But principally, and above all, Reader, do not fail to observe how much of JESUS and his finished salvation is in this passage. The LORD JEHOVAH then said to the patriarch; *I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house. I will raise up thy seed, He shall build me an house. And I will establish his throne for ever.* And what is it now? Blessed be JEHOVAH; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the glorious Covenanters, the gracious Fulfillers. The Son of GOD is come. He hath tabernacled among us. He hath built his house. He hath *hewn out his seven pillars. He hath* (as the Wisdom, Image of the Invisible GOD) *killed his beasts, mingled his wine, and furnished his table.* And having obtained eternal redemption, by his blood and righteousness, he is now entered into the temple not made with hands, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us. Hail! thou JEHOVAH JESUS, LORD of all! All power is thine in heaven and on earth. In thee the souls of all thy redeemed ones rejoice. *And of the increase of thy government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this.*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter relates the circumstances of David's war with the Philistines, and Moabites. He smiteth Hadarezer.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while reading the wars of David, do not overlook the spiritual wars in which David's *LORD* engaged for the salvation of his people. JESUS hath indeed spoiled principalities and powers, and

made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. And as the great Captain of our salvation hath gone before in the holy war, so his people follow him with conflict and in armour. Who shall say, what Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and a troop of foes both within and without, are unceasingly making war with the people of GOD. Blessed JESUS! where is our strength but in thee? Where shall we find might, or power, or strength, against the host of our enemies, unless thou wilt fight our battles for us, and in us, that we may be more than conquerors through thy grace helping us? Oh! how precious the thought. The battle is not doubtful, nor the conflict uncertain. Thou hast conquered all our foes for us, and we overcome them also by the blood of the Lamb. LORD JESUS, in all my spiritual conflicts let me set thee continually before me; for thou art on my right hand, therefore shall I not be moved. *Behold, GOD is my salvation, I will not fear what men can do unto me.*

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

We are here told of David's friendly message to Hanun king of Ammon; and of the impolitic conduct of Hanun to David's messengers, whereby David is so angry that he opens a war against Hanun, and conquers him.

REFLECTIONS

IN the unprovoked ill treatment of David and his servants by the king of Ammon and his people, we may behold a picture of the ungodly world harassing and afflicting the people of GOD. When the LORD JESUS sent his servants the Prophets to prepare the way for his coming, what reception did they meet! When he came himself, with all that meekness and gentleness which distinguished his character, the rancor of the enemies to the cross became only inflamed the more. And when the whole of redemption was finished, and the Son of GOD was returned to glory, though he now sent graciously, from heaven by his HOLY SPIRIT, and by the ministry of his Apostles, to

tell even Jerusalem sinners, that the very blood they had shed was spilt for the redemption of many that had their hands in his crucifixion; yet who believed their report? Alas! what deadly blindness hath veiled the eye of man by nature! The Son of GOD foretold the event; and its correspondence exactly answered. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, much more will they call them of his household." Precious *LORD* JESUS! well may every heart exclaim, whom the *LORD* hath made willing in the day of his power; *How is it, LORD, that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world.*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains a further account of the wars of David. Rabbah is besieged and taken. The Philistines are again overthrown.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, Reader! how the Ammonites were brought under with harrows of iron, and with axes. A lively representation how ill it will fare with the enemies of our spiritual David, when they shall be brought under his dominion. For the knee that will not bend to the sceptre of his grace, shall be broken under the iron rod of his justice. Oh! for grace to kiss the Son lest he be angry with unhumbled sinners, for their long standing out against the word of his gospel, and they perish from the right way. If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Let me contemplate, in the crown of Ammon put upon the head of David, with all the precious stones in it, the sure presage that our JESUS must be crowned even in the presence of his enemies. And they who would not have this glorious man CHRIST JESUS to reign over them, shall be brought before him for destruction. Yes! thou precious JESUS! thy people shall see thee as the beloved Apostle saw

thee, *on thine head many crowns*. The crown of thine eternal GODHEAD; the crown of thy Mediatorial kingdom. The crown of victory over all thine enemies. The crown of redemption for every poor sinner thou hast brought home to thy kingdom. And dearest LORD, amidst so many crowns shall not there be one more conspicuously great and illustrious as it will appear to *my* eye, and as it concerns *my* redemption, even the crown which I, a poor, ransomed, hell-deserving sinner, do now with joy unspeakable and full of delight, put upon thy sacred head, in ascribing the whole, and every part, from beginning to end, of my redemption from sin and Satan, my own dreadfully wicked heart, and a world of wickedness all around, to thee, my glorious, gracious, Almighty Redeemer, JESUS! *for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me to GOD by thy blood*.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

This chapter represents David in a very different point of view from the former. There we beheld him most lovely in his humbleness before the LORD. In this, in a state of transgression, numbering his people. Here is an account also, of GOD's visitation and David's punishment.

REFLECTIONS

READERS let us pause over this chapter to remark what a vast difference we behold in David, from what the former chapter represents him! Is this David, who so enjoyed the gracious manifestations of the LORD, and found his whole heart going forth in praise, and prayer, and faith, and love! And now through distrust numbering his men, as if he had no longer confidence in the LORD, and was looking to an arm of flesh! But, Reader! what is man, even the best of men, if but for a moment left to himself?

Precious JESUS! cause me to learn, from this renewed instance before my eyes, what a poor creature is man in his highest

attainments, and how needful thy blood and righteousness are, through the whole and every part of our pilgrimage, to cleanse the conscience and to justify the soul. Reader, learn from it your daily need of JESUS! See whether you are thus coming to CHRIST daily, hourly, to gather pardon, grace, and strength for every emergency. Depend upon it, if you have lost a sense of that powerful impression, which you felt when you first came to JESUS a poor, needy, helpless sinner, it is not because you have less need of him, but because you have relaxed in your attention to your own wants, and the Redeemer's fulness to supply. Oh, Sir! see that you make him what he really is, and must be, to his people, when rightly used and improved, as well the Finisher, as the Author of our faith; the End as well as the Beginning. Many set out upon a full conviction of their need of JESUS, but after awhile are turning in to somewhat of their own by way of confidence. Pray GOD, that you and I may not so learn CHRIST. But may the LORD give us grace to make him the whole of our hopes, for there is salvation in no other. As you have received CHRIST JESUS, the LORD, so walk you in him. Let every grace be acted upon him, and everything will then tend to show our increasing need of him, until we arrive to this blessed issue, to know him, to be *made of GOD to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the LORD.*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

Though David had it in command, that he should not build the temple of the LORD, yet it was not commanded him that he should make no preparations for it. This chapter represents him busy in the design, and instructing his son, Solomon, who was appointed by the LORD to build it, how to proceed.

REFLECTIONS

*READER! while you and I pause over the account here given of David's zeal for the LORD'S house, and behold with what generosity and greatness of mind he prepared his silver and his gold, for the service of Him, from whom he received, and to whom he owed all he had: while we pay all suitable respect and praise to David, let us duly consider to what nobler services we are called under a gospel dispensation, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD in JESUS CHRIST. Silver and gold, (may many a precious soul say, with the Apostle,) have I none, but such as I have, would I offer to the LORD. Oh! dearest JESUS! it is thou which hast made all thy followers kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. By thee, therefore, would we offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. And while contemplating the vast preparation of Solomon's temple, in the gold, and silver, and wood, and stones, think of the vast and long preparation from the foundation of the world, for the introduction of him whom that temple represented. Oh! thou blessed JESUS! give me continually to meditate with rapture and delight on that love of thine in which GOD our FATHER laid the foundation of our everlasting happiness, and formed the temple of thy body for the express purpose of salvation. Here was mercy indeed built up forever. Here was a temple indeed formed for eternity, in which all thine, being incorporated, should be kings and priests forever. And when the temple of thy body, by the sacrifice of thyself was destroyed, according to the determinate counsel and fore knowledge of GOD, thou didst by thine own power, agreeable to thine own prediction, raise it again the third day. Make us, blessed JESUS, even all that are thy people, make us, as thou hast promised, pillars in thy temple; that being *built upon the same foundation as the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief corner stone; and in whom the whole building is fitly framed together!* we may grow up unto an holy temple in the LORD, for an habitation of GOD, through the SPIRIT.*

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

This Chapter relates to us the appointing of Solomon king, in the room of David his father. The Levites and officers of the temple are appointed also, and numbered.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I only detain you with the reflection of one interesting thought, which seems to arise out of the perusal of this chapter, concerning the Levites. You see how numerous they were in those early ages of the church; and you will, I am sure, think with me, that in the present hour faithful ministers can never be too numerous, in labouring in the word and doctrine. If JESUS, in the days of his flesh, commanded his disciples to pray the *LORD* of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; well may we with earnestness beseech of him, now in compassion to the perishing state of thousands everywhere around, to send forth truly awakened servants of the sanctuary to his service. LORD JESUS, I would say, thou great Bishop of souls! graciously do thou ordain pastors after thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with understanding and knowledge. Let them be such, O LORD, as shall do the work of Evangelists, and make full proof of their ministry. Oh! for the dawn of that glorious day when the watchmen upon the walls of Zion shall see eye to eye! when the church of JESUS upon earth shall hear some resemblance to the church triumphant in glory. Surely, dearest JESUS, when that hour comes, so faithfully promised, and so devoutly prayed for by the faithful in all ages, under the quickening influences of the HOLY GHOST; that hour, that day, when Ethiopia, and Seba, and the multitude of the isles, shall stretch forth their hands unto GOD: surely, LORD, thou wilt be adored by the redeemed below, in congregations as numerous as the multitude which John saw in heaven, whom no man could number. LORD! hasten the hour in mercy to a lost world; cut short thy work in righteousness, thou that art mighty to save; and bring on the latter day glory, *when the*

kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

Here is a continuation of the same subject concerning the Levites as the former. The several divisions in the different branches of the Levites are here made by lot.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a sweet thought ariseth out of the perusal of this chapter! we here behold Levites set apart by lot to stand *before* the LORD, according to the order of their course in their daily ministration. And no doubt, beheld with an eye to JESUS, as a figure for the time then present, the order was beautiful, their ministration lovely, and they were accepted before GOD in JESUS. But what a sweet thought ariseth out of this very contemplation, when we consider the whole of this service as shadows only of good things to come, the body of which was JESUS; and now behold the whole body of Levites, even all the mystical members of JESUS, as set apart to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable, before GOD in JESUS, as their reasonable service. The Levites ministered only in the order of their course. But JESUS's Priests continually. They, when they had fulfilled their monthly station, retired to make way for the ministration of others. But JESUS's Levites are supposed daily and hourly to draw nigh to a throne of grace, having boldness to enter into the holiest at all times, and upon all occasions, by the blood of JESUS. Think, then, ye of this royal priesthood, to what vast dignity ye are called! JESUS, your great high priest, hath brought you nigh. He hath opened this new and living way by his blood, and ever liveth to keep it open by his intercession! See, then, that ye live up to this high privilege. A throne of grace is always open, always accessible, and the promise calls us to approach. Sprinkled with the blood of JESUS, consecrated by the word and prayer, and receiving of

the fulness of the SPIRIT, let us draw near with true hearts, in full assurance of faith.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

As the preceding chapters related the regulation of the service of the Levites; this chapter is directed to inform the Reader of the appointment of the order of the singers in the temple service. They are also arranged by lot in the same number of four and twenty distinct orders.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in beholding this goodly company of the singers in the temple, think of him whose praise they celebrated, and sing thy song of redemption also; for he hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light. The song they sung is the same as John heard the armies of Israel in heaven sing, and which, neither in heaven nor earth can any sing, but the redeemed. Reader! can you join the happy chorus? Are you of this temple service? Salvation is the joyful sound; and to the Lamb that was slain in the accomplishment of it is, the voice is directed in praise. Precious, precious LORD JESUS! let me daily, hourly, sing of thy love, shout loudly of thy mercy; and here, however faintly, poorly, and with a feeble voice, my notes express the unequalled blessing; still may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not thee and thy salvation above my chief joy. And wilt not thou, gracious Redeemer, since thou hast purchased me with a price so dear as thy blood, take me at length, when my song is ended upon earth, to sing it anew before thy throne of glory in heaven?

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

To the account given of the singers in the former chapter, is here subjoined the list of the porters, treasurers, and store-keepers, among the Levites; and of certain officers called to the administration of the affairs of GOD, and the king.

REFLECTIONS

FROM the perusal of this Chapter, the ministers of JESUS may derive, under his SPIRIT'S teaching, sweet instruction, to show with what vigilance they are expected to stand as porters in their station. Ye shall be named (saith the prophet) the priests of the LORD. Men shall call you the ministers of our GOD. Placed at the doors of the house of JESUS, what an eye of vigilance should be open to every one about to enter; to observe their walk, their life, their conversation, their object, their pursuit, their design. And how to look out and notice the approaches of the enemy, so as to defend the truth from error, and keep back the feet of those who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

From the character and officers represented here under the name of treasurers, how sweetly are the Scribes in the gospel, which are well instructed, taught the necessity of bringing out of the gospel treasury to the people, things new and old. Entrusted by JESUS with the charge of his holy word, his ordinances, and all his precious truths in a way of instrumentality; oh! how lovely is the office of those who, from their inexhaustible Storehouse, bring forth continually to the people the unsearchable riches of CHRIST. But on the contrary, what an awful abuse of their office do they make, who preach themselves, instead of CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

And let all officers, and judges, and magistrates, from this sweet chapter learn also that since the temple service with all its appendages were thus appointed, how needful it must be to manifest that they bear not the sword in vain, but by a wise and impartial administration, are counted worthy of double honor.

LORD JESUS! give to all thy servants grace in the several ordinations of thy service, that all, with a single eye to thy glory, may promote thy blessed cause, and set forward the salvation of thy people.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

The Chronicle of characters in the temple service is nearly finished. Here therefore in this chapter we have the list of the fathers, and chief captains, the princes of the several tribes, and the officers of the court.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to read the order of things observed in the days of David, without having our minds led out to consider yet more, the beautiful disposition and order made in the house of our Almighty Spiritual David, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, after that he had taken to himself his great name, ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and sat down on the throne of his kingdom. The apostle beautifully describes it when he saith; And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.

Reader! it is a blessed thing to belong to this holy army. Though door keepers only in his service, or merely hewers of wood, or drawers of water, yet to be brought into the family and household of faith, exceeds, in point of dignity and of happiness, the highest station, void of CHRIST, in earthly greatness. LORD JESUS, grant me to be among the number of thine! And whatever station in thy service thou wilt be pleased to appoint me, so that I but stand before thee, under thy eye, and the smiles of thy love, I shall feel the full

enjoyment of that felicity, which the Queen of the South described of Solomon's household: Happy are the men; happy are thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. And blessed forever, blessed be thou LORD JESUS, my GOD and Saviour!

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

Having finished the Chronicle of persons and things, as pertaining to the service both of the temple and the court; this chapter opens to us on interesting view of some of the concluding scenes of the life of David. He calls his people together; makes an affectionate address to them; delivers the pattern to Solomon of the temple, and earnestly exhorts both him and the people to the greatest care and diligence in the building of it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold what an interesting light the HOLY GHOST hath placed the departing patriarch David in, before the Church in this chapter. When we behold him going forth in the name of the *LORD* to the battles of the *LORD*, against Goliath and the many other such like blasphemers of GOD and his cause which followed, we could not but admire the stripling, and yet more be led to admire and adore the gracious hand which strengthened him for the war. But now arrived to the close of life, how interesting is it to see the old man ready to depart, and standing on the threshold of the eternal world, yet giving his last advice for the due glory of the GOD of his mercies. Reader! must it not be the best and sweetest of all deaths, as well as the most honourable, to be found in the exercise of faith, praying for the glory of GOD to be continued among his church and people here below, when the believer himself is going to be removed to the enjoyment of the church triumphant which is above? How would you wish to be found in the dying hour, but in the living experience of JESUS' faithfulness, and recommending him and his great salvation to all around you? It is true, indeed, few situations, like that of David,

open so large a sphere for an interference in the public government of JESUS'S church. The *LORD* calls, as in the instance of David and Solomon, whom he pleases to take interest in this important concern. And when princes are found, like David, heartily engaged in promoting GOD'S glory, happy is that nation and people so unitedly employed in raising the spiritual temple of GOD'S worship. But every individual who knows JESUS, and loves JESUS, cannot but take part in what concerns Jesus; and must, and will, serve and promote the growing interest of JESUS, with his prayers at least, when he hath nothing else to offer.

Dearest LORD! Do I behold David and his son, his court and people, all interested, all alive and animated in preparing, what after all was but a type of thy presence: and shall I, who know thee now in substance, as the Author and Finisher of salvation, shall I be cold and lifeless when thy glory is languishing all around, and all hands are faint, and hearts are dead, in thy service? Oh! come LORD JESUS with all thy quickening influence in the midst of thy churches; inflame the souls of princes, priests, and people; *let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST*, have his heart warmed with the love of CHRIST, that *the LORD may revive his work in the midst of the years*; and bring on that fullness of the Redeemer's glory in the earth, which the LORD hath promised, when, *from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to his name, and a pure offering.* Amen, LORD JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

This chapter is but a continuation of the former. David had not finished all he had to say, and here therefore we have the sequel of his address. He then makes his offering towards the building, and calls upon the people to follow his example. He closes in prayer and thanksgiving. Solomon commenceth his reign, and David dies. With these relations the first book of the Chronicles closeth.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us take one view more of the dying patriarch David as we read his history in this close of it, and gather from it those interesting lessons it so highly affords. What a life was it taken altogether, though so abundantly distinguished with divine favor. Might he not, like another patriarch of yet more ancient days, have taken up his language and said, *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* If we pursue the thread of his history from the sheepcote to the throne, and look at him in every point of view, and in every character, whether public or private, we trace a life of perpetual anxiety, trouble and sorrow. And had not an abundance of suited grace and strength been given him, the persecutors of Saul in his early days, and the heart-breaking sorrows induced by the conduct of his ungodly children in the after stages of his life, would have drank up his spirits. But Reader! amidst all these what a beautiful, what an interesting, and what an highly finished character, in the devotional part of David's life, doth the HOLY GHOST set forth to the church. And while the faithful record that is made of the patriarch's shameful fall, and the foul offences he committed, is brought forward without the least reserve, to show what man, even the best of men, is in himself; how illustrious an instance, in his recovering by almighty grace, is afforded to show what the same man is, when under the powerful work of salvation by GOD. Let the best of saints feel deeply humbled as they read the awful transgressions of David. Let the worst of sinners feel their souls lifted up with every encouraging hope as they behold his transgressions put away from the covenant redemption in JESUS. Oh! thou source, and fountain, and author, and finisher of all our joys, all our blessings, all our hopes, temporal, spiritual, and eternal: How shall we even hear of thy name, thou blessed, blessed JESUS, but with rapture! surely the everlasting fragrancy of it will be *as ointment poured forth.*

One thought more let both Writer and Reader indulge in, before they close this book of GOD. Let us pause over its sacred contents, and as we trace a Chronicle of so many generations, and of so many events, all brought within so little a compass, let us solemnly

consider the trifling nature of all things here below, and the total insignificancy of man upon earth. Here is the record indeed of many generations. But where are the generations themselves; to say nothing of the thousands of the great ones of the earth which kept the world in awe while living, whose very memorial is perished with them! Reader! let it be our wisdom, from the contemplation of such men and things, to turn to a brighter subject, which is neither liable to decay, nor to be forgotten. In JESUS we behold one who compriseth in himself, in his own person, and in the fulness of his office-work, as the Redeemer of his people, all that the most unbounded desires can need to constitute happiness in time, and to all eternity. It is thine, blessed JESUS, to live for ever amidst the dying circumstances of all things around; for thou art both the life and the light of all things; and as the FATHER hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, because thou art the Son of Man; because thou art the life of all thy people; and because thou livest, in thee they live also. Precious consideration under all our changes, in life and in death. Here, then, blessed LORD, let both Writer and Reader rest. The love, the praise, the service, the adoration of every creature, angels and men, are thine. To thee the whole of thy redeemed bow; nay, all power is thine in heaven and in earth. We hail thy name amidst the Chronicles of worlds, and the rise and fall of nations and of empires. Thou art worthy alone to possess universal dominion. To thee peculiarly it belongs as the infinitely wise, holy, glorious, eternal Son of GOD. And in thy glorious office-work as the Redeemer and Mediator of thy church, all the ransomed of thy blood adore thee, the LORD JEHOVAH, our righteousness for evermore. To thee, thou blessed JESUS, in union with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, as the one eternal GOD, and the joint-author of creation, redemption, sanctification, and glory, may both Writer and Reader, with the whole church above and below, bring their offerings of love and praise for evermore. Amen.

2nd CHRONICLES

General Observations

This *second* book of the Chronicles bears no proportion, in point of the time it records, to that of the former. For all the events registered in this volume, include the history of somewhat less than 500 years. It takes up the records of the church from about a thousand years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the history is pursued through this book to the period of the Babylonish captivity.

The events recorded in this second book of the Chronicles, correspond, in point of history, to what is related in the first and second book of the Kings; but the Reader will do well to observe, what further accounts are given here, in addition to what were then recorded. The design of the HOLY GHOST, (if one may presume so to speak) in the compilation of these Chronicles, is to preserve the history of the church of GOD, and especially in a faithful record of the regular descent of the family of David. The dying patriarch, Jacob, under the influence of GOD the SPIRIT had prophesied, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come*. These Chronicles, when traced in a regular succession, and compared with what follows in the other books of sacred inspiration, lead the Reader on to the discovery of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Through the several monarchies which succeeded the *Babylonian*, to the coming of CHRIST, we trace the lineal descent of David's royal house. And as, through all the tributary state in which the church was brought, under the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and at last the *Roman* government, the Jews never lost sight of their own king, neither their own laws; so it is worthy the highest attention, that under the *latter* empire, during which time the LORD JESUS came, the Jews themselves

confessed, that *now they had no king but Cesar*. Now therefore *the Shiloh was come*. And the royal house of David, in the person of JESUS, emerged from the obscurity in which it had been so long hid, and brought forward again that kingdom, *of the increase and government of which there shall be no end*.

I shall detain the Reader no longer from entering on the perusal of this book of GOD, but only, as in every former instance, so in this, to beg his eye may be always on the look out for Him, on whose account, and for whose great work of redemption, not the Bible was written, but even creation itself, with all its magnificence, was appointed. It is offering no violence to truth, to believe that, as the LORD JEHOVAH from everlasting had determined the redemption of his people; when he went forth in acts of creation, these were preparatory to the more glorious deeds in redemption, which were to follow. And hence, every event from the creation of the world, to the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, was designed as intermediate, and preparatory to the introduction of him, who though appearing in what is called *the fullness of time*, was in reality *set up from everlasting*. It is under the most perfect conviction of this, that I venture to beg again and again the Reader's most earnest enquiry through every page, for him to whom the whole ministers. And oh! thou HOLY SPIRIT of truth; thou Glorifier of the LORD JESUS! let it please thee to call up the diligence, and to reward the search both of Writer and Reader in their enquiries, like the Greeks which came up to the feast, when like them, as we explore this feast of divine records, we say also, *We would see JESUS*. Be pleased, LORD, to hang out his star in the firmament of thy word, and by a more luminous light of thy grace within our souls, lead us, and go before us, until it points to the place where the LORD JESUS is. One such view of thee, thou blessed JESUS! discovered in those Chronicles of thy church, in manifesting both thy love then and now, will give a *joy unspeakable, and full of glory*; and become a renewed evidence, to all the numbers we are continually receiving, that thou, art indeed JESUS CHRIST, *the same yesterday, and, today, and forever*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This second book of Chronicles takes up the subject of history where the former left off. Solomon's entrance on his reign is here recorded: his solemn offering at Gibeon: his choice of wisdom: his strength, and riches.

REFLECTIONS

I PASS over every other consideration in this chapter, to have my soul unceasingly fixed on thee, thou glorious Solomon, and the peaceable, happy reign of righteousness, which by thy coming to the throne of David thy father, thou, even thou, O blessed JESUS, hast brought in to the redemption of mankind! I cannot look on any other. I dare not take off my thoughts from the contemplation of JESUS! Thy word tells me, that in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. And to what other source shall I go, who am so poor and ignorant in myself, and need supply so continually, when all riches and honour are with thee, and there is none else that can cause my soul to inherit substance. Like the Solomon of whom I read in this chapter, I would say, *Give me understanding and knowledge*, that I may have that *life eternal*, which consisteth in the light of *the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST!* Hath not GOD thy FATHER constituted thee King in Zion? Hath he not given all things into thine hand? Is not grace, mercy, life, and peace, treasured up in thee? And are not all the blessings thy redeemed can possibly need, in time or in eternity, found in thee? not simply as plenteous as the stones in Jerusalem, but inexhaustible, incalculable, unsearchable? Oh! then for faith to believe *the record which GOD hath given of his dear Son!* I would come to thee, blessed JESUS, for all I need. And I would come as one sure to obtain. For though thou hast all the treasures of heaven, and art the Almighty Treasurer, yet is it not for thyself, but for thy people. It hath pleased the FATHER, that *in thee should all fulness dwell; that of thy fulness we might all receive, and grace for grace*. Who so ready to give as JESUS! Who so needy as I! Pour out then, *LORD*, of thy fullness. I ask not the riches,

the wealth, the honour of this vain world, but *the wisdom that maketh wise unto salvation*. I ask JESUS himself! Grant me thyself, O LORD, for in thee I have all things.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter represents Solomon as beginning the work of the temple. He numbers the men for the service: sends to Hiram for materials; Hiram's kind answer.

REFLECTIONS

IN the view here given of Solomon's temple, the workmen, and the materials taken and gathered from afar, I would contemplate how Solomon, my GOD and King, hath gathered the workmen and materials for his Temple, from all the varieties of the earth. *When the LORD gave the word, great was the company of the preachers.* Thou hast called patriarchs, prophets, and apostles: thou hast taken thy workmen from among the lowest, even the outcasts of the world. And now, LORD, when called, and gathered, and collected, and brought to thy Jerusalem to form thy church below; founded on thyself, thou Chief Corner Stone, how are they like polished stones of the temple, closely joined in JESUS, and formed for *an habitation of GOD, through the SPIRIT*. Are they not the household of faith? Are they not as a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by JESUS CHRIST! And when, by and by, thou shalt remove the whole building to constitute thy temple above, how will they all appear before thee in glory! Blessed LORD! give my soul to see in those outer things, the shadow of those good things which are yet to come. Make me, however low and humble the lot assigned may be, a builder in thine house. Cause me to rest wholly my salvation, and all my hopes upon that elect, precious Corner Stone, which GOD hath laid in Zion; that all my strength, faith, and gospel conversation may be *on JESUS, in JESUS, and of JESUS*: perfectly and unalterably convinced, that *other foundation can no man lay than*

that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST. Here, LORD, would I rest, and here would I be found knowing that he that thus buildeth, and thus liveth, and thus dieth, shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The information in this Chapter, is in respect to the building of the temple. Here is an account of the spot, the time in which it was begun, the dimensions, extent, and ornaments of it.

REFLECTIONS

How is it possible, dearest JESUS, to behold the account of this temple; to behold the hallowed spot oh which it was built; to mark the dimensions; to observe the most holy place, and the vail, which at thy crucifixion was rent in twain, as a token that all separation between GOD and his people was forever done away; without having our very souls led out to thee, and to mark all the lovely features of thy Person and work, thus shadowed forth in the ancient building of Solomon's temple? Do I behold thee, thou dearest LORD, in substance of our flesh, entering into the temple! Do I see thee going on to Mount Calvary for a sacrifice! Do I hear thee say, *Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days!* Do I behold the vail of the temple rent at thy death and shall I not in all these, see that everything in Solomon's temple was intended to typify, and represent thy Person, and offices, and relations, and characters! Yes! blessed JESUS, this, with all its superb furniture and ornaments, was but the shadow; it is thou that art the substance, and in thee most plainly is set forth the whole to which these things ministered. Condescend, Holy Saviour! to bring my soul from the ministry of these things, to be more and more acquainted with thee. And as the mind of JEHOVAH was thus occupied in directing the structure of an earthly house, to represent thy glory, oh! that thou wouldest lead forth my soul to the beholding in it, what sets forth the heavenly

temple of thy body. *LORD* grant that I may be growing up to thee in all things. Be thou my *GOD*, my holy one, the foundation, the top stone, the all in all, of the spiritual building, that I may be found in thee, and united to thee for ever.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This chapter is but a continuation of the former. The subject is prosecuted concerning the work and materials of the temple; and here is described, the altar of brass, the molten sea, the lavers, candlesticks, and tables, together with the instruments of gold.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this chapter, however short and imperfect our researches can go, in the discovery of spiritual blessings veiled under temporal ministrations, without first looking at the several things here consecrated to the service of the temple, with an eye to better things to come, and in reference to *JESUS*, and his church, and ministry. Was not the golden altar a beautiful emblem of the divinity of the *LORD JESUS*? It is the altar, we are told, which sanctifieth the gift: and surely it was the Deity of *JESUS* which gave dignity and efficacy to his complete redemption. Surely the altar represented *JESUS* in his person, blood, and sacrifice, as the incense ascending from it, became a lively emblem of the efficacy of his all-prevailing intercession; neither can we be at a loss to understand to what purpose the tables in the temple ministered, when we now behold the table of the *LORD*, with the standing ordinance of his holy supper, constantly presented to our view, as a memorial of his death, to be observed for ever in his church. And the molten sea, with all the washings both of priests and people, as sweetly set forth the ordinance of baptism in the church of *JESUS*, which forms an entrance into the pale of the covenant by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the *HOLY GHOST*, shed on the *LORD'S* people abundantly through *JESUS CHRIST* our Saviour.

Hail! thou all-blessed, all-precious EMMANUEL! thou art the one great ordinance of heaven! in thee and thy finished work of salvation we behold all the services, ordinances, sacrifices, and temple-worship of the old church dispensation centre. In thee, dearest LORD, they all had their accomplishment. They were the shadow of good things to come: and thou art the substance. To thee they all point. By thee their efficacy is forever done away. And in thee their services are rendered no longer necessary. Thou art the end of all for righteousness to every one that believeth; and in thy complete redemption-work we behold our souls justified before GOD. Everlasting praises be unto thee; O LORD, for all thou hast wrought and accomplished by thy blood!

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The temple being finished, the vessels and dedicated treasures are brought into the temple, and the LORD giveth a token of his favour and acceptance.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! as I look on, and behold the riches and stores bringing into thy temple, what have I to offer or bring to the service of my GOD? Blessed JESUS! give me grace, like that poor widow, whose offering thou didst regard, to bring my two mites, even my soul and body, for all I have, and all I am, and ever shall be, is from thee, LORD, and of thy bounty, and of thine own would I give thee.

But oh, precious JESUS! did the Levites take up the ark unto its place, and did the whole nation of Israel celebrate the festivity with sacrifices, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude: and shall I not prize that one all-sufficient, all-glorious, and all-effectual sacrifice, to which they ministered, which is thyself, in all the fullness of thy love and redemption!

I bless thee, thou great High Priest of a better dispensation, established upon better promises; that now no cloud can intercept

the view of thee, when, in the glory of JEHOVAH, thou hast filled the house of our GOD. We can and do behold thee, by faith, in thy word, in thine ordinances, in thy visits of grace to our hearts. And we can and do behold thee, by faith, when we see thee entered into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us, having obtained eternal redemption by thy blood. Hail! holy blessed LORD JESUS! be thou our hope, our joy, our salvation here below, as thou art, and wilt be our portion for evermore.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This chapter is so closely connected with the former; that it may be considered but as a continuation of the same subject. The cloud which filled the house, as an intimation of the divine presence, gives occasion to Solomon to bless GOD for this grace manifested.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! most gracious, most holy, most blessed LORD GOD Almighty! what expressions of thankfulness can be found sufficient to speak thy love in the unequalled gift of thy dear Son! Was it not enough, O thou FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort, that from thine own free grace thou didst set up thy dear Son from everlasting, as the constituted head of thy church and people; but through so many ages intermediate to his coming thou shouldst be pleased to keep up, by so many ways, and in such various representations, tokens, and symbols, and types to shadow forth the glories of his person, and the vast importance of his salvation? Oh! LORD! I would not only beseech thee, like Solomon, to bless me in all the circumstances in which I may be placed, and to pardon me in all the transgressions into which I may fall, for JESUS's sake; but I would pray also, Holy FATHER, that thou wouldest give me grace to appreciate and esteem this inestimable gift of thy dear Son in a manner suited to the vast importance with which thou hast been pleased to give him. I see, LORD, that thine infinite mind hath been

occupied in this grand concern, as it relates to the salvation of poor sinners, from everlasting. Thou hast called upon the world to behold him whom thy soul loveth. Thou hast manifested such a display of love and grace in this solemn transaction of redeeming thy church by the LORD JESUS, as challengeth the whole earth to contemplate the person of JESUS whom the FATHER so loveth. Now, *LORD*, hear me for one sweet mercy which in its bosom includes every other; cause me so to love the LORD JESUS as thou lovest him. Let JESUS be precious to my soul as he is to my GOD and FATHER. And while I pray thee to look upon the face of thine anointed, and accept my soul in him; oh! for grace in mine own soul to look unto JESUS with that fixedness of rapture and joy, until my whole heart be found going out after him in such earnestness of desire as can be satisfied with nothing beside. Hear me, LORD and FATHER, for this mercy! I am encouraged to ask it in faith, because JESUS himself encourageth me so to do. For he hath said, *In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER, in my name he will give it you. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full.* Thus my joy will be full when my soul is full of JESUS! let this be the very language of my heart, *Whom have I in heaven but thee; and who is there upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee? My flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

We have here the account of the LORD's gracious answer to Solomon's prayer. The effect it had upon the people. Beside these things, here is related the circumstance of the LORD's visit to Solomon by night.

REFLECTIONS

How encouraging is it to see the gracious answers of GOD to the cries and supplications of his people. Surely, as the prophet said

upon another occasion, the GOD that answereth by fire let him be GOD. But oh! how sure is it, that the LORD GOD that hath answered, and doth answer, by the acceptance of the sacrifice of JESUS, he must be GOD. Yes! blessed LORD! thou hast heard, and thou hast answered, in the rich redemption of thy dear Son, and manifested that in him *shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

LORD! I would look up to thee that as my eye and my soul desires to be everlastingly fixed on JESUS, thou wouldest grant me all that is needful for me in all my straitenings and difficulties. And if the heavens are shut up, or if sickness, pestilence, or evil, have their commission to devour; yet, LORD, look, we beseech thee, unto JESUS, and accept poor sinners in him. Pardon and forgive thy poor creatures, and let the blood and righteousness of JESUS plead when sin most cries out against the iniquities of thy people. Consider, LORD, that they are thy people, the work of thine hands, and whom thou hast taken into covenant with thyself. *Be very gracious, LORD, for thy name's sake, and let not iniquity be our ruin. See, we beseech thee, we are all thy people?*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us a further account of Solomon's buildings. Having built the temple and his own house, he here is represented as building cities. The Gentiles are made tributaries. His yearly sacrifices.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE I behold Solomon engaged in building houses, and going as a merchantman to gather riches; LORD, I would say, make me a wise master-builder, and the true merchantman that seeketh goodly pearls, even *the pearl of good price.*

Upon thee, thou blessed JESUS, as the chief corner-stone GOD the FATHER hath laid in Zion, would I build both for my present, and for my eternal habitation. And LORD, do thou instruct me so to build that

when the winds, and storms, and rain shall descend, being founded upon thee the rock of ages, I shall never fall, but abide on thee, and in thee, forever.

And as a goodly merchantman may I seek thee, the precious treasure hid in the field; needing not to go to *Ezion-geber*, and to *Eloth*, but may find thee at the entering in of the gates, and at the coming in of the doors. Yes! blessed JESUS, thou standest, and criest, and holdest forth thy riches, yea durable riches and righteousness, without money and without price. Oh! then, thou dearest LORD! teach my soul this precious merchandise, how a poor sinner may be eternally rich in receiving out of a full Saviour, whom the more he gives out, the more he hath to bestow; and the more impoverished insolvent sinners he receives, the more glorious he himself becomes. Here, LORD, would I for once be truly covetous, and desire to make this the gainful business of all my life. For this would I rise early, late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, that JESUS, with all his fullness, GOD with all his promises, and the HOLY SPIRIT with all his influences, I might bring home to my house, to my heart, to my soul; and live and feast upon them for ever and ever.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This chapter, which closes the history of Solomon's reign, gives the most brilliant account of his greatness. His fame brings to his court the Queen of Sheba. Here is the relation of the interview between them; Solomon's riches; his death.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is truly interesting to behold the queen of the South coming from her own country, excited by the fame of Solomon to seek after his wisdom. But how much more truly interesting is it when we consider that the HOLY GHOST herein beautifully represents the coming of the whole gentile church to the light of JESUS, and kings to the brightness of his rising.

It forms a subject in which every intelligent Reader cannot but feel pleased to behold the friendship between Solomon and the queen of Sheba, when he imparted to her of all her heart desired, and she presented to him the treasures of gold of ophir, and precious stones, and algum trees. But how infinitely higher in delight doth the subject arise in our view, when we behold in this a lively representation of JESUS our Solomon receiving the poor gentile church, and every individual sinner among his redeemed ones, with his poor offerings, and bartering his grace, and wisdom, and love, with all the riches of his redemption in the wonderful exchange!

And Reader! while we look at Solomon in all the splendor in which he is here described, and before we take our farewell of him, shall we not be led from the view of him as far as the shadow goes, to the contemplation of JESUS the substance, of whom in many instances he was a lively type. Our CHRIST, as well as Solomon after the flesh, was the son of David; and sure I am, that as the LORD sent by Nathan to have Solomon named Jedidiah, beloved of the LORD, a voice from heaven proclaimed our JESUS under this glorious character, the beloved and only begotten Son of GOD, in whom JEHOVAH was well pleased. And who can read the account of the wisdom of Solomon, as wiser than all the men of the east, without having their thoughts directed to the contemplation of that Solomon *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* who can behold the extensiveness of Solomon's empire, of whom it is said that the LORD gave him a largeness of heart, even as the sand which is on the sea shore: without immediately being led to consider the kingdom of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose dominion *is an everlasting dominion and whose power ruleth over all.* Solomon was indeed the richest of all princes of the earth; for silver was as the stones of the street in Jerusalem. But what is this in comparison of the unsearchable riches of CHRIST! Solomon had a reign of peace during his life, and his subjects were happy under his government. But JESUS is himself, by way of emphasis called *the prince of peace;* for the sceptre of his kingdom is altogether *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.* And if Solomon built by divine appointment the temple of the LORD, did not our JESUS himself become both the builder and the temple; for all his people are built

on JESUS, the chief corner stone. He it is of whom alone it ever could be said, *He shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the glory!* Hail! holy, glorious, gracious, blessed JESUS! a greater indeed than Solomon is here. Thou art higher and more excellent than the kings of any land. Thou art *the man whose name is the BRANCH*, Under thee and thy government we shall be safe. *All power is thine in heaven and in earth. Thy name shall endure for ever. Thy name shall be continued as long as the sun. Men shall be blessed in thee. All nations shall call thee blessed. Blessed be thy glorious name for ever; let the whole earth be filled with thy glory. Amen, and amen.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

We enter upon the history of Rehoboam in this chapter. He begins his reign with rejecting the counsel of the elders, and following youthful advice. Ten of the tribes of Israel revolt. He fleeth to Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS

IF in perusing the page of Rehoboam's folly we stand amazed to see the blindness and infatuation of such conduct; how much more may we be astonished at the folly and infatuation of sinners in rejecting the counsel of GOD against their own souls, and preferring the pleasures of sin for a season. *Oh! ye simple ones* (is the language of wisdom in the streets of the city) *how long will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge!* Surely the sinner that slights JESUS and his salvation is simple to the utmost possibility of simplicity. He hath no true knowledge to guide him. He prefers the hollow and empty husks of the world to durable riches and righteousness. The sinful pleasures of the earth are to him preferable to JESUS and his grace and glory. Could a man make a mock at sin, if he were not a fool? Could he sport with that which must end in ruin if he were not blind, and ignorant, and senseless,

and stupid? Precious JESUS! thou that art wisdom itself. Oh! give us to see, to know, to appreciate rightly thy value, and to be thoroughly convinced of this, that *Happy is the man that findeth thee; for thy merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain of thee more than fine gold.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

This chapter is the continuation of the history of Rehoboam. He raiseth an army to subdue Israel. Is forbidden to go to war by Shemaiah. An account of his wives and children.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a poor trifling character is this Rehoboam? Is this the son of Solomon? Alas! what a poor resemblance of wisdom to the Father. Reader! do remark that grace is not hereditary. As the father cannot bear the sins of the son, neither the son the sins of the father; so grace hath no connection in natural alliances.

Is not this Rehoboam a true picture of all carnal, slothful men! as he preferred the sluggish situation of the fleshly pursuits to those of promoting the glory of GOD, so we find all men under the reigning power of indwelling sin, desire only *to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.* Oh! what multitudes are there of Rehoboams in the land, who know nothing, think of nothing, enjoy nothing but fleshly lusts; whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things. Precious JESUS! keep thy people from such things. Oh! give to them to have their conversation more and more in heaven, and from thence to be always looking for the Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who will change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to his mighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

We have an awful sequel to the life of Rehoboam in this chapter. The lustful king forsaking GOD is left in the hand of the king of Egypt. His death.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what evidences do the whole earth afford of the reality of grace. We see men like Rehoboam, filling up a place in history, and the sum total of their lives is this, they lived, and eat, and drank, and then died. But is this the end of man's existence? Oh! for distinguishing grace to live all our days to the glory of GOD. To live *for* JESUS; and to live *to* JESUS. What can be sweeter than the precious testimony that *we have fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST. LORD!* grant that this may be my portion. Let nothing call off my attention from thee, the one grand object of all desire. In thee, LORD, I shall possess all things. And if thou art mine, I shall be truly happy in time, and happy to all eternity.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This chapter relates to us the history of Abijah, the son of Rehoboam. And here we have the melancholy account of the wars between Judah and Israel. This brings us to the close of Abijah's history.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to read the history of war and bloodshed without having our minds led out to the serious consequences of sin, which hath introduced death with all its trains of evil. Behold, Reader, in the example before us, how the descendants of Jacob, in

the different tribes and families, have lost sight of their original stock, and are employed in destroying one another. Oh! the wretched consequences of a fallen state! precious JESUS! here again, as in a thousand other instances, let me pause to praise thee for thy gracious interposition in the redemption of our fallen nature!

LORD! I beseech thee that in all the conflicts and warfares in which my soul may be engaged, give me to see, like *Abijah*, that the LORD is on my side, then need I not fear what men can do unto me. And oh, LORD! let my cause be on the same side as his was, with the house of David. JESUS is my lawful sovereign: by heirship; for the FATHER hath made him heir of all things; and by purchase and by conquest, for he hath purchased my redemption with his blood; and by the victory of his grace over my heart, he hath a rightful claim to my obedience and my love. LORD, grant that I may never be found lifting up the heel of disobedience against thee, lest like Jeroboam the LORD smite me, and I never after recover strength to lift up my head. But make me the willing subject of thy grace, that my knee may bow before thee, and with all the redeemed joyfully confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER.—Amen.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The succession of the history is carried on in this chapter in the relation of the reign of Asa, the son of Abijah. His character and piety, and an account of his victories.

REFLECTIONS

It is hardly possible to read the character here given of *Asa*, and the blessed eventual consequences of his piety, as it concerned the people of Judah, without having our minds led out in delightful contemplation on the happiness of a church, and nation, and people, under the blessings of princes which set up true religion in the land, and adorn the gospel of JESUS, not only by precept, but example. The imagination can hardly calculate the extensiveness of such a

blessing, in the innumerable happy consequences, which spring out of it. Who shall indeed say to what auspicious blessings, even in generations yet to come, it may reach.

And while we exercise the mind in contemplating the mercy as it is found in a land at large, under the eye of a reforming prince, like Asa; if we carry the thought into the narrower circle of churches and private families, the blessing is immense, even here, in the eventual gracious effects which must follow. Let the Reader figure to himself a church, an house, a family, all living in the faith, and love, and fear of GOD. They are closely allied in the strictest and most durable of all bonds, of reverence and faith in JESUS to a covenant GOD in CHRIST, and in real amity and Christian union to one another. JESUS is their glorious head, and they are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Let the enemies of their salvation, like the Ethiopians against Asa, come forth with an army of a thousand thousand, yet the battle is the LORD's, and he will eventually come forth to their deliverance. The graces of his SPIRIT will be their support, and confidence in the promises of redemption by JESUS their strong hold. They will be exercised indeed in resisting sin and Satan, but more is he that is with them than all that are against them. It is nothing to our GOD to help, whether with many or with few. They shall overcome, as the armies of heaven have done, by the blood of the Lamb, and be made more than conquerors through his grace helping them.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The history of Asa is continued through this chapter. Encouraged by Azariah, on whom the SPIRIT of GOD descended to teach the king, he entereth further in the reformation of Judah from the remains of idolatry. He removeth his mother from being queen in consequence of her idolatry.

REFLECTIONS

How beautiful upon the mountains (saith the prophet) are the feet of them that publish salvation. And a lively token of divine favor, in the person of Azariah, was given here in this embassy from GOD to his people. And was not the purport of his visit to the same effect? Did he not hold forth the presence, the favor, the love, the assurance of protection to the people, while adhering to their covenant engagements? And what were these things but shadows and types of JESUS?

And what is it now? Ambassadors are sent by the LORD JESUS to propose and negotiate with poor sinful men, an embasage of mercy, favor, and peace. On JESUS, our fullness, our security, our very being and safety depend. And if, while these glorious tidings of GOD's good-will to men are held forth to us like Asa and the people, our very souls go forth in praise, and love with thanksgiving, for the unspeakable gift of GOD in his dear Son: oh! how certain is it, that the LORD will give us rest on every side from all our enemies. The LORD will fight our battles for us, and we shall hold our peace, *When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter closeth the history of Asa. After a long reign, and long prosperity, in consequence of new troubles arising, Asa sends to the king of Syria for aid. Being reprov'd for it by the prophet, Asa manifests great displeasure. He is diseased; seeks not to GOD, but to the physicians, for help. He dies, and is buried with great pomp.

REFLECTIONS

IT is impossible to close our view of the life of Asa without having the mind exercised with solemn thoughts concerning an history so very mysterious and extraordinary. The HOLY GHOST hath

twice caused it to be recorded in his history, that *though the high places were not removed; nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days*. Though his latter end therefore differed so materially from the beginning, yet are we led to hope that a work of grace had passed upon his soul; and though for his rebellion and departure, like a stubborn child, under correction, he was put to bed in the dark; yet a child still, and mercifully considered so by his gracious GOD and FATHER in CHRIST.

But Reader! leaving the history of Asa, let you and I endeavour to make the suitable and becoming improvements from it, which a case so solemn and striking is highly calculated to propose. When we see as in his instance, and in the instance of others, such as the apostle Paul speaks of, in whose hearts a work of grace hath been manifested, that they still carry about with them a body of sin, oh! let it serve to teach us with what wariness and caution believers in JESUS should have their conversation in the world. If Paul himself groaned in consequence of this, and years after his regeneration declared that *he was carnal, sold under sin; that the good he would he did not; but that the evil which he would not that he did*. Oh! think, my brother, what a mass of sin this unrenewed part of our nature the body is, and with what holy jealousy should we watch over it, lest it drag clown the soul! How oft doth Satan, joining with the remaining corrupt lusts of our nature, intice us from JESUS; and in what numberless instances do we find our hearts wandering from all that is truly precious, from JESUS, from our happiness, from his word, from his people!

Oh! thou Holy One of Israel! the *LORD* our righteousness! how endeared art thou to my soul in this among a thousand other views in which I see and feel my daily need of thee. *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* None but JESUS can accomplish this mighty work, for all the angels of heaven are incompetent to such a service. And blessed, forever blessed be thy dear name, thou art truly called JESUS, because thou wilt save thy people from their sins. Thou hast redeemed them by thy blood from all the powers of hell and darkness; and thou hast, and wilt save them from themselves and their own corrupt nature. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, (saith GOD by his servant the prophet) or shall the lawful captive be*

delivered. And Reader! recollect every sinner is a *lawful* captive, who by sin hath given himself to the service of Satan. *But thus, saith the LORD, even the captives of the mighty, shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered. For I will contend with them that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.* Isaiah 49:24, 25. Oh! precious, precious promise of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, made to the person of our dear IMMANUEL; and in him confirmed sure to all his seed.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

We arrive now in the history of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah to the record concerning Jehoshaphat the son of Asa. He hath a prosperous reign. He appointeth teachers in Judah. An account of his greatness.

REFLECTIONS

IT is highly gratifying in the perusal of the word of GOD, when we behold his servants zealous for his honor, and making his glory the first object of their concern. And however, in different ages of the church, and under the different dispensations of the Old Testament scripture or the New, we behold various characters, still it is precious to remark how the children of the *LORD* have all one family feature in their knowledge and love of him. Begotten by the same FATHER; purchased by the same Redeemer; and brought under the influence of the same SPIRIT; they are adopted into the same sonship, and are heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST. The image of the *LORD* they are changed into by grace; they are impressed with it, for it is engraven on their foreheads, and the SPIRIT of the LORD is in their hearts. So that everything concerning them becomes precious and interesting. GOD their FATHER marked them for his own from everlasting; and in the person of his dear Son he chose them and loved them from all eternity. And in time he hath provided for all their wants, and watches over them with thoughts of

peace, and not of evil, to give them an expected end. GOD the Son received them from his FATHER as his gift, and by becoming their husband, head, and surety, made them the purchase of his blood, and became interested in all that concerned them, through time to all eternity. And GOD the SPIRIT graciously undertook in his blessed office-work to bring them savingly acquainted with the FATHER, and with CHRIST, and make them the willing subjects of his grace in the day of his power. So that from the united mercy, love, and blessing, of the sacred three in one, their minds, like Jehoshaphat's, are secretly inclined to the love, and reverence, and obedience, and faith of GOD in CHRIST. They desire to love what the LORD loves, and to hate what the LORD hates. They pray to be brought into an holy conformity to his will in all things. JESUS is precious, his word, his ordinances, his laws, his people. And while they take delight in whatever tends to the promotion of the Redeemer's glory, they feel distress in whatever brings dishonour to his most holy name or his word. Reader! are these, more or less, in all ages the real characters of GOD's people? let your heart and mine see to it then that we have such testimonies of our adoption and sonship.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This chapter informs us of the treaty Jehoshaphat made with Ahab, to go against Ramoth-gilead to battle; and the consequence of the war. Ahab is slain. Jehoshaphat is spared.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over the perusal of this chapter, and passing by for the present other considerations, let your meditations with mine be deeply exercised in beholding the striking contrast between the false and lying prophets here represented, seducing Ahab to his ruin, and the faithful honest Micaiah, in foretelling to him what would take place.

Nothing in history, nothing in all the events of the world, nothing in the setting up, or putting down empires, bears the least proportion, in point of magnitude and importance, to that of men drawing the line of eternal distinction between true and false teachers, concerning the truths *as they are in JESUS*.

Who in the days of Ahab would have ventured to have called in question those four hundred prophets, who all with one voice concurred in sending Ahab to battle with full assurance of success; and who backed their commission in the name of the *LORD*? And who would have ventured to come forward, when the poor solitary prophet Micaiah, from the prison, foretold the awful event hanging ready to fall upon the head of the king, and to have justified his faithfulness? But the event manifested where the truth lay. It is not pomp, nor parade, though accompanied with pretended commissions from JESUS, can certify to truth. Men, destitute themselves of saving knowledge, can never be safely followed in what they deliver on divine things. And the *LORD JESUS* himself hath marked *hirelings* in such plain characters, as leave it no great matter of difficulty to discover the object of their ministry. They may, like the four hundred, be numerous, be of one mind, discourse with great confidence, and of certain success; but the apostle awfully speaks of the bringers in of heresies, *even denying the LORD that brought them, that they shall bring upon themselves swift destruction*.

The *Micaiahs* of the present day may be, as he was, exposed to much persecution. Like Paul and his few faithful followers, they may be held up as a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. And faithfulness will be sure, when exercised in the reproofing sinners, to bring upon them the obloquy, the scorn, the derision, to speak the best of it, of men; and to provoke the rage of devils. But if their ministry be directed to exalt the Saviour, and humble the sinner; if they preach CHRIST, and not themselves; set forth the wretchedness of man in his highest attainments, and insist upon the person, offices, blood, and righteousness of JESUS, as the whole of salvation; here we may safely join issue with what so fully corresponds to the counsel of GOD in the salvation of sinners. CHRIST is declared to be both the wisdom of GOD and the power of GOD for salvation, to every one that believeth. These are they *whose faith I*

pray you *to follow, considering the end of their conversation, JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

We have related in this Chapter a further account of the reign of Jehoshaphat. He returns to his kingdom after the battle of Ramoth-gilead. He sets judges over the land.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us pause over the history here presented to us, and gather from the perusal some of those sweet and interesting instructions which are presented to our meditation.

In the peaceable and happy return of Jehoshaphat to his house after so merciful a deliverance, let us learn to estimate divine mercies, and rightly to receive them. Is not every return to our house, to our families, to our home, a token of divine favour? And are not those mercies heightened if, at any time, like Jehoshaphat, we have gone out without prayer, without seeking the divine blessing, without divine direction; nay, perhaps, like Jehoshaphat, in opposition to the divine will and pleasure. Nay, more than these; when, as in the instance before us, our return to our house in peace hath been distinguished from others who, like Ahab, went out in health as Jehoshaphat, but returned no more. What numberless examples of a similar kind are going on in the present hour in the world, in which we are called upon to mark the distinguishing mercy? And shall not our unthinking hearts sometimes pause, and behold the LORD's hand in conducting out, and bringing home in peace and safety.

And if a real follower of the LORD JESUS be brought to such views of divine favor, will he not eye the tokens as tenfold brighter, and enjoy them with tenfold sweetness, when viewing them as covenant blessings, and accepting them as such from his interest in JESUS! Hath a GOD in CHRIST entailed blessings both on soul and

body; hath he promised, by virtue of covenant redemption in the blood and righteousness of his dear Son, to bless his people both in their basket and in their store; in their going out and their coming in; blessings in the city, and blessings in the field; blessings in time, and blessings to all eternity? and shall not every follower of the LORD JESUS find a relish and a sweetness of the richest kind from perceiving the covenant love with which every one of them is brought home to the heart, marked in the plainest characters of the FATHER's love, the Saviour's grace, and the SPIRIT's fellowship. Yes! thou dearest JESUS! when I see thy love in the mercy, and the precious fruits, of thy redemption in the favor, be it what it may; whether at going out, or returning home in peace, then will my joy be full. It is JESUS *in* the blessing, and the love of JESUS *with* the blessing, which gives the finishing relish to all, and furnishes *a joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

In the faithfulness of the prophet let us not only behold the loveliness of being always firm in the cause of the LORD, but pray for grace to follow so bright an example. An openness and integrity of conduct in speaking truths, however unpleasant, is not limited to the ministry; there are few characters in life but may find occasion for the exercise of it in numberless situations: a father to his child, or a servant to his master. And when GOD and our conscience demands such services there should be no hesitation.

Lastly. In the reformation set up by Jehoshaphat, we may gather a sweet and precious instruction, how grace operates, when the LORD awakens it in the mind. We hear no reproof, no expostulation, no anger, no excuse on the part of Jehoshaphat, towards the prophet. Grace was in the heart of Jehoshaphat, while the prophet was delivering his message from the LORD. And the blessed effects of both, in the word of the LORD from without, and the grace of the LORD within, wrought those sweet consequences in the mind of Jehoshaphat. Let us learn from hence how to estimate the work of grace. It is not he which merely confesseth sin, but the promise is, *he that confesseth and forsaketh it, shall*, through JESUS and his complete salvation, *find mercy*.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

We have here Jehoshaphat in trouble. War is threatened him: he proclaimeth a fast: he offers up prayer: the LORD hears, and answers in mercy: his enemies are overthrown. The close of his reign.

REFLECTIONS

WHERE shall believing souls fly in their trouble, but to a covenant GOD in CHRIST! Like Jehoshaphat, we are told, and from the unquestionable authority of GOD'S word, that the children of *Ammon*, and the children of *Moab*, even the host of foes arising out of the world, from our own corrupt nature, and from the powers of darkness, all come forth against us, day by day, to battle. But if, like Jehoshaphat, instead of mustering human strength, and human skill, we take refuge in the GOD of our salvation; if we go forth, dearest JESUS, in thy name, and in thy righteousness make our boast, we shall be more than conquerors, through thy grace helping us. And we shall assuredly find the valley of *Berachah*: every place indeed will open room for blessing, for every event will furnish cause for it. But learn, my soul, in the midst of all the precious things which this chapter contains, of GOD'S covenant love and mercy to his people, what corruptions still remain in our old nature. Is it not now, as it was with Jehoshaphat and Judah, amidst all the reform set up? Are there not the sad effects still to be found, of what the human heart is with believers now, as with Judah then? It is said that *the high places were not taken away; for as yet the people had, not prepared their hearts*. Oh! precious JESUS! do I not know, do I not feel the daily workings of a corrupt nature? And though thou hast wrought out, thou blessed Finisher of salvation, a complete deliverance for me in thy blood and righteousness, yet, as if to keep me daily, hourly sensible that the work is all of grace; and what I once needed in bringing me out of nature's darkness, I daily need to keep me from falling back to it again; art thou not showing me that the high places of vanity, pride, self-righteousness, and the breakings out of sin, all

contradictory as they are to one another, yet annoy my poor soul, and manifest what a poor creature I am continually. *LORD!* overrule these things to thy glory! Give me to see thy preciousness! Enable me to improve mine interest in thee from day to day, that being stript of everything, I may lean wholly upon thee and seek comfort only in thy finished work. Oh! for grace thus to live a life of faith upon the Son of GOD, and to make mention of thy righteousness, even thine only.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with the history of the commencement of the reign of Jehoram, who succeeded Jehoshaphat. A melancholy history it contains of his wicked reign. Here is recorded his awful disease, death, and burial.

REFLECTIONS

Who can contemplate the awful character of *Jehoram* without dismay! Who can read such a sad page of history in the life of man, without being struck at the sad degeneracy of human nature! And is this the real representation of all men by nature! Are all men liable to the same conduct, and, but for preventing and restraining grace, would invariably pursue the same steps, if similar circumstances of temptation surrounded them? I Pause, my soul, over such a view! Am I by nature a child of wrath, even as others? Did I bring with me into existence every seed of sin; equally prone to ignorance, blindness, hardness of heart, pride, worldly affections of every kind, envy, malice, hatred, covetousness, and all the deadly fruit of a deadly stock, deeply rooted in my nature! Is this the real state of my soul, and the soul of every son and daughter of Adam! Should I, but for grace, have been for ever ignorant of JESUS, unconscious of the glories of his person, unacquainted with the work of his redemption, totally regardless of his love, ignorant of the importance of his salvation, and not only averse to the desire of it, but even

unconscious that I needed it! Was this my case, dearest, blessed, compassionate JESUS, when thou first looked upon me, when thou didst pass by and saw me in my blood, and didst bid me live! Should I never, but for this grace of thine, have heard thy voice, seen thy face by happy faith, tasted of thy goodness, and my hands been made to handle of the word of life! Do I really now love thee, thou precious EMMANUEL, and was this the cause, because thou didst first love me! Oh! matchless goodness! oh! unequalled love! oh! precious, precious Redeemer, friend of poor sinners! *LORD* cause me to love thee, to live to thee, to hang upon thee, to cleave to thee more and more. Surely a whole eternity will be too short to speak thy praise! *LORD* take me, make me thine, poor and wretched as I am, for all I am, and all I have, soul and body, are all too little to offer, and too mean to testify thy praise, thou Almighty Saviour of our ruined and undone nature!

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

Ahaziah's history openeth at this Chapter. He succeedeth to the throne—makes a wicked reign, and is slain by Jehu. Athaliah destroyeth all the royal seed, except Joash.

REFLECTIONS

OBSERVE, my soul, in the history of this chapter, the awful consequences of sin! What a short triumph had Ahaziah. Life is but a year, and when that year is spent in sin and folly, what a wretched life is made of it? How awful are the consequences which arise out of improper and irreligious alliances! But what blessed effects have taken place in JESUS'S union with our nature, and his betrothing himself to his people! Our alliance with ungracious persons or in families, is sure to bring on numberless evils. But the LORD JESUS condescending to unite us to himself, hath introduced us into the happiest state, the wonder of angels, and the admiration of a

congregated world for ever more. Oh! dear *LORD*, break for ever, in my soul, all affinities and relations which may tend to interrupt my joy and happiness with thee, and do thou take the whole possession of my heart, and reign and rule there with unrivalled sway. *I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.*

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

The history is pursued through this Chapter. Joash is made king. Athaliah is slain. Jehoiada restoreth the worship of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

I would pass over both the history itself, and all the circumstances connected with it, while I review the gracious events the *LORD*'s right hand here accomplished, to give my meditation wing in flying to the yet more precious subject of that revolution wrought by grace, when sin and rebellion, with all the usurpation of Satan, are put down in the heart of man. I desire to bless *GOD* for the mercies here wrought for his Judah, and that he raised up this *Jehoiada* for the deliverance of his people. But oh! my soul, think of that everlasting deliverance wrought for all his people, when *GOD* our *FATHER* brought forth his dear Son, his true *Jehoiada*, hid from ages and generations, and set him as his King in Zion, when declaring the decree of redemption in his name. Here was the everlasting overthrow of Satan's usurpation, tyranny, and power over our poor nature! Here was the final destruction of false gods, when the heathen oracles, by the coming of the *LORD JESUS*, were struck dumb for ever. And here was the introduction of that glorious kingdom of righteousness and peace, which shall flourish forever. Hail, thou glorious, thou almighty *JESUS*! I see thee and thy lovely form beautifully shadowed forth in the character of *Jehoiada*, who ministered in thy name! Thou hast made a covenant indeed in thy blood and righteousness: for thou thyself art the whole of it. And it is thou that hast both set up the reform, and art the wisdom,

righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of thy people. Oh! dearest JESUS! while the FATHER crowns thee King in Zion, and all the redeemed congratulate thee in thy coronation in the church of the first-born which are in heaven, do thou by the influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT enable my soul to put the crown of my own personal redemption on thy sacred head, that I may exult as the people here did in the view of their lawful sovereign, for thou art my lawful GOD and King for evermore. And oh! my gracious LORD, while thou art blessing me with the communications of thy love, and my soul truly enjoys the fullness of blessings under thy reign, let thy grace draw out my heart in thy service, that all the idols of creature affection may be destroyed, and JESUS alone govern my heart and affections forever.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter the history of the reign of Joash. The death of Jehoiada. Joash falleth into idolatry. He is slain.

REFLECTIONS

The improvements to be gathered from the perusal of this chapter seem very obvious, and as important as they are plain. In the conduct of Joash we see to what an extent men may go in carrying on the purposes of religion when outward circumstances correspond to make it their interest, while all the while rottenness at the core is in the heart. In all this outside reform how plain is it that there is no regeneration, no work of GOD the SPIRIT; no turning of the heart to GOD; no real regard for his honour and glory. Oh! thou blessed SPIRIT of truth, thou glorifier of JESUS, let thy work on my soul be manifest. Plead, I beseech thee, O Almighty LORD, *with* my soul, and *in* my soul, the cause of JESUS. By thy discoveries to my own view of sin, of unbelief, of lusts, and all the train of corrupt affections, oh! give me to see, to feel, and to be earnest in seeking after JESUS in all his fullness, suitableness, and grace, that my whole

soul may be truly brought over from dead works to serve the living and true GOD.

In the death of Zechariah let us behold the real, solid, and substantial worth of true faith. Oh! for grace to be *the followers of them who now through faith and patience inherit the promises!* See my soul, what a precious testimony the LORD JESUS in ages after gave to this his faithful servant's death. And thou, who livest in happier times, and art not called upon to resist unto blood, see that thou art always ready to bear testimony to *the truth as it is in JESUS. Be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might.* Like Paul, count not thy life dear unto thyself, so that thou mayest finish thy course with joy, in fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life. Surrounded with such a cloud of witnesses, learn to run with patience the race that is set before thee, looking unto JESUS the author and finisher of faith. Precious LORD! in all things do thou have the pre-eminency.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This chapter records the reign of Amaziah: his wars, his idolatry, the LORD's displeasure against him; his combat with Joash: his death.

REFLECTIONS

WE ought to pause over the view of such characters as Amaziah, and gather instruction from the very awful representation of the corrupt and fallen nature they afford. How in direct opposition to duty, to interest, to happiness, is all their conduct. Making a profession of godliness, but denying the power of it. At length breaking out in open rebellion, and closing life in all the bitterness of sorrow. How dreadfully painful are the embassies of faithful servants to such men; and how sure are their reproofs to bring upon them their hatred. But whether the *Amaziahs* of the present day will hear, or whether they will forbear, they must be found faithful. And

however slighted, or despised, or even brought into peril by their integrity, still they are to go on *through evil report and good report*. The injuries they sustain GOD will recompense. He that despiseth them despiseth him that sent them. And in the end GOD will judge their cause, and bring forth their integrity as the light. JESUS looks on, and knows all. *He will come with vengeance, even GOD will come with a recompense.*

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the history of the reign of Uzziah. He invadeth the office of the priesthood, and is smitten with leprosy. He dieth, and is succeeded by Jotham.

REFLECTIONS

HERE would I meditate over the wretched, ruined, and undone state of *Uzziah*. A leper to his grave. Cast out and forsaken both of GOD and man. Loathsome in the sight of both; and living and dying universally unpitied, unhelpt, and unreclaimed. And are there any *Uzziah's* of the present hour? Do any count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite to the SPIRIT of grace! how desperately lost to a real sense of their own state by nature? How totally unconscious of the infinitely precious value of the blood of JESUS; how wretchedly mistaken as to their own filth, corruption, lusts, and universal depravity. What strangers to themselves, to JESUS, to the necessity of the work of GOD upon the soul, and the absolute expediency of being washed from the leprosy of sin in the blood of CHRIST! blessed, thrice blessed GOD, who in mercy led me to see the preciousness of salvation, and as graciously led me to seek it in the way the LORD himself appointed. Never, blessed JESUS, may my soul invade thy office, but rejoice to come under the censer of thy righteousness. Oh! give me to see that I am indeed sheltered from the wrath to come, from the leprosy of this life, and the miseries of another, being found in thee and under thy precious all-

atoning sacrifice, whereby thou hast for ever done away the sin and uncleanness of thy people.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

The reign of Jotham is recorded in this chapter. He obtains a victory over the Ammonites. He is succeeded by Ahaz.

REFLECTIONS

IN the quick succession of kings which this part of the word of GOD brings forward to view, it is profitable to pause and consider, how transient those characters were in their power and influence, which during their government, no doubt, made a mighty bustle in life, and moved up and down as beings highly important. But alas! what is all human greatness but as a bubble on the mighty waters! precious JESUS! what would the whole earth, with all its greatest monarchies and men be, void of an interest in thee and thy great salvation! How bounded within a short space their lives! how insignificant their existence! how trifling and childish their pursuits! Without thee, thou dear Redeemer, no hopes beyond the grave, no prospect of immortality; no redemption from sin; no resource from the fears of death, nor from the alarms of conscience! wishing to live after death, and yet dreading the hereafter; hoping there might be a place of rest; but in the midst full of a thousand forebodings concerning it! Oh! thou glorious, gracious, precious JESUS! it is thou which hast *brought life and immortality to light by thy gospel*. And by thy great undertaking thou hast not only opened to thy people clear and distinct views of the everlasting mansions of the blessed, but by thy finished redemption hast purchased eternal happiness for them, and art gone before to take possession of it in their name. Now, *LORD*, we hail thy glorious person, and adore thee for thy finished work. All thy people are by thee made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. *We have received a kingdom by thee, and in thee, which cannot be moved*. Oh! for grace whereby we may serve

thee acceptably in this life *with reverence and godly fear*; until we come to reign with thee in the life that is to come in glory forever.

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the history of the reign of Ahaz and a melancholy relation of his wicked reign it furnisheth. He is afflicted by the Syrians. His death, and successor in the kingdom, is also related.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE! my soul, over the perusal of this chapter, and in the conduct of Ahaz behold the lost, depraved, hardened, and wretched state of human nature. See, my soul, to what sin hath reduced every man? and remark also how deluded to his own ruin is the sinner, who, when the *LORD* is coming forth as his enemy, is vainly looking to an arm of flesh to become his friend; as if a man would set the briars and thorns against *JEHOVAH* in battle! But while contemplating man's worthlessness, oh for grace to admire and adore *GOD*'s faithfulness. Was it not enough, oh! thou most gracious *LORD*, that immediately upon the fall of man redemption was promised; and that from age to age thou shouldest send thy servants to keep alive the remembrance of this unspeakable mercy promised in the minds of thy people; but that, at a period when they were all sinning with an high hand, and living as if regardless of all thy love, that then thou shouldest magnify the exceeding riches of thy grace, and then commission thy servant the prophet to tell Ahaz that redemption was approaching, and *EMMANUEL* should appear as the son of the virgin. *LORD*! help me to adore, to magnify, to rightly understand and prize those depths, and heights, and breadths, and lengths, of such peerless, matchless love! And *LORD*, amidst all the unworthiness, and coldness, and deadness, and undeservings of my heart, let such views of thy grace comfort and refresh my soul. Yes! thou blessed *JESUS*, thou precious *EMMANUEL*, amidst all my sorrows let me

derive my highest consolation from any interest *in* thee, my relation *to* thee, my hopes and expectations *from* thee, and my whole salvation *of* thee, the LORD my righteousness. Thou art indeed *EMMANUEL*, GOD with us, GOD in us the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

The subject of this chapter is the chronicle of the reign of Hezekiah. He restoreth the true worship of GOD, and cleanseth the LORD's house.

REFLECTIONS

How beautiful the face of things appears in Judah under the reign of Hezekiah, compared to the deplorable state in which we behold it under the reign of his father Ahaz. And oh! how much the conduct of men in power, and in exalted stations, operates upon all the inferior departments, both in church and state. But chiefly, my soul, let the improvements which arise out of this chapter tend to lead thee to the precious JESUS. And conceive how infinitely interesting and important must be that salvation of his, which was so uniformly made in all ages of the church the great means and end of purification, unto which, by faith, the people all directed their religious services. Oh! thou blessed reconciler, *who hast made our peace in the blood of thy cross!* by virtue of thy atoning blood and righteousness it is, that after all our unworthiness and the setting up of idols in our hearts, we are like the house of Judah under Hezekiah, again consecrated unto the *LORD* to approach in the name and the rich sacrifice of JESUS. Thou art the author and finisher, the means and the end, the sum and substance of all consolation to thy church, both militant and triumphant, by peace here and glory hereafter. Hail! blessed JESUS! *I will love thee, O LORD, my strength; thou art my song of rejoicing all the day, for thou art become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

This chapter relates the continuance of Hezekiah's good reign. He proclaims a passover. The people are earnest in destroying the idols.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we pay all due respect to this beautiful piece of history in the church, and find cause to bless GOD for raising up his servant Hezekiah in such a time for the recovery of the land from idols, let you and I have our thoughts exercised in the contemplation of the mercies we are called to in the free, and full, and seasonable enjoyment of our gospel ordinances under the rich profusion of the means of grace the *LORD* our GOD hath reserved to us. Are we as a nation, as a people, better than our fathers? Have we merited the blessings we possess in our hallowed things? Are we not gone away in a thousand instances from his sacred word, from the love of his truth, from the grand distinguishing doctrines of the gospel; from the love of ordinances and from a well-grounded confidence in him? And doth the *LORD* amidst all our provocations, still preserve to us those best of all privileges, our sacred things, our sabbaths; his holy word and ordinances. Oh then, let the example of Hezekiah and his people stir us up to an earnest, hearty, and sincere return to the *LORD*. Let us send out missionaries to the various kingdoms of the earth, as he did his posts to Israel, and invite all ranks and orders of people to come to JESUS. And oh! let our return to the *LORD* be with an eye to the person, blood, and righteousness of JESUS. He is our passover, he is our peace, our propitiation, our altar, our sacrifice, our righteousness, our all. Yes! blessed JESUS! thou art divinely prepared and graciously furnished by GOD our FATHER, a suited Saviour for fallen, sinful men. Sweetly and secretly in thy person are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: and in thy finished work the life, safety, present peace, and everlasting happiness of thy people is contained. *LORD!* to whom shall we go but unto thee, *thou hast the words of eternal life*. Thou art our passover sacrificed for us. In thee,

and on thee, we would keep an everlasting feast. And oh! do thou bless us as a High Priest of our calling, and may our GOD and FATHER answer it, and confirm it in heaven his dwelling place, the habitation of his holiness and his glory.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

The prosecution of Hezekiah's history is carried on in this chapter. He puts down the remains of idolatry. The character of Hezekiah in his sincerity is briefly spoken of.

REFLECTIONS

I pass over several otherwise interesting reflections which this chapter ministereth unto in the zeal of Hezekiah and the people to put idolatry out of the land, in order to attend to what the HOLY GHOST hath here so largely dwelt upon, the liberality of the people providing for their clergy, and the faithfulness of the clergy in the moderate use of the good things of GOD'S providence, and their zeal and services in the LORD'S work among the people. In whatever character the ministers of JESUS are considered as servants and laborers, as watchmen or stewards, they are uniformly held forth as exercising a most solemn and awful office, for the faithful account of which they are responsible at the judgment-seat of GOD. *We watch* (saith one of them, well taught in divine things) *for your souls, as they that must give account, that we may do it with joy, and not with grief.* Called to the great work and labor of the ministry; solemnly engaged in it; intrusted by the LORD with the charge of his word, his people, his house, his ordinances, and family; the grand object should be how to promote his glory in the salvation of men; and by every means in their power to win souls unto CHRIST. Every faithful servant is bound to advance his LORD'S interests. How much more every faithful servant of JESUS, in that the salvation of the souls of poor perishing sinners is so intimately connected with the glory of his master. Oh! LORD JESUS! do thou in compassion to the

perishing state of sinners all around, call such to thy service whose hearts, like thine own, may be moved with compassion in the contemplation of a lost world. And to those whom thou hast called, or shalt call, be pleased to give the sweet communications of thy HOLY SPIRIT. Make them more anxious to win souls to JESUS than to win kingdoms to themselves. And let the same gracious frame of mind mark all thy sent servants, which the apostle, Paul felt when he could and did appeal to his people, and say, *I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you.* 2 Corinthians 12:14.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

In this chapter we arrive in point of history to the close of Hezekiah's life and reign. He meets with a sharp trial in the approach of the Assyrian army. His sickness and death. Manasseh his son succeeds him in the throne.

REFLECTIONS

So royal a character as Hezekiah, and especially after the view we have had before of his father Ahaz, demands our thankfulness to the GOD of our mercies, who maketh one to differ from another, and by his grace forms all the difference between the precious, and the vile. And while we look at Hezekiah, let us not overlook all the offspring of JESUS, our almighty king. Is it not he who hath begotten us unto this royal state, and made all his children kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER! Think, believer, what an honored, what a royal state you are *new born* to in CHRIST JESUS! he hath made us (saith an apostle) *partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.* You are called to a princely service also; for his service is perfect freedom. And how noble is the clothing of the king's daughter, which is *all glorious within*. How royal their state; how truly kingly their dignity, *which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of*

man, but of GOD. Hail! thou holy, blessed, royal LORD JESUS! by whose complete salvation we are thus begotten to the privilege of children of GOD, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST. Oh! for grace to live up to our high and glorious privileges. Beloved! now are we the sons of GOD! and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure. 1 John 3:1, 2.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

We enter in this chapter upon the history of the reign of Manasseh; and a most wicked reign it proved. He is carried into Babylon. In prison his heart is changed. He is liberated from prison. At his death he is succeeded by Ammon his son. He dies also, and Josiah his son becomes his successor.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in the contemplation of such characters as are here represented, behold the awful situation of the wicked. How by sin they destroy themselves, ruin their friends, involve their dearest connections in evil, and beginning in sin, for the most part terminate their existence in vanity and vexation of spirit. But think, my soul, what a miracle of grace must it be, when any, like Manasseh are delivered out of the snare of the devil, *who were taken captive by him at his will*. Surely none will venture to dispute here the sovereignty of grace, or to put that down to man's free will which can belong to none but the undeserved; unsought for, unexpected, mercy of GOD in CHRIST. And hast thou, LORD, brought my soul out of the prison house, out of Satan's empire; and washed me from my sins in thy blood! Hast thou made me a rich partaker of the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS! Oh! blessed, forever blessed, be the means in affliction like Manasseh's, and yet more blessed be the GOD of the

means, who remembered me in my low estate, *for his mercy endureth for ever.*

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

This chapter brings us acquainted with the reign of Josiah. He destroyeth idolatry; repaireth the temple; the book of the law being found in the house of the LORD, Josiah causeth it to be read. The king reneweth the covenant.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let our improvement of this chapter, under the SPIRIT'S teaching, be to remark from the early call of Josiah to the knowledge of the LORD GOD of his fathers, the blessedness of those who are brought betimes to a saving view of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and redemption in his blood. It is an unspeakable mercy, no doubt, and a miracle of grace, at any period, and at any time, when souls are truly converted to JESUS. The laborers in the vineyard at the sixth, and ninth, and eleventh hour, which were called and equally recompensed in the close of the day, give us a rich representation of the free, sovereign grace of our most compassionate and gracious FATHER. Surely it is a very glorious proof of the sovereignty of GOD'S love and mercy, when we behold men in the meridian of life, and in the midst of all their pursuits of business, or of worldly pleasure, taken aside by the kind hand of the LORD, and brought to the knowledge and love of JESUS. And surely the grace of GOD is magnified in the conversion of old sinners, who are grown old in sin as well as years, And yet the long current and tide of their affections is made to turn at the command of his voice, who raiseth the dead in trespasses and sins. But we behold with peculiar loveliness the grace the LORD bestows on those whose tender years are seasoned with the love of JESUS. Reader! how doth your experience correspond with either? Hath JESUS, the morning star, risen upon *your* soul? Hath JESUS the day spring from on high visited *you*? Can you trace your

knowledge of this light and life of man, like Josiah, from your youth? Oh! the unspeakable felicity of knowing him from a child, and becoming acquainted with JESUS from our earliest years? What can equal that joy of the soul arising out of the LORD's manifestation, when speaking to a believer, as he did to Josiah; *Because thine heart was tender and thou didst humble thyself before me, I have heard thee also, saith the LORD.*

Blessed JESUS! let it please thee to make continued manifestations of thyself to all thy people. Visit our souls in thy word, in thine ordinances, in all thy means of grace, by providences, in blessings, in mercies, in all thy sovereign appointments. And as thou hast given us to see thy beauty, thy loveliness; thy grace, thy suitableness and all-sufficiency; and won our affections to thy love in the moment of conversion; so, LORD JESUS, let us day by day have renewed discoveries of thy love, until at length, after the various manifestations and the sweet visits which thou makest us, we are growing up into an increasing knowledge *of* thee, an increasing desire *after* thee, an increasing confidence *in* thee, and an increasing longing *for* thee and thy glory, thou wilt take us home to thyself to behold thy fair beauties, and to dwell with thee for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

This chapter concludes the history of Josiah. He keeps a solemn pass over. He goes to battle at Magiddo, and is slain. Is deeply lamented at his funeral by his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the view of this passover, and the religious observance of it by the whole kingdom of Judah, let you and I learn to prize our gospel privileges. They had the shadow, we have the substance. They looked to good things to come; we celebrate mercies fulfilled. They looked through the passover to redemption by JESUS's blood; we commemorate in the Holy Supper that

redemption completed, and have our feast upon the sacrifice. Blessed JESUS! thou art the passover, the sacrifice, the altar, the ark, the whole of all the types under the law. For all pointed to thee, and in thee had their completion. Offered up upon the altar for our sins a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of GOD our FATHER, thou wert roasted in the flames of his just indignation against our sins; and thy person becomes the everlasting nourishment, the wholesome, saving, healthful food of our souls, the bread of GOD for poor sinners, on which they may feed, and feast, and live forever. Bread of GOD, I would call thee, that camest down from heaven, be thou my portion now, and to all eternity. On thee would I feed: to thee would I come, and make thee my passover, not only to preserve me from the destroying angel, and from the wrath to come, but to be my glorious entrance, and my everlasting security, joy, and happiness in the presence of GOD for evermore.

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

This chapter brings us to the conclusion of the Chronicles. Here is contained the history of Jehoahaz, and his being deposed by Pharaoh. Jerusalem taken. Jehoiachin made king. Zedekiah's short reign. The proclamation by Cyrus.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and before you close the book of the Chronicles, which contains a faithful register of events both of men and things, think what desolation sin hath introduced into the circumstances of mankind; nay, even into the church of GOD! Who but must tremble in the relation of what is here recorded! and though here and there, in the character of some few gracious souls, we discover that the *LORD* hath not left himself without witness, which act as the salt of the earth to preserve the whole from universal putrefaction; yet *how* (as the prophet speaks) *is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed!*

And Reader! when you have duly contemplated this faithful portrait of man by nature, turn your eyes and behold what that same nature is when recovered by almighty grace in the person, purchase, blood-cleansing, soul-justifying, and soul-adorning righteousness of GOD our Saviour. Yes, blessed JESUS! I would behold thy church, not as it is in itself, but as it is united to thee, and made all glorious within; and also comely without, from *thy comeliness which thou hast put upon it*. Didst thou not at infinite expense, from infinite love, and by infinite power, purchase her to thyself? And dost thou not now watch her, water her every moment, and keep her night and day, lest any hurt her. Hast thou not for her unfaithfulness and departures from thee suffered, in different ages, *the wild boar out of the wood to root her up?* But in the midst of all thou hast brought her again in, and planted her in thine holy mountain. There may be, and there will be, the desolations of threescore years and ten; shaking dispensations, trying afflictions, and much tribulation; but though thou wilt *sift thine Israel as corn is sifted, yet* (thou hast said,) *a grain shall not fall to the ground*. Oh! thou the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! be thou the Refuge of all thy people in the day of their adversity. And when the wealthiest empires of the earth have had their day, which thou hast appointed; when thy church scattered as it now is, amidst the various monarchies of the world shall be gathered together, and the time of her dispersion is over: Then oh! blessed, mighty, glorious LORD JESUS, then let that auspicious promise be fulfilled and realized over the wide universe of GOD, in which it is said *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever*. The peaceable kingdom of righteousness in JESUS, shall extend over all the habitable earth, and *all flesh shall see the salvation of GOD*. Amen.

HAWKER'S
BIBLE CHAPTER
SUMMARIES
AND
REFLECTIONS

VOLUME 2



BY
ROBERT HAWKER

EZRA – EZEKIEL

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CONTAINING
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PREFACE

Dr. Hawker delighted to speak of his Lord as "My most glorious Christ." In his *Poor Man's Commentary on The Old and New Testament*, "Christ and Him crucified" was emphatically the burden of his comments and the keynote of his ministry. Hawker, began his comments on each Bible chapter with a *Summary* of the chapter at hand, and concluded his verse by verse comments with *Reflections* on the same. This three volume set, entitled *Robert Hawker's Bible Chapter Summaries and Reflections* omits all of the verse by verse comments and presents only his chapter summaries and reflections. Perhaps it could more appropriately be termed Hawker's concise commentary on the entire Bible. While it *is* abbreviated, you will find it very thorough.

Dr. Hawker preached his last sermon in Charles Church on March 18th, 1827, and on April 6th he died, after being six years curate and forty-three years vicar of the parish. On the last day of his life he repeated a part of Ephesians 1, from the 6th to the 12th verses, and as he proceeded he enlarged on the verses, but dwelt more fully on these words: "To the praise of His glory Who first trusted in Christ." He paused and asked, "Who first trusted in Christ?" And then made this answer: "It was God the Father Who first trusted in Christ."

C. H. Spurgeon once commented concerning Robert Hawker by saying, "Gentleman, if you want something full of marrow and fatness, cheering to your own hearts by way of comment, and likely to help you in giving your hearers rich expositions, buy Dr. Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary. Dr. Hawker was the very least of commentators in the matter of criticism, but he sees Jesus, and that is a sacred gift which is most precious whether the owner be a critic or no. There is always such a savor of the Lord Jesus Christ in Dr. Hawker that you cannot read him without profit."

The Publisher

EZRA

General Observations

There can be no question who was the penman of this book of GOD. *Ezra*, whose name it bears, was evidently the writer of it. Though indeed if he literally was the scribe of the whole, he must have been an ancient man at his death, for it contains in point of history a period of at least 80 years. It begins with the first year of the reign of Cyrus, which was about 536 years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and closeth somewhat about the 456th year before the Christian era.

The name of *Ezra* is not without signification, for it implies an *helper*. And certain it is that he well answered to this name, for his ministry must have been highly beneficial to the church of GOD in the critical period in which he lived. And I conceive the LORD hath made his labors a blessing and an help to the church, in all the intermediate periods, to the present hour.

The Reader will have a better apprehension of the several contents of this book, and will enter with more clearness of understanding into the design of the HOLY GHOST in causing this faithful record to have been committed to writing, and handed down to the church, if he considers before he begins the perusal of it, the precise time of the church to which it refers, and connects also with the reading of it the view of the several contemporary writers in the church, whose ministry and labors were exercised much about the same era. What *Ezra* hath here stated, as an history, will have great light thrown upon it, if the Reader consults what the prophets, who ministered in the successive ages before, had predicted should be accomplished. If he looks no further back than the ministry of *Isaiah*, and traces in the writings of the prophets that follow to *Micah*, the sacred writings of those inspired men will be of great use to the advantageous reading the book of *Ezra*. And although the

prophets *Haggai* and *Zechariah* did not begin their ministry so early by many years as *Ezra*, yet as they were both engaged in the LORD's service before that *Ezra* finished his labors, a reference to those parts of scripture will be highly profitable.

Another interesting point for the pious Reader to observe before he enters upon the perusal of this book of GOD, will be to call to mind the state of the church at this period of its history. The Babylonish captivity was now over. The church was liberated from Babylon, though still tributary to the Persian government which succeeded it. And such of the people as the LORD had inclined to return to Jerusalem, were now inhabiting again their beloved city, though all in ruins. But the kingly government which their fathers possessed, was lost. Such was the state of GOD's Israel at the period when *Ezra* wrote and begun this scriptural record.

I have only to detain the Reader with a request, before he enters upon the perusal of the book of *Ezra*, that both at the commencement and through every part of it, he will be on the lookout in every chapter and verse, more or less, as the several portions may direct, for a glimpse, (if it be but a glimpse), of him to whom the whole is intended to minister, and on whose account alone it becomes most highly interesting. The HOLY GHOST hath never, in any one period of the church, left himself without witness that it is to JESUS he is ministering, and all the records he hath graciously given the church, by whatever servant he hath thought proper to send, they all, like so many rivulets directing their course towards the sea, point to JESUS. This was he *of whom Moses and the prophets did write*. This was he *whose day the patriarchs saw afar off, rejoiced in the prospect, and was glad*. And this was he for whose sake JEHOVAH declared himself to *Cyrus* two hundred years before *Cyrus* was born, that *he had called him by name*, and commissioned him to the deliverance of his people, when *opening before him the two-leaved gates into Babylon*. See Isaiah 45:14. And the same is he whose redemption we are equally interested in, whom the fathers looked forward to, and whose faith we would desire to follow, considering the end of their conversation; JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Reader! let you and I pray the Almighty SPIRIT, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, who caused this scripture to be written, that he will bless it to our perusal, and more especially in that sweet and most

precious part of it which contains JESUS; that in whatever part of scripture he is spoken of, or under what shadow soever he is veiled, like *Ezra*, we may be scribes, as he was, *well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, to find and bring forth out of the treasury *things new and old*. And, as *Ezra*, it is said, (Chap. 7:10, 16,) prepared his heart to teach in Israel, and was a ready scribe in things which are divine; so may we be prepared, from the same gracious source, to discover somewhat in every page of him, in whom are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Oh! LORD! do thou, *with whom is the residue of the SPIRIT*, grant both to him that writes, and the eye that reads, increasing testimony to *the truth as it is in JESUS*; that as *these things are written that we might believe that JESUS is the Son of GOD*; so in believing we may have life through his name, Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The book of Ezra, from the commencement of it to the conclusion, contains a very interesting record in the history of the church. It opens with the proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia, to permit the Jews to return from their captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem. Here is an account of the return of certain of the people. The rebuilding of the temple; and the vessels of the temple, carried away in the captivity, brought back and restored.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let our contemplations be called forth in the account given of Cyrus, and behold in him a lively type of the truly anointed of the LORD, full of grace and truth, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. *Cyrus* was foretold two hundred years before he came, that he should deliver the LORD'S people from Babylon, But JESUS was held forth as a deliverer of the LORD'S people from sin and death, from everlasting. The *one* ministered to a temporal salvation; the *other* to an eternal. The *one* proved a blessing for a time; the *other* forever. The *one* saved from this world's sorrow; the *other* from all the evils

of this life and that which is to come. Hail! all-glorious, almighty Deliverer! the LORD of hosts is thy name.

But, my soul, did Cyrus proclaim deliverance to captives? Did the Persian king cause it to be published that everyone with whom GOD was might go out free, and return to Jerusalem from their captivity? And did the people willingly offer themselves, in whose hearts the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH was, to avail themselves of these privileges? And shall JESUS, whom the FATHER hath anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, and to give liberty to the captives, issue forth his proclamation and none regard it? Oh! LORD GOD! thou who didst graciously put thy SPIRIT into the minds of the chief of the fathers; put forth thy SPIRIT now. LORD incline the hearts of sinners, that they may see and know the year of jubilee is come. Let that precious promise be fulfilled in which thou hast said, In the day that the great trumpet is blown, *they shall come that are ready to perish*. Do thou, precious LORD JESUS! do thou work in the minds of sinners both *to will and to do of thy good pleasure*. And LORD in mercy grant, that none of thine may remain in the Babylon of this world, nor be fond of the chains which sin and Satan hath cast around them. Let them hear thy voice thou Son of GOD. for thou hast said, *all that hear shall live, By the blood of thy covenant bring forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water*. Take to thyself thy great name, and reign and rule the Almighty, universal LORD, of all. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the record of the number which returned of the people from Babylon. Of certain priests, which could not show their pedigree.

REFLECTIONS

VERY precious, and very highly interesting, are the thoughts which arise out of this chapter under the blessed SPIRIT's teaching. And Reader! let you and I see that we do not lose sight of them.

Behold, then, how careful the fathers were to preserve, amidst the most calamitous times, a faithful record that they were of the stock of Israel, and had Abraham for their father. Though living in Babylon, they had not incorporated with the seed of Babylon; but though cast down for their sins, they considered themselves not finally cast off. GOD was still their GOD, and his covenant engagements not broken. Let us interpret this of gospel-times, and see how highly it speaks to the true children of promise in JESUS. We are not simply recorded in the genealogy of families if we are children of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, but our record is on high, and our names written in the LAMB'S book of life. And though we, like the church of old, live in the Babylon of this world, yet, blessed be GOD, JESUS tells us we are not of this world. And if Israel were saved and brought home, because of GOD'S covenant promises to Abraham, think how everlastingly certain and sure must be the covenant engagements of JEHOVAH with his dear Son, purchased and confirmed by his blood, and all his people justified in his righteousness. Oh! the precious, precious privileges JESUS hath secured to his church to insure their final triumphs over all the captivity of sin and Satan. And oh! Reader! let us be highly jealous of these vast privileges. See, day by day, that we do not lose sight of our interest in them, but live in the constant use of them; and not like some of the priests and people, unable to prove their pedigree. Oh, dearest JESUS! may it be my daily delight, with the first of the morn and the last of the night, to look again and again over the love-tokens of thy favor. Surely I may say of thee as the church of old, *Oh! that thou wert (for thou art) as a brother to me, that sucked the breasts of my mother; when I should find thee without I would kiss thee, yea, I should not be despised.*

And while I am upon these sweet thoughts, suggested by the view of the church as here numbered in their return from Babylon, do I not behold in it also a blessed and a glorious type of the whole nation of the redeemed on earth returning at the last day, when Babylon, the great mother of harlots, shall be cast down, *and the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of JESUS*, shall fall to rise no more. Precious, precious LORD JESUS! ride forth now thou Almighty LORD of all, and win the nations to the sceptre of thy grace. Proclaim, as Cyrus thy type did,

for thy people to return. Let the enemies of thy cross fall before thee, and dare no longer to retain thy captives. Bring them, LORD, to thine home, to build thee a spiritual temple, in thy strength, riches, and power. In every age make up the register of those whose names are written in thy book, until at length all that the FATHER hath given thee are gathered to thee, and the millions whose bodies sleep under the altar in heaven in hope, shall at thy call arise to all the wonders of futurity, and the whole purposes of creation and redemption being fully answered in the union of thy glorious body being brought to thee, the song of everlasting, unceasing praise and hallelujahs, shall fill the realms of bliss to the HOLY THREE in ONE, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for evermore.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This chapter opens with an account of the zeal of the fathers and the people to begin the temple. They set up the altar; renew their offerings; and the foundation of the temple is laid.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, in those perilous, poor times of the church, yet amidst all their poverty, the altar was set up, and the foundation of the temple laid. But thine Altar is forever established, and thy foundation from everlasting laid; even JESUS, who is the sum and substance of every altar, sacrifice, and priesthood, and the whole of the temple, foundation, and top-stone, brought forth *with shoutings of grace, grace unto it*. Yes! thou dear Redeemer, in the secret and mysterious nature of thy person, work, and office, thy blood and righteousness, do thy people find the Altar, on which all offerings can alone be offered. *On* thee, and *in* thee, and *by* thee, all the presentations of thy people's persons and prayers come up with acceptance. And thou art the foundation on which is built their life, safety, happiness, and comfort, both in time and eternity. And, LORD, grant that in the view of thee and thy finished work, I may lose sight of all outward things; for neither the splendor of Solomon's temple,

nor the want of splendor in the second temple, is anything, for thou art *All, and in all*.

Where thou art, blessed JESUS, thou givest glory indeed, to the service, to the offering, in the church, in the heart of all thy people; and without thee what is all the outward adorning, or inward parade of church or worship? My soul therefore will weep like those men if thou art not present, and shout for joy when thou art with me. Everywhere, and in all things, be thou my portion; and then in all things my happiness will be complete. Thou art my dwelling place, my church, my temple, my altar, my sacrifice: for how full of all things art thou to supply every spiritual necessity? And while my soul is sweetly solacing herself in thee and on thee; while CHRIST is my home, my house, my habitation; his flesh my food; his blood my drink; his righteousness my covering; and all that belongs to JESUS my treasure; angels will be my ministering spirits; and JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, my companions both here and forever.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This chapter relates an interruption to the labours of the people in building the temple from their enemies. Commandment issued from the king to put a stop to the work.

REFLECTIONS

WE have a very beautiful instruction given us by the HOLY GHOST, in what this chapter holds forth to us of the opposition the people of GOD receive from false friends, as well as open enemies, in the progress of the divine life. *They that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS must suffer persecution*. It is a mark of the christian character, and impossible wholly to avoid it. But, my brother, in the spiritual building, whether far advanced in the superstructure, or whether the foundation be but just laid, yet if JESUS be the foundation stone, depend upon it it is *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, to all carnal characters around you. Do not forget therefore, your high

calling; but seek grace to go on with the building, being more and more established in your most holy faith, praying in the HOLY GHOST. Look daily to your foundation, even to JESUS; *for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, JESUS CHRIST.* On him rest the whole weight and burden of your salvation, and let him too bear all the glory. And as stones highly polished, let one grace be added to another, and one ordinance make way for another. *In nothing being terrified by your adversaries;* but living upon, walking with, rejoicing in, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And depend upon it, however apparently the work may seem hindered, yet JESUS is secretly carrying it on, and his people are growing unto *an holy temple in the LORD, for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT.* And as the apostle in his sweet consolation speaks, *the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself, and GOD, even our FATHER, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, will comfort our hearts, and stablish us in every good word and work.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The affairs of the Church put on a better aspect than in the foregoing chapter. Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume the building, and Zerubbabel and Joshua are animated to the work.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! do I not behold thee even in this chapter, when I perceive thy servants stirring up the minds of thy people to thy cause. Surely thou art the LORD GOD of the prophets, and when thou didst influence the several characters in thy church, both ministers and people, was it not a plain manifestation that thou wast speaking in them and by them in procuring peace to the prosecution the work of thy temple. Indeed, from everlasting thou, and thou alone, art the peace, and the peace maker, in all cases, and upon all occasions. Thou hast made our peace with GOD by thy blood. Thou hast made our peace with ourselves, and with our own consciences. All nature,

and all things, by the fall were at enmity with man; and all the inferior orders instantly arose in rebellion against him, because he had rebelled against GOD. But when JESUS came he restored all things: To GOD his glory—to man his peace—to all creation order and regularity. And as thou hast purchased our peace by thy blood; so by thy continual advocacy thou livest to render it effectual. And now in thy blessed gospel thou comest to preach peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh. Hail! glorious, almighty, blessed Prince of peace! LORD, in thy peace make me to go on in defiance of the opposition of hell and the world, in building thine house; and being myself built up in my most holy faith. And let devils assault, or the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST fail; yet, LORD, speak but thy peace to my soul, and all shall be well. Say unto me as thou didst to thy disciples; *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This Chapter relates an event of great joy to the people of GOD. Darius commands the building to go on. It is finished. They celebrate the Passover, and make a feast of dedication.

REFLECTIONS

AT length we have seen, after many years expectation to the people, and much opposition from their enemies, the temple built and dedicated; and once more the church enjoying unmolested the privilege of her ordinances. But while we bless GOD for thus watching over his people for good, and in his own good time doing good to Zion; let us look to him whom that temple, and whom every ordinance, points to, and in whom all have their meaning and completion. Yes! precious JESUS! I would desire grace to look unto thee; for on thee all the eyes of saints and angels are unceasingly fixed with delight. And well may a poor sinner therefore look with delight on thee, since but for thee, and thy great salvation, he must

have been looking up in the misery of the damned for evermore. Help me, then, thou precious LORD, to contemplate thy beauties, thy glories, thy loveliness, in thyself; thy loveliness and suitableness to thy people. Surely thou art *the LORD our righteousness*. Thou art indeed the temple, the altar, the sacrifice, the High Priest, the offering, the Lamb of GOD, and the all-sufficient propitiation; the advocate, the intercessor of thy people. Angels are gazing on thee, thou peerless beauty! the spirits of just men made perfect have their eyes fixed on thee. Every redeemed soul now in glory among the ransomed in the Zion which is above, is looking on thee with love, with rapture, with unspeakable, undescribable delight! LORD JESUS! make me one of the blessed multitude, and keep my heart, my soul, mine eyes, forever and forever gazing on thee. And while on earth my poor feeble frame is on the stretch to see thee in everything, to bless thee for every mercy, and to enjoy thee in all; oh! let me live near thee, and to thee, and with thee, day by day in a life of faith, until at thy second coming faith shall be swallowed in sight, and my soul sit down at the fountain head of everlasting enjoyment, in the presence of GOD and the LAMB for evermore, Amen. Hallelujah.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

We are here brought more particularly acquainted with Ezra, the writer of this book. He had modestly said nothing of himself in the opening of his records of the church; but here he is obliged to say somewhat concerning his own history, from the part he took in the public service. He is represented as going up to Jerusalem; obtains a commission from the king for that purpose; and he enters upon it with blessing GOD for the appointment.

REFLECTIONS

How truly lovely doth Ezra the scribe appear in the view here given of him! a scribe indeed well instructed in the law of GOD. Trained in a foreign land, and under captivity, yet still his attachment to his beloved Jerusalem, and the people of his fathers, and yet above all to the GOD of his fathers, how near at heart had Ezra an

interest in all that concerned the welfare of Zion. Truly might he say, *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning: If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I do not prefer Jerusalem before my chief joy.*

But while we pay all due respect to a character of such eminency as Ezra, how is the mind directed in the view of him to the recollection of one, to whom Ezra was but as the faint shadow to the substance. JESUS came to his beloved Jerusalem with full commission from the King of kings, even GOD his father, and had all power given to him in heaven and in earth. And as many as were minded of their own will, when by his grace the LORD had made them willing in the day of his power, the FATHER gave to be his companions, that *JESUS might give eternal life, to as many as the FATHER had given to him.* And the LORD JESUS declared the decree which JEHOVAH had made for this express purpose. But with what power was JESUS vested; to what extent his commission; to receive all honor, that as the FATHER was honored, so also should be the SON! All his ministers and servants freed from tribute; for if *the Son had made them free, they then are free indeed.* And all who refuse to bow the knee to the sovereignty of his grace, must bend before the iron rod of his justice. Hail! thou Almighty JESUS! who camest to us in thy Father's name, and by his authority. All power, grace, and salvation be thine. May every knee bow before thee, and every tongue confess, *that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.* Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here a further relation of Ezra's journey to Jerusalem. He begins it with prayer; the LORD conducts him and those who accompanied him in safety. An account of his arrival, and his entrance on business.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! doth not this view of Ezra's return from Babylon, with the number of the people here named and recorded, suggest to thee the ransomed of Zion, which shall one day return with everlasting joy upon their heads; when JESUS shall again be seen on the holy mount, and with him, not only *the hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of Israel, but also a multitude which no man can number of all kindred's, nations, and languages!* Oh! how delightful will be that appearance; and how sure and certain is the journey to it now. There is an highway opened, and it is indeed called *the way of holiness*. And it is truly called the way of holiness, for JESUS is himself the way; and the holiness of his person and finished- work, is the holiness of his people. *The wayfaring men, though fools, cannot err therein*. Here, precious JESUS, may I be found, returning from the Babylon of this world to the Jerusalem of a better. Yes! thou dearest LORD, thou art indeed the way, the only way, the sure way. For in thy person, thy redemption-work, thy covenant righteousness, thy atoning blood, followed with all the promises, and invitations, and assurances of thy gospel, my soul finds a sure way, and would walk in no other. Most fully convinced I am, that *salvation is in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*. Witness for me, that my soul is come in this way: And oh! fulfil that precious promise, LORD, to my soul, that *all that do come thou wilt in no wise cast out*.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

In the prosecution of Ezra's commission, he makes discovery that the people of GOD had formed affinity with strangers. This calls forth great distress. Ezra seeketh to GOD in solemn prayer upon the occasion.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and mark in strong characters on your mind the distinguishing love of GOD to Israel. The LORD by prophecy had pointed out their distinction ages before. They were *to dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations*. And from everlasting it had been so determined upon. In the gracious purposes of GOD in covenant relation, they were set apart to be known by their distinguishing peculiarity and character. And their happiness consisted in this; their singularity was to be their singular honor. They were to be a nation of priests, distinguished with peculiar sacrifices, peculiar duties, peculiar privileges, peculiar blessings: a people near to GOD and set apart for himself. Judge, then, the awful apostacy when Israel forgot her blessings, mercies, privileges, and above all, the GOD of her fathers, and mingled the holy seed with the idolatrous nations around. Reader! let the thought be suitably impressed upon your mind as one of the spiritual seed of Israel. Are not believers in CHRIST peculiarly set apart and formed for JESUS glory? Are they not *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*. Doth not JESUS mark them for his own; make them *kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER*; the purchase of his blood, the subjects of his grace, and the token, gift, and pledge of the FATHER'S love? And what ought to be the immediate consequence of these distinguishing mercies, but *to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. Who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of GOD; who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy*.

Let me only add one thought more on this sweet chapter. Who can behold Ezra thus acting as the intercessor for Israel, but must instantly call to mind that Great High Priest, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in this glorious, all-prevailing office, in whose eventful death and intercession all the high priests under the law found favor and acceptance with GOD. Yes! blessed JESUS! to thee would I unceasingly direct my attention. Now, even now, thou wearest thy priesthood still; appearest in a vesture dipped in blood, to denote the sure efficacy of thine high office, and that *thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners*. Let me never open thy blessed scriptures at

any part, read a page, or verse, of thy several servants ministering, without an eye to thee. Thou art the sum and substance of all their services. The whole law, and the whole priesthood, were *but a shadow of good things to come*. In thee the whole centers; and the whole is completed for the salvation of sinners, and the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This Chapter gives us the history which followed Ezra's prayer. Shecaniah encourageth Ezra to set about a reform. Ezra with fasting begins it. The people feel suitable sorrow, and the strange wives are put away.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter, and before I close this book of divine inspiration, and shut up the view of this great man's history and reform; see, and consider what the HOLY GHOST graciously intended to teach the church from it of a spiritual, gospel nature.

And here, my soul, stand still and consider how much of thine own life and conduct is strikingly set forth. Have I not from the womb been seeking out and forming strange alliances, and taking up connection with anything, and with everything, rather than being married to CHRIST? In Adam and his stock, fallen, sinful, and polluted I was born; by nature closely attached to him, and seeking nothing but what proved my alliance to him. Married to the law, wedded to my own righteousness, (or rather my fancied righteousness, for in reality righteousness I had none); how did I seek to find justification before GOD by the works of the law? And though that law became only the ministration of death; though its demands of unsinning obedience, making no one allowance whatever, might have made my very soul tremble under its universally condemning power; yet notwithstanding its rigour; notwithstanding the dreadful condemnation it held forth; still infatuated to my own present and everlasting ruin, never should I have put away those strange wives had not JESUS, like another *Ezra*,

have come with grace in his lips, and love in his heart, and by his HOLY SPIRIT *convinced me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, and divorcing me from every other alliance, betrothed me to himself, and made me his forever. Oh! thou almighty Bridegroom of thy church and of thy people! what unknown, unexplored riches are contained in that tender character. Yes! my soul! *thy Maker is thine husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name. And thy Redeemer, the GOD of the whole earth, shall he be called.* Help me, JESUS, my LORD and my GOD, to put away all the strange alliances my poor sinful heart hath been making. Do thou, dearest JESUS, hedge up my path, my way, with thorns, if at any time my wandering soul should be going away from thee after my old lovers! oh! draw me, thou dear LORD JESUS, that I may run after thee; and be thou my *Ishi*, my husband, my Holy One, the LORD my righteousness.

Farewell, *Ezra*, faithful servant of my GOD! I bless thy LORD, and my LORD, that he was pleased to sanctify thy ministry in this sweet book of thine, under GOD the SPIRIT, in showing so much of JESUS shadowed forth in the several parts of it. And, blessed LORD GOD, be thou eternally praised, when from the services of thy inspired ministers glory thereby reverts to JESUS; everlasting glory be to the holy undivided Three in One, for all salvation. Amen.

NEHEMIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of, Nehemiah takes up the history of the church very nearly from the close of that of Ezra; at least, not more than ten or twelve years after. The design of the HOLY GHOST in giving this memoir of the Church's history, among other divine causes, was, no doubt, to carry on the progress of the church's account in a regular order. It compriseth a period of not more than *twelve* years. And as far as the connection of history can be preserved, at should seem that this record of Nehemiah opens about ninety years after the return of the people from Babylon; and closes about 433, years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It is well worthy the Reader's attention, that small and inconsiderable as those records of the church appear at this period, and especially if compared with other nations; yet not a word doth the scripture contain of the mightiest monarchies then existing, excepting in such things as are necessary to relate, from their occasional transactions with the church. The kingdom of *Persia*, which succeeded in the sway of the then known world that of Babylon, had now flourished for a century; and *Greece* began to make a conspicuous figure in the earth. *Rome* also was in her infancy about this time under which *Judea* at length became tributary as a province. Yet not a word of either, unless (as I said before) in a collateral way, from having to do with GOD's people. It is the seed of Abraham, the church of JESUS, the HOLY GHOST records the memoirs of, whether Jerusalem be in adversity or prosperity; as if (and which is indeed the case) all the rest were regarded no more, or less, but as they ministered to GOD's people. What a thought to exalt our ideas of the nature and tendency of distinguishing grace! well might the man of GOD exclaim, *Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD!*

The principal subjects in the book of Nehemiah are—the zeal and concern of Nehemiah, under a commission he received from the king his master, to repair to Jerusalem for the rebuilding the wall of it; redressing the grievances of the people; registering the people; setting up a reform, and following up the plan of Ezra in the dissolution of unlawful marriages.

We cannot help admiring, as we prosecute the history, the very affectionate attachment of Nehemiah to his people; and yet more how much the LORD had imparted to him of his HOLY SPIRIT. Surely the LORD had heard and answered the fervent prayer the man of GOD had put up, even before he called, agreeably to his own most gracious promise, and remembered him for good.

I must still beg the Reader before he enters upon the perusal of this precious fragment of the church's history, to keep in memory the request I have all along been making him, namely, to search for JESUS through the whole. I should be tempted to question the authenticity of the book of Nehemiah, if nothing could be found in it either in direct reference, or in secret allusion, to his sacred and most endearing person, to whom all scripture ministers, Reader! depend upon it, JESUS is here. And if here, he will be found of them that seek him. Oh! then for increasing grace, both to Writer and Reader, to search and find him whom GOD the FATHER delighteth to honour, and GOD the HOLY GHOST is engaged to glorify. Oh! LORD JEHOVAH! give us to see him, to know him, to love him, to live to him, to rejoice in him, to hang upon him, and to cleave to him, that he may be our portion in life, in death, and to all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The book of Nehemiah opens with an account of Nehemiah's grief at the relation he received of the calamities of the people at Jerusalem, Here is the account also of his fasting and prayer upon the occasion.

REFLECTIONS

How truly lovely doth Nehemiah appear in the account here given of him. Not all the splendor of a court, nor the favor of a king, could make him forget the interests of his own country, or prevent tears from running down when he considered the affliction of Zion. Think of this, my soul, in the best moments of any outward providences, and take part in the concerns of the church of JESUS. Doth the church of JESUS lay waste? Are the dear members of his mystical body in affliction? Do they hunger while thou art full? Are they oppressed, and thou takest no part in their oppression? Oh! how canst thou be counted part of JESUS. Oh! gracious GOD and Saviour, grant to me such a sympathizing spirit in all that concerns thy cause and interest in the earth, that I may never, never lose sight of the wonderful price thy church cost thee, when for redemption thou didst shed thy precious blood. Animate, my soul, I beseech thee, thou HOLY SPIRIT of grace, with the same fire from thine holy altar, as thou didst thy servant the prophet, that like him I may besiege the mercy-seat with clamorous and unceasing petitions, resolving, for *Zion's sake, never to hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake never to rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

Behold, my soul also, in this sweet chapter, the mighty privilege of a throne of grace. Behold in this instance of Nehemiah, that no place, no clime, no country, no situation, is in itself able to keep the awakened soul from GOD. That throne which John saw surrounded with a rainbow is accessible on every side. JESUS, the Lamb, is in the midst of it. He still hears prayers; still feeds the church which he hath purchased with his blood; still acts as a priest upon his throne; wears thy nature and the priesthood still; and is infinitely more ready to take in petitions and bestow blessings than his people are to ask or receive. Oh! LORD JESUS! I would say, hear me then for myself, for my country, for thy church, for thy people! *do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build up her walls and love her still.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Nehemiah appearing with a sad countenance before the king his master, occasions the monarch to ask the cause. Upon being informed, and Nehemiah making request to go to Jerusalem, the king graciously grants it, and furnisheth him with all suitable things for his journey.

REFLECTIONS

MARK, my soul, the very different characters which distinguish men of the world from real lovers of GOD. Their features, manners, customs, pursuits, habits, pleasures, all differ. Whatever root of bitterness it is, I do not presume to say, but certain it is that there is a root of bitterness springing within them, both the blossom and the baleful deadly fruit appear in all their branches. But while these marks plainly testify whose they are, and in whose cause they are planted; how blessed is it to see that they can extend their luxuriancy no farther than the LORD allows. And how further blessed it is to see, that the LORD makes use of them medicinally to his people for good. *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* meant not so, neither did their heart intend it; but yet, in reality, all they did, and all their scoffs and oppositions, only tended to make Nehemiah more assiduous, and more earnest in his recourses to a mercy seat. Reader! when our enemies do this; when they drive us to a throne of grace, when otherwise we should not go there, surely the LORD, by his overruling wisdom converts their very evil into good, and compels them, contrary to their wishes and intent, to prove our kind friends.

Mark, my soul, in Nehemiah, the portrait of GOD's children. While the LORD's house lies waste, they take no pleasure. While JESUS and his people are oppressed, there is no joy in a gracious soul. See then, my soul, whether, like Nehemiah, thou art anxious for the prosperity of Zion? Can a throne of grace witness for thee, that thy petitions are lodged there for her welfare? Dust thou love her courts, her ordinances, her servants, her ministers, her people? Is the LORD himself precious to thee, and dearer than the golden wedge

of Ophir? Oh! thou dear Redeemer! let thy name, thy person, thy work, thine offices, thy character, relations; all, all that belongs to JESUS, be as ointment poured forth. And oh! grant, my LORD, that I may be a sweet savor of JESUS, as Nehemiah, to all around.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter is chiefly directed to record the names of those who arose to build the walls, and the order in which they proceeded in the work.

REFLECTIONS

I HOPE the Reader will not peruse this chapter, without gleaning much improvement from it, though the subject relates to nothing more interesting than the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem. But in the repairing the walls of Jerusalem, we must look beyond the mere letter of the word, and consider that Jerusalem is the city of the great King, and the people of it the nation whom GOD hath taken into covenant with himself. Were the walls of Jerusalem laid waste? Did the enemy enter in by her gates? Was she carried into captivity by the foe? Yes! all this was done. But by whom was it done, and for what cause? The prophet hath answered; *He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.* Doth the enemy say, *Is this Zion*, whom no man looketh after? Let them know that the LORD doth look after Zion, and *will comfort her waste places.* For he hath said, *I will make you a praise among all people of the earth, when I have turned back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.*

But sweet as these considerations are, in reference to the LORD's mercy manifested to Israel of old, how infinitely more interesting do they become, if viewed through the gospel medium, and having their accomplishment in the recovery from the captivity of sin and Satan, the rebuilding the walls of the church of JESUS, and the bringing home *the redeemed of the LORD to Zion, with songs of everlasting joy upon their head.* Here the subject riseth to an higher degree of sublimity; and we may behold the several worthies in this chapter,

headed by their high-priests, as the representatives of the church of JESUS, following the great and glorious High Priest of our profession, CHRIST JESUS, emerging out of all the ruins of the fall, and forming an holy temple to the LORD, through the SPIRIT. Even in the present day of grace, and beheld only with an eye to the recovery from the powers of darkness, and the dominion of sin in this life, the subject becomes beautiful and interesting. But looking forward to the eventual redemption from everlasting misery in the world to come, nothing can be more animating, nor delightful. Here it is the promise of GOD, by his prophet, receives its full accomplishment. In JESUS, and his finished redemption, when the LORD hath builded Zion, and made his glory to appear, JEHOVAH will indeed make every child of JESUS a praise among all people of the earth, in having forever turned back their captivity, and put a final close to all the oppressions the Israel of GOD hath sustained from all the enemies of her salvation, for evermore.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have an account of the opposition the builders of the wall met with from the common enemy. While they mock, Nehemiah takes refuge in prayer, and setteth a watch to prevent their evil designs.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I shall derive very sweet improvements from this chapter, if, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we discover our personal interest in it, and amidst all the oppositions we meet with from the enemies of our salvation, like Nehemiah, we learn where our strength is, and from whence help is to be derived. We are building for eternity, and there are many foes to obstruct our progress. But if our foundation be JESUS; and if he who hath founded Zion, gives us, by his HOLY SPIRIT, to rest all upon this precious Corner Stone, then the promise is sure, *we shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.* Reader! are you thus engaged?

Is CHRIST your foundation? Have you laid your rest upon him deep and firm? Have you quitted every other foundation? Do you heartily and cordially, lay the whole weight of your salvation on him? Do you live upon him, act faith daily, hourly, upon him? Do you not only live *upon* JESUS, but live *to* JESUS? These are heart-searching enquiries. But if the LORD enable you thus to build upon CHRIST, depend upon it, in defiance of all opposition, he that enabled you to begin, will help you to complete; *and the top-stone will be at length brought home with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.* Let a thousand Sanballats arise, or ten thousand Tobiahs mock; yet he that is with you, is more than all that are against you. *The LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.* Go on, therefore, in the strength of the LORD; crying out in the words of the prophet; *Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we are led to behold Nehemiah reforming certain abuses which had crept in among the people. He sets a noble example of liberality.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a blessing to every state, and to every people, are faithful governors! placed by a gracious GOD in the supreme department of magistracy, like the beneficent planets of the earth, they shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And when the LORD JESUS, who places them where they are, graciously furnishes them with hearts, and heads, and hands, to minister to his glory, and the people's welfare, like Nehemiah, their government becomes a blessing, and their persons sacred and beloved.

But, my soul, while thou art contemplating the happy state of an earthly governor, a faithful magistrate, like Nehemiah, among men, look to thy JESUS, the Almighty supreme LORD of heaven and earth, *by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice.* All the good that is done upon earth he doeth it himself. Yes, blessed JESUS! it is thou

that by the sweet and secret influences of thy SPIRIT dost order, regulate, appoint, and give blessings to the whole events of justice, truth, and faithfulness found among men. In thee, and from thee every source of blessing must flow. Nay, thou thyself art the everlasting glory, the honor, beauty, and loveliness of all merciful dispensations. And art thou, then, my governor, my LORD, my GOD, my Holy One? Oh! give me to hail thee, and to acknowledge thee LORD of all. And while I bend the knee before thee, do thou bring *every thought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST*. LORD, let me dwell *under thy shadow; revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; that the smell of fragranc*y in thy sweet sacrifice may be *as the wine of Lebanon*.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

We have revived here the persecution of Sanballat against the church. The work, however, is completed. A secret correspondence is carried on between Tobiah and some of the nobles of Judah.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to read this Chapter, and behold the various methods which the enemies of Nehemiah made use of to draw him from the work he had engaged in for GOD's glory, without immediately having our minds led forth to contemplate the still more plausible and subtle devices which Satan and his agents are unweariedly engaged in to harass and afflict the people of GOD. What fiery darts of temptation do they throw forth from the quiver of their hellish malice? And if at anytime they are successful, which the LORD sometimes graciously may permit, for our greater advantage and his glory in the end; oh! how do they triumph in our fall. But Reader! there is a way, and it is indeed the only way of counteracting all the subtlety and malice of Satan; namely, as the redeemed now in heaven are said to have done; *they overcame by the blood of the LAMB*. Yes! blessed JESUS! thy name, thy cross, thy precious blood and righteousness; these are the ensigns of victory,

by which alone we can resist the devil, and cause him to flee from us. And like Nehemiah we shall finish the wall, subdue all oppositions and be more than conquerors through thy grace helping us, when by thy blessed SPIRIT we are made *strong in the LORD and in the power of his might*.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This chapter contains the account of the government of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. A register also of the genealogy of them, who returned first from the captivity of Babylon, both of the people, priests, Levites, and Nethinims.

REFLECTIONS

LEAVING the subject of Jerusalem's safety, and the means the zealous Nehemiah adopted to preserve her from the foe, I would call upon myself and Reader to an higher subject arising out of it, and consider how our Almighty Governor, when about to return to the court of heaven, having finished the holy building of salvation in his own blood and righteousness, set watchmen upon the walls of his Zion, and poured forth abundance of grace that a standing ministry might be alive to the safety and security of his redeemed ones. Yes, blessed JESUS! methinks I see thee in the moment of thy departure sending forth thy servants, and bidding them to be very anxious for the everlasting interests of thy Zion; and under thy blessed SPIRIT to watch at thy gates, and at the doors of thine house, night and day, and to give the LORD JEHOVAH *no rest, nor peace, until he hath made Jerusalem a praise in the earth*. Ye ministers of my GOD! see that ye are found faithful to your post! Plead with the people! plead with GOD in CHRIST; make mention of his purchase, of his blood, of his cross, of the register of the names in the book of life written in heaven; and never cease, never give over; but *be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort*. And oh thou adorable EMMANUEL! do thou bless and crown the labours of thy faithful sent servants, that Jerusalem *may again be peopled with men as a flock*.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This is an interesting chapter, for it records the solemn manner in which Nehemiah caused the law to be read in the presence of the people.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS chapter this, which in the view of Ezra reminds me of JESUS! how was it possible indeed to see Ezra taking the book, and opening it before the people, and not call to mind what I have read of thee, thou Holy Saviour, when as a Lamb thou, and thou alone, wert found worthy to open the book of GOD, and loose the seals thereof. And were the people of the captivity anxious to hear Ezra the scribe read out of the book of the law, and shall I not be, extremely solicitous that thou, most blessed JESUS, should open to me the precious words of salvation? Did they weep with holy tears at what they heard. And shall my soul remain, unmoved at the gracious words which proceed forth from thy mouth? Was the law of Moses, which contained the ministration of death, glorious to their view? And shall not life from the dead in the gospel of thy blood and righteousness, be abundantly more glorious? Oh! precious, precious Lamb of GOD; let me join the universal song that filled heaven and earth, in the moment redemption work was made known, and cry out with them; *Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD, by thy blood.* Yes! thou adorable Redeemer; the church hail thee in heaven; the church praise thee on earth. Oh! let a poor worm send forth his feeble breathings, poor and feeble as they are, and sing as they did, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.* May all glory be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter an account of a solemn fast appointed in Jerusalem, in which the Levites take a very principal part in confessing their sins.

REFLECTIONS

READER! there is a sweet improvement suggested to us in this solemn fast of GOD's ancient people, which we shall do well to observe, for this will be to convert their afflictions into a source for our joy. I mean the sense they had of the long series of blessings shown to them and their fathers, and their sad use and abuse of them. And was Israel singular in this? May not you and I justly take up the same language? Have not our lives been marked with mercy? Our fathers and their fathers through every past generation; what do the histories of all speak, but the same solemn truth; GOD's grace and man's unworthiness. Hence the Psalmist, after a long and beautiful recapitulation of divine love and goodness, as manifested in the history of Israel, makes this charming observation; *Whoso is wise will ponder these things; and they shall understand the loving kindness of the LORD.* And Reader! if we ponder these things as they concern our own private history, depend upon it, like Israel, we shall discover GOD's gracious tokens all the way along the path of life we have trodden; and his pardons and blessings in the midst of all our ingratitude, and rebellion, and sin.

But when the mind is oppressed and overwhelmed under such a sense of departures and backslidings from the LORD GOD of our fathers, what a relief is afforded in the contemplation of GOD's covenant love in the person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. How infinitely precious to every poor sinner becomes the view then of JESUS and his finished salvation? How delightful is it to take refuge in JESUS when under a conscious sense that I am nothing but sin, he is the LORD my righteousness; and he is made of GOD to all his people *wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* Oh! precious Redeemer! to thee I come; in thee my soul finds confidence. Thy blood and righteousness pleads more for thy people's salvation than all their transgressions plead against them.

Here then, do I desire, like the Princes, and Levites, and Priests of the congregation, to renew the covenant in thee, for thou art the whole of it, and set to my seal *that GOD is true.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This chapter records the names of them that subscribed to the covenant. And here also are the outlines of the covenant itself.

REFLECTIONS

How truly beautiful is the church of GOD when considered in her several orders and characters. Here in this chapter we have a faint representation of it. The people of GOD are here set forth as renewing their covenant, signing and sealing to the testimony of GOD's truth, their right of covenant blessings in him; and his authority and power over them by virtue of his having taken them into covenant with him. These distinguishing relations, if I may so call them, are marked down. Each in his rank and order subscribe his hand to the blessed truth. The governor begins, the Priests and Levites follow; and the rest of the people bring up the great account. And is this not the case of GOD's church and people in all ages? Chosen out of the world, and distinguished and set apart from the world, GOD acknowledgeth himself to be, the gracious FATHER of his CHRIST; and his people in CHRIST as a people which he hath formed for himself, and who shall show forth his praise. JESUS is the true *Tirshatha*, the governor of his people; all his people are made kings and priests unto the FATHER by him. And as all his household, both young and old, both high and low, of both sexes, and characters, subscribe and set to their seal that GOD is true; so He graciously poured out of his HOLY SPIRIT on all, according to *the measure of the gift of CHRIST*. My soul! art thou of this family? Hath the LORD this day avouched thee to be his servant? And hast thou avouched the LORD to be thy GOD? Yes! blessed JESUS! in thee I pray to be found. Thou art the covenant, and the whole of the covenant. Here would I subscribe my hand, and set to my seal. And oh! blessed LORD, do

thou set me as a seal upon thine heart and as a seal upon thine arm. Let thy blessed SPIRIT seal my soul unto the day of redemption. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter an account of the residence of the rulers and certain others who voluntarily undertook to make Jerusalem the place of their abode. The list also of those chosen by lot to dwell there.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! whilst thou readest the honourable testimony that is given to the people who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem, the holy city; and observest how the people blessed them for it; think of the yet far happier privilege of those who dwell under the continual light of GOD's countenance, and are *citizens with the saints and of the household of faith*. Their admission into the church is sacred; their residence there is blessed; great are their privileges, and everlastingly secure their interest. United to their spiritual head, the LORD JESUS; united to each other in him; members of his mystical body, and members of one another; how closely joined to JESUS; what blessings, mercies, enjoyments, portions, are they born to, and entitled to, by their new birth, redemption in JESUS, and their privileges in his blood and righteousness? My soul! is this thy mercy? Art thou indeed a resident in the holy city? Hath the Son of GOD made thee free indeed! oh! how sweet to live under his constant eye; to see now the king in his beauty by faith, and shortly to see him in his glory! Blessed king in Zion! precious LORD of Jerusalem, even the beloved Jerusalem, which in the days of thy flesh thou didst weep over; and for the redemption of which thou didst shed thy blood; be thou my chief joy, my daily portion. Thy people shall indeed dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations. They shall be continually praising thee. LORD, make me of the happy number, that dwelling in thy Jerusalem below I may at length be admitted into the new Jerusalem which is above, when she shall

come down from GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, to take all her citizens that GOD himself may be with them, tabernacle forever in them, and wipe away all tears from their eyes.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

Though this Chapter contains little more than a record of the names of those who first returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel, yet it forms a most important Chapter, because it hath in it the record of the several characters as they succeeded in the High Priest's office.

REFLECTIONS

FROM the perusal of this Chapter my soul may learn that the minutest point belonging to the church of JESUS, in all ages, hath been interesting, The very porters of GOD'S house are spoken of with honourable testimony. David, indeed, though a prince, and a great one, declares himself that he would rather have been *a door-keeper in the house of GOD than dwell in the tents of ungodliness*. Think, then, my soul, to what an honour art thou arrived, if so be JESUS hath betrothed thee to himself, and made thee his in an everlasting covenant and union not to be broken? Pause, and contemplate thine high privileges. Given by GOD thy FATHER to the person of his dear Son, JESUS hath bought thee, purchased thy ransom, subdued the unwillingness and stubbornness of thy nature by the sovereignty of his grace; endowed thee with all spiritual gifts, and graces, and blessings; undertaken, by the influences of his SPIRIT, to complete thine education; and by his own power when life is ended to bring thee unto glory. Are these thy mercies, my soul, and thy privileges in JESUS! And dost thou not love him, adore him, desire to live to him; and make him thy whole glory? Oh! precious Redeemer! be thou more and more precious, more and more lovely and desirable to my view. Oh, marvellous grace! Oh, stupendous mercy! JESUS hath loved me, and given himself for me, an offering and a sacrifice of a

sweet smelling savour! LORD! banish all other thoughts, drive out every buyer and seller from thy temple, which is my body and thy lawful right. Come in, LORD JESUS, and live, and reign, and dwell there. Be thou my GOD, my LORD, my righteousness, and let my soul's salvation be to thy glory.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

We here arrive to the close of Nehemiah's wise and pious government. The chapter relates several interesting circumstances. Nehemiah had returned to his master at Persia; and as it should seem, was permitted to visit Jerusalem a second time. He reforms certain abuses crept in during his absence; and particularly restores the sabbath to its original Sanctity.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul! how GOD's people have been enjoined in all ages to keep separate from all others, and never to mingle with them, much less to form alliances with them, and learn their works. See then that thou art come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing. In GOD's original appointment the people of his dear Son dwell alone. They have a distinct mark and character, Given to JESUS. Purchased, redeemed, ransomed by JESUS. Regenerated by the spirit of JESUS, and set as a seal of the SPIRIT on JESUS hand, and in JESUS heart. Oh! then as one of the LORD's ransomed sinners may it be my portion thus to be known, and distinguished. Let no *Tobiahs*, no *Sanballats*, neither *Ammonites* nor *Hanaanites* be in my alliance. But oh! let me be found one with JESUS, united to my LORD: and CHRIST my LORD be formed in my heart, *the hope of glory*. And oh! for grace to be so known in reverencing the sabbaths of my LORD, the ordinances of JESUS, his word, the ministrations of his grace, and all his holy things. LORD, remember me for my good in all these, according to the greatness of thy mercies, in JESUS thy dear and ever blessed Son.

And now farewell, thou noble Tirshatha, thou magnanimous Nehemiah, thou great and faithful servant of the most high GOD! I

pray for grace to imitate thy lovely example. And amidst all the opposition of the Sanballats and Tobiahs of the present day, may it be my happiness to be distinguished, as thou wert in thy generation, valiant for the truths sake; and only zealous to be approved before GOD.

But oh! Almighty GOD! thou who didst give to Nehemiah all he possessed of fortitude and grace in this blessed cause; to thee would I chiefly look, and while delighted with the history of the servant, recognize the hand of the Almighty Master; influencing, guiding, guarding, and giving success to Nehemiah in all! Yes! HOLY SPIRIT! it is thou which hast in all ages raised up faithful servants, to be honoured instruments in thy almighty hand, for good to thy people. To thee, then, be all the praise and all the glory. I desire to bless thee for thy mercies to this great man, in giving him so distinguished a post in thy church. I desire to bless thee for causing his history to be handed down as an example to succeeding ages. And oh! LORD, grant that all may be blessed to bring glory to GOD, and happiness to thy people in JESUS CHRIST, to whom with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST be endless praise. Amen.

ESTHER

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of Esther is as singular a record as any in the Bible. That it hath been received into the canon of scripture, and accepted as part of the inspired writings, is sufficient to confirm its divine authority; at least that part which is contained in the ten chapters inserted in this book. What follows as the supposed continuance of the history in the book called the *Apocrypha*, is altogether, so questionable, that the Jews never received it into the canon of their scripture.

The book itself contains an interesting memoir of that part of the Jewish history which belongs to the children of the captivity which remained in Babylon, and fell under the Persian government, who did not return to Jerusalem with the captives which returned, when permitted so to do in the reign of *Cyrus*, king of *Persia*.

It is not certain who was the penman of it, though from a passage in one of the chapters (9:20.) it should seem that *Mordecai* committed it to writing. Certain it is, that he was well qualified for the office.

The subject is the danger to which that part of God's church was exposed from the hatred of her enemies; and the Lord's watchful care over his people in the wonders of his providence. Some few leading characters here and there interspersed, seem to point to the Lord Jesus; and which the reader will do well to be very diligent in looking after.

The period of time to which this book refers is not very deafly ascertained. That it was a considerable space after the first return of the children of the captivity is certain, for *Cyrus* was then king, and *Darius* followed. And the first year of the reign of *Cyrus* was about 536 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas this could not have been less than twenty years after. Some indeed have dated it nearly 70 years after.

I only here, as in all former instances, request the Reader to begin the perusal of it in prayer, that he may find sufficient cause to end it in praise. *All scripture (the apostle saith) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This book opens with the history of a great feast made by the king of Persia to his high lords and captains. The queen being sent for to the banquet, refuseth to come.

REFLECTIONS

MY Soul! let some of the improvements this scripture furnisheth lead thee to contemplate the sad state of man by the fall? What do we read of this great king and his vast empire of good. What hungry bellies did he fill; what poor did he nourish: and what misery did he relieve? Not a word of these royal acts. How would his name have been handed down to posterity had some sweet records like these have been given to us. And yet infinitely higher, and more illustrious, had his reverence and love of God been recorded. Could it have been said that his court and people, led by his example, were pious towards God, and gracious towards men? Instead of this, we hear of nothing concerning him but feasting and lust, pride and passion.

From such a prince let us turn to one who was, and is, the reverse. Yes! blessed Jesus, thou art the prince of the kings of the earth; and both in empire, in love, and power, and grace, and goodness, all thy people can desire. Under thy reign everything is formed for real splendour, real happiness and joy. Thou causest them that love thee to inherit substance, yea durable riches, and righteousness. Thou makest a feast indeed, a gracious, spiritual feast, and art thyself the food thereof. And thy feast is to lead thy people into green pastures, and feed them beside the still waters of

comfort. And by and by thou wilt bring, them all home to thine everlasting mansions of light, and joy, and happiness above, where thou wilt lead them *to fountains of living waters, and where thou wilt wipe away all tears from all eyes.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This chapter is a continuation of the history, resulting from the former. Vashti the queen being deposed, Esther, a jewish girl, is chosen. Mordecai her relation is enabled fo make discovery of a treason meditated against the king.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let the view here afforded of the sad corruption and base lusts of our poor fallen nature, add one conviction more to all thou hast already received of the great necessity and immense blessing of the pure gospel of Christ. Well might the angels call it *glad tidings of great joy, which should be to all people.* For what tidings more glad, or what joy greater, than to tell a poor sinner, who feels a body of sin and death, of uncleanness and inordinate affection, that *there is a fountain open to him for sin and uncleanness; that there is a spirit to mortify the deeds of the body, by which he may live.* Oh! the unspeakable mercy folded up in this proclamation of *liberty to poor captives.* Captives to sin, to Satan, to divers lusts and pleasures, to the effect of anger, malice, hatred, variance, and all the works of the flesh. Yes! precious Jesus, thou hast brought deliverance in thy gospel from the vile passions of our nature in this life; and by thy great salvation deliverance from the wrath to come. Oh! Lord deliver me from myself, from my own corrupt nature; from a body of corruption under which I yet groan. Make me holy as thou art holy, and never, dearest Lord, suffer me upon any occasion, or from any cause, to be making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof?

Reader! when you have gathered this instruction from the view of the ungoverned lusts of men, as read to us in this chapter; turn your thoughts and gather another sweet instruction, from the

overruling providence of God, as sweetly taught us in this history in making the very corrupt passions of men, minister to his glory. Never doth the Lord manifest more strikingly his sovereignty and grace, than when he compels the very passions of bad men, to promote the sacred purposes of his holy will. The church of God was about to be brought into danger. How shall the Lord, without openly displaying his interposition, preserve it? Why thus. Ahasuerus turning off his queen Vashti to gratify his anger, shall be influenced to the choice of Esther, to supply her place. And Esther, unknown to him, being of the children of the captivity, shall be brought forward as the Lord's instrument, to the preservation of his people. Neither is this all. For as a secondary aid to the accomplishment of this purpose, Mordecai shall be brought acquainted with a plot laid against the king's life, a record shall be made of his loyalty, which shall not immediately be rewarded, but brought forth in due season. Oh! how beautiful is it, to watch the ways and works of our wonder-working God. Justly is it said, *that his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.* Reader! make application of this blessed doctrine to your own person and circumstances, and depend upon it you will find continual opportunity, of proving the same thing. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have here the church of God brought into great danger, and threatened with total destruction. Haman the Agagite is advanced by the king to great honors; being slighted by Mordecai he determineth revenge upon the whole nation of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

IF we anticipate the history of this memorable event, as the sacred writer hath in the subsequent chapters given it, we shall not only derive a most blessed lesson, how to wait the Lord's time in all

trials for deliverance; but we shall learn also, how to possess our souls in patience during the dark hour. Never, perhaps, was there a more deadly blow aimed by any wretch, than this Agagite leveled at the poor Jews. And the sequel shows us that it fell wholly upon himself. Reader! depend upon it, such will be all the stratagems and schemes of Satan, in his various attacks upon Jesus and his Church. It is not enough to say that his designs shall do no harm; we must say more than this, and be convinced that they shall all do good. *For all things work together for good to them that love God.* Doth Satan plan my soul's destruction? Doth he want to get me into his snare? doth he desire to have me, that he may sift me as wheat? Do I know these things? do I feel, at times, his power? Doth he join with my corruptions to cast me down? And doth a sense of this make me cry to the Lord? Doth it cause me to fly out of myself, and take refuge in Jesus? Surely then, the Lord overrules even the devices of the enemy to my soul's welfare. And I ought to rejoice, as the Holy Ghost, by his servant James, commanded the church, when *falling into divers temptations*. Here then, blessed Jesus, let my soul always rest on thee, and thy finished work of salvation, when at any time unpromising events and discouraging trials occur. Oh! for grace, at all times, to exercise faith on that sweet promise: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This chapter begins with the relation of the effect Haman's plan had upon the minds of the Jews. The great distress in which the whole were involved. An account is given to Esther. She conferreth messages with Mordecai upon it. A fast is appointed by Esther, before she ventures into the king's presence.

REFLECTIONS

READER! here is a large fund of rich things in this chapter, to call up thy most awakened contemplation. Mordecai, in the prospect of the destruction of his countrymen the Jews, covered himself with

sackcloth, ran into the midst of the city, and uttered a loud and bitter cry, in token of the threatened miseries of the people. But if you and I had but a deep sense of the threatened punishment of everlasting miseries, which are hanging over the heads of all *that hold the truth in unrighteousness*; could we but properly ascertain the sorrows of that tribulation, and wrath, which must assuredly one day light upon all the workers of iniquity; what bitter dolorous cries would issue from the heart, in the sad prospect of such dreadful, everlasting misery? But how little do the most awakened consider, as they ought these solemn things! God speaks once, yea twice, and man regards it not. Oh! Lord! take to thyself thy great power, and turn back the hearts of the people to seek thy face, before *the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come*.

Reader! think, if it be possible, of the vast difference between the court of Persia, and the court of heaven. See in the case of Esther the queen, how wretched that one so high in rank should yet be in danger of her life, if presuming to come into the king's presence uncalled. Whereas thou hast not only a court of heaven, and a throne of grace at all times to fly to; but one there who commands thee to come boldly, to find mercy and grace to help in all times of need. One, who makes thy cause his own. One, who is more interested for thy welfare than thou art for thyself. One, who hath loved thee and given himself for thee. Oh! precious, precious Jesus! to thee, Lord, would I come; not according to the law of my obedience, for I have nothing to plead of this kind; but in the law-fulfilling, and all-perfect righteousness of thy finished salvation. And oh! how sure and certain is my reception of grace and mercy from thee; since thou hast said; *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out. My sheep shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand*. Be thou everlastingly blessed, O my God and Saviour; and let a throne of grace witness for me, that in thee and thy salvation do I put my trust; *so shall I never be ashamed nor confounded world without end*.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

We have here the prosecution of the history concerning Esther's going in before the king. She adorns herself in her royal apparel, and approacheth the king. He receives her graciously.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read this history of Esther's going in before the king, full of fear, doubt, and a thousand misgivings; and not call to mind the state, in which many of God's people go in before Jesus their king and God in Zion! and who can behold the kindness and complacency with which the king received Esther, and not have his heart led out, to contemplate the everlasting love, and kindness, and favor, which the Lord Jesus sheweth to all his poor petitioners. Surely any of the Lord's redeemed ones have cause to blush, who keep back through fear from Jesus, when we here behold Esther going in unsent, uncalled, and contrary to the law, and yet finding favor; while every poor sinner that feels his need of Jesus is called, invited, nay even commanded to come, and the golden sceptre is always held out, and Jesus waits to be gracious. Reader! let this sweet view be productive of all its designed effects in our hearts. We have no uncertainty, no ifs or peradventures, respecting our reception. We have no Hamans to oppose us; for though Satan the adversary, is said to stand resisting, yet blessed be our God he is rebuked. But we have a sure, a successful, an all-prevailing advocate with the Father, who ever lives, both to plead, and to ensure our acceptance. Oh! for grace then to go always with holy boldness, not in slavish fear, nor in bondage frames, for this is highly unbecoming the redeemed of the Lord; but let us come, as those whom the Son of God hath made free, and in whom God our Father hath called us to the privilege and adoption of sons. Oh! how very delightful would all seasons, and especially holy ordinance seasons prove, if by faith in God's dear Son, the redeemed of the Lord would at all times draw nigh in the blood of the cross.

Reader! as Esther made a pause before she ventured to bring her petition too hastily to an issue; so let you and I, in all great events concerning the Lord's providences in the world. Though this chapter

closeth with a dark and lowering aspect, yet it is in the Lord's hands. He is everlastingly pursuing the salvation of his people. *Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Leave all events with Jesus. Hast thou trusted him with thy soul; depend upon it he careth also for the body. Leave every concern in his hands. He doeth all things well. Remember that sweet scripture, *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth knowledge, shall keep the heart and mind in Christ Jesus.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The black cloud with which the church was covered, in the preceding chapter, begins in this to brighten up. Ahasuerus, unable to sleep, causeth the records of his kingdom to be read to him. This leads to Mordecai's advancement. Haman begins to meet with mortification. Esther's petition is presented.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while I pray for grace both for you and myself, that we may derive all suitable instruction from our gracious covenant God, as held forth to us in this chapter, manifesting himself in the deliverance of his people, and the ruin of his enemies, both as the God of providence and of grace, I would beg of you, with greater earnestness, to let what is said of Mordecai, and the honor put upon him, lead your mind to the contemplation of Jesus. Surely in the day, when from the gate, and from the prison, Jesus was exalted at God's right hand as a Prince and as a Saviour, and all principalities and powers made subject unto him, the exaltation of Jesus, as the glorious Head of his church, was then set forth; and as our adorable Redeemer and Saviour, Jehovah manifested that he delighted to honor him. And think how the Lord Jehovah hath indeed delighted to honor him. He hath not only given him a name which is above every name, but it hath pleased the Father, that in him should all

fulness dwell. He hath not only made him the Saviour of poor sinners, but he hath made all the angels of light to worship him. All the employment and service of his church below is, to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. And all the work of the church above is also to honor Christ: the song of angels, as well as of the redeemed from among men, is addressed to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb that was slain, forever and ever.

Reader! how shall you and I honor him whom the Father delighteth to honor? There is but one way. Oh! for grace to follow it. I would pray for faith to honor Jesus as the Father honors him. And while Jehovah commits all his glory to Jesus, so would I commit all my salvation: I would honor Jesus as the Sent of God, the sealed of God, the Anointed of God, the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. Yes! blessed Jesus! I would desire so to honor thee, as everlastingly to love thee, to live to thee, to be no longer my own, but as thine by purchase, by the sovereignty of thy grace upon my heart, and as the gift of the Father to thee, for the blessed purposes of my salvation. Blessed be God for all providences, all promises, all mercies, all dispensations; but above all, blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Here we have in this chapter the final ruin of Haman. Esther, at the banquet, presents her petition; prays for her life, and the life of her people: accuses Haman of his villany. The king orders his execution.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not let the history of this wretched man Haman pass away from thy mind, without leaving the suitable reflections the review of such an awful character ought to occasion. What our blessed Lord said of some in his days seems applicable to some in all the days of the Church; *Ye are* (said Jesus to them) *of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning.* And what a resemblance doth the character of

Haman bear to such a stock? His hatred to poor Mordecai, stirred up by the evil spirit, disdained to show itself against an individual only; the whole race shall die. Inflamed by power, by pride, and a troop of evil passions, he prosecutes his implacable malice, and to the attainment of this one object he would sacrifice every other. Pause, Reader, as you contemplate the man. Recollect that the same depravity is every man's by nature; and, but for grace, the evil which one man feels disposed to do, all would feel disposed to do. Nothing makes the difference, but the sovereign, free, restraining, preventing, and renewing grace of God in Jesus. Oh! for a thorough sense of this upon the heart! Oh! for a more awakened knowledge of our infinite and eternal mercies in Jesus. Oh! for ever blessed, blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

One word more before we quit this chapter. See, Reader, in Either's suit obtained, after all the difficulties which seemed to lay in the way, that the cause of God's people can never be overlooked, nor forgotten. Hence, then, let us gather a renewed evidence that in Jesus and his great salvation are everlastingly secured to his people all the blessings contained in redemption. Trials, and difficulties, and seemingly impossibilities of deliverance, may, and must indeed, beset the people of Jesus in their way: but never forget this; Jesus is everlastingly pursuing one invariable plan of happiness concerning them. Oh! for grace to love Jesus, and to know Jesus as a friend, even when in his providences he seems to frown as though he was an enemy. Oh! for grace to lean upon one arm, when with the other he is correcting; to cleave to him, when we cannot take comfort from the darkness of his ways towards us. By and by (the soul saith) he will appear to my joy: I shall behold his face in righteousness. I know that all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth. Things are now dark; but the morning will come. Oh! for grace, then, to wait the Lord's time, and to be convinced that all things must and do work together for good to them that love God, and are so called according to his purpose.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter, what might have been expected, as a sequel to the former; Haman's whole house involved in his ruin: Mordecai advanced: and the Jews delivered from the ruin which had been long hanging over them.

REFLECTIONS

OF all the sweet reflections which arise out of this chapter, (and many and interesting they are), I desire chiefly to have my soul directed to the contemplation of Jesus, in his love to this people which the anxiety of Esther, for her countrymen the Jews, so strongly prompts the mind to consider. If she felt such concern as to cry out, How can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people; or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? Think, Reader, whether it be possible to conceive Jesus will look on, and suffer any of his to perish? Recollect the interest he hath in them, the relationship in which he stands towards them; the purchase he hath made of them; the vast price they cost him; the love he hath to his Father who gave them to him; and the pains he hath gone through, to make their salvation sure? And can you suppose it possible, that he will suffer one of those little ones, which trust in him, to perish? Consider what he is in himself: His glory, greatness, almightiness, and sovereignty, as God and man in one person. Consider what he is in his alliance with his people: There is not a relationship in nature but Jesus fills. He is our everlasting Father. *As one whom his Father comforteth*, (he saith himself) *so will I comfort you*. He is the husband of his church, the brother, the friend. In short, under the tenderest and most endearing characters, he condescends to represent himself, as it by way of confirming his love, which is stronger than death and more vehement in its warmth than coals of fire. And consider what Jesus hath done to satisfy their souls, in the assurance of his unalterable love. He assumed the very nature of man, to convince man by such a palpable evidence of it, how his heart was towards his people. And having stood up as our surety, borne our sins, carried our sorrows, and though knowing no sin in

himself, yet being made sin, and even a curse for us, and having satisfied the divine justice, answered the whole law, taken the punishment, finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, washed poor sinners in his blood, clothed them in his righteousness, he now ever liveth to see the whole purposes of his salvation, fully accomplished: can He endure to see any evil upon his people; or those for whom he died brought into everlasting ruin? Can Jesus look on and behold the destruction of his kindred? Reader! think of this and cast thy soul upon him who careth for thee? Oh! precious Jesus! I would say, cause me to rest with full assurance of faith, and to triumph in thee and thy great salvation!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter the sequel of the whole history. The day long appointed for the destruction of the Jews being arrived, and the Jews having obtained a new grant, to stand up for their lives, defend themselves and are victorious. Mordecai appoints an annual commemoration of this mercy.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! while proclamations are made and religiously observed, for the annual celebration of deliverances; do thou get away to the mountain of holiness, in the gospel Church of Jesus, and daily celebrate that great deliverance from the wrath to come, which the Son of God by his glorious undertaking and accomplishment, wrought out for poor sinners, who are brought to believe in his name. Here is an everlasting festival indeed, opened to thy unceasing contemplation and thy joy. And here it is that we find *the kingdom of God not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Here then, my soul, seek grace from God, to celebrate in a constant jubilee, thy deliverance from the curse of God's law, the alarms of thine own conscience, the terrors of a guilty mind, with all the just apprehensions of the wrath to come. Blessed

be God! the king's decree hath been published and sent through all the provinces: Jesus gives grace, mercy, and peace. And God *so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* And God the Holy Ghost confirms the glorious truth, in giving poor sinners grace *to believe the record which God hath given of his Son.* Lord! cause my soul to receive the truth in the love of it: and oh! grant that I may by faith live in the daily enjoyment of it; and at length arrive to the everlasting celebration of it in the realms above, where Jesus will be eternally adored, and praises of redemption be unceasingly offered to God *and the Lamb.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

This very short chapter, being unconnected with the history of the church, seems to have been inserted here only to record the advancement of Mordecai, and the happy state of God's people under his favor.

REFLECTIONS

FAREWELL Mordecai! blessed be a faithful God in covenant for his faithfulness to thee and his people. Sharp were thy exercises, and deep the waters of tribulation, which broke in upon thee; when under the pressure, a loud and bitter cry issued from thy very soul. But oh! how hath the Lord brought thee out, and led thee through fire and water, until he hath brought thee into a wealthy place. See, my soul, and in the view always take confidence in the contemplation, how certain the issue is in all the appointments of the Lord. Not one thing hath failed, neither can ever fail, of God's covenant engagements to his people; but all are come to pass as it is this day. And shall not all the promises in Christ Jesus be sure to all his seed? Did Mordecai utter a loud and bitter cry in the midst of the city, while in the very moment the Lord was bringing about all the gracious purposes that followed: and shall my soul forget the unequalled cry of Jesus in the garden, when in an agony the sweat of his sacred body was as great drops of blood falling down to the

ground! Was the Son of God thus afflicted, and his soul exceedingly troubled, in the very moment when, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, he was to be taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain, that by his stripes we might be healed, and by his death our souls live forever: and shall my heart despond, or doubt the efficacy of his blood, and the security of his righteousness? Oh! Lord, henceforth give me more firmness, more assurance of faith, that I may behold thee in those sacred seasons accomplishing redemption, sure to all thy seed. Thou must see the travail of thy soul. The solemn word, the solemn oath is gone forth; *Men shall be blessed in thee; all nations shall call thee blessed.* Hail! holy, blessed, almighty Jesus! In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. To thee do I come, and in thy salvation make my boast. Thou art the Lord my righteousness, the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof. Amen.

JOB

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IN my entrance upon every part of the Sacred Writings, I desire to keep constantly in view, the same solemn charge from the LORD as he delivered to Moses from the bush; and to take off the shoe, in token of profound humiliation, as one conscious *that the place where I tread is holy ground*. LORD! grant me every suited grace at all the steps I take, *that my feet may not slide*.

In opening this book of GOD, the Reader will, no doubt, be led to remark with me, how very different the stile of writing is, from any of the former scriptures we have hitherto noticed in this Commentary. It forms, indeed, a beautiful manner of conveying divine truths in the variety which the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to make use of upon this occasion; serves to manifest the riches of his grace in this particular, that while the methods are various for carrying on his gracious design, all result from *one and the same SPIRIT, who divideth to every man severally as he will*.

Respecting the writer of the book of Job, various have been the opinions of studious men on this point. Some have ascribed it to *Job* himself: others have pronounced *Moses* to have been the writer of it. Some have thought that it was *Elihu*; and a few others have fancied it was *Isaiah*. But I should think the thing impossible, respecting the latter. The antiquity of the book of Job is unquestionable; for the very latest period could not bring it further down than to about 1540 years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and certain it is, that *Isaiah* lived not at a greater distance from that era than 750 years. But I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader in this place with any further observations respecting the writer of the book of Job, or the period in which it was written. In the very opening of this commentary, I have (according to the best of my ability) stated the *order* in which the several books of the Bible, as appears to me, should be placed; to which therefore I refer.

I think it, however, more important to ascertain the reality of Job's character; as some have ventured to raise questions on this point, and have supposed that no such a person as Job ever lived. But that Job was a real person, and the writings which bear his name inspired, I venture to conclude, are both undeniably proved from other parts of the Bible. The apostle Paul makes a quotation from this book, and doth it in the same manner as is usually done, whenever one sacred writer borrows from another. *It is written*, saith the apostle; meaning in the word of GOD: see 1 Corinthians 3:19. And as to the existence of Job, the apostle James, refers to him as an illustrious example of patience, which would have been absurd, upon the presumption that Job never had existed. James 5:11. Nay, GOD himself, by his servant the prophet Ezekiel, classes Job with two others of his faithful servants, which puts us beyond all doubt of the reality of his person. Ezekiel 14:14, &c.

The great object intended by the HOLY GHOST from this book in the church of GOD, as far as our discoveries have hitherto led, is, to manifest the sovereign grace and love of a faithful GOD to his exercised people, notwithstanding all the outward circumstances with which they are surrounded; and at the same time, to demonstrate, in the conduct of his afflicted ones, to what an extent of patience, and even joy, in trial, his grace can lead them. But, beside these general blessings, intended to be held forth to the church, there is a yet far more important purpose, to which the book of Job, and the character of Job, was intended to minister. I mean, in the beautiful representation he makes, as a type of the ever-blessed and adored Redeemer of the church, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. In the sufferings of Job, and his patience under them, as far as grace enabled him to be victorious in his sorrows, the representation of JESUS may be considered. And, after his recovery, when the LORD appointed Job as an advocate for his friends, we may behold some sweet resemblance to our LORD'S exaltation at the right hand of power, and becoming the glorious Intercessor for his people. Here it is, therefore, I would pre-engage the Reader's more awakened attention, when prosecuting the perusal of the book of Job. For, supposing (what I venture to believe was the case) that the HOLY GHOST, in his blessed office of glorifying JESUS, was pleased, at so early an age of the church, to sketch some outlines of the Redeemer

in a typical representation; surely it is our interest, and our duty, to be on the lookout for the sweet traces, that while our eyes behold, our hearts may be warmed in the gratifying discovery.

I think it only necessary to detain the Reader one moment further, to remind both myself and him, of the necessity of prayer, with suitable watching at the mercy-seat, that the minds of both may be under the divine teaching, that the further we enter into the study of these treasures of heavenly truth, our souls may be made more made more heavenly-minded from their blessed influence; and from breathing an atmosphere above the perishing things around us here below, we may, like the apostle, manifest the gracious effects these divine things, which are above, leave upon us, *in having our conversation more in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Amen.*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Book opens with an account of Job, his piety, riches, integrity, and religious care of his children. Next follows, an account of Satan's malice against Job, and his permission to tempt him. The Chapter closes with the melancholy relation of the death of his children, and the calmness of mind Job manifested under these afflictions.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, Reader! that a reverse of circumstances the relation of one short period, in the life of Job, hath produced! how quick the transition from the house of feasting, to the house of mourning. And what, but a well-grounded interest in JESUS, can prepare the heart for such changes, which an hour may induce? Depend upon it, faith in JESUS is the only adequate resource under every situation of trial. For this cause (saith Paul) we faint not. This is the cause and the only cause. While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. As long as we eye JESUS directing all things, ordering all things, and directing and ordering them for our sure welfare; while this is beheld, and believed, and depended upon, the

soul will never faint. Then the whole world of losses, and bereaving providences, are still seen by the believer, as working out some certain, however at present it may be an hidden, good. The humble follower of JESUS like Job, will then be able to bless a taking GOD, as well as a giving GOD. The LORD hath only recalled what was lent it was his own while given: it was still his whenever he to take it away. And convinced at the same time, that the LORD'S love is not lessened, the soul can and will rejoice, under the heaviest afflictions. And Reader! mark this down as exemplified in Job's instance, and as it is equally so in the instance of all the LORD'S people. Whatever the LORD recalls, he never can or will take away his CHRIST. This once given is given for ever. The charter of grace so runs, *that his righteousness shall be forever, and his salvation that which shall not be abolished. Here Job found an hiding place from the storm. And here every faithful soul, may take confidence also.*

While I pray GOD the HOLY GHOST to impress upon the mind, both of the Writer and Reader, these and all other suitable reflections of a practical nature, which arise out of the view of Job's strong faith, and confidence in JESUS; I wish, if possible, yet more particularly to interest the Reader's attention with my own, in the view of JESUS in his High Priest's office, in the presentation of himself for his people, which Job so sweetly typified, when sanctifying his children and household, in the daily burnt-offerings. Who but GOD himself, could have brought this man of Uz, acquainted with the knowledge of sacrifices? And what but divine teaching could have led the patriarch to the belief, that there was efficacy in them, when offered with an eye to JESUS? Oh! for the lively actings of faith, upon the person, work, and salvation of the LORD JESUS, when we behold the grand sacrifice, thus uniformly shadowed forth through so many generations! Dearest JESUS! give me to rest with full confidence on thee, and thy finished redemption, and most cordially and heartily to believe the record, which GOD hath given of his dear Son. May it be my earnest desire to have my own soul, and all my household sanctified, with the precious offering of thy body once for all, by which thou hast for ever perfected redemption; and hast fully manifested, that thou art the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

In the former Chapter we find Satan tempting Job, in some very heavy and trying afflictions of Job's family and circumstances; and Job triumphant. In this Chapter we have the adversary making a further attack, in his violent assault upon Job's person. To add to the poor man's affliction, his wife joins in persuading him to sin. He reproves his wife and is visited by his friends.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I would call you, and myself at the same time, in our improvement of what is here related, to a subject which the HOLY GHOST graciously intended to be gathered out of it, as well as from the whole tenor of scripture, on the same interesting point. If Job's sufferings were typical of JESUS, and we are commanded to take the example of those, who have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, for our encouragement of suffering affliction, and of patience; well may we look at such of them, as are intended to hold forth to us the outlines of him, who in his victory and triumph over Satan, wrought our deliverance in that accomplishment, and hath conquered both hell and destruction, for the salvation of his people.

Behold then, Reader, the victory of the LORD JESUS bruising the serpent's head, and subduing his kingdom both for his people, and in his people, by his glorious redemption. The original ground of the quarrel against our poor nature, began with our glorious head. Hence JESUS undertook to conquer Satan for us, and drive him out of the kingdom of our hearts where he had taken possession, by conquering him in us. The apostle saith, that forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage. Hence JESUS triumphed over Satan at his death on the Cross, when the Redeemer's heel was bruised. And the Son of GOD prosecutes his victory, by converting us his people from the error of our ways, and which is called in scripture, delivering us out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of GOD's dear Son. And what is yet

more, by the grace of his SPIRIT implanted in our hearts, he gives wisdom as in the case of Job, to escape from Satan's wiles. Thus we overcome by the blood of the LAMB, and are made more than conquerors through his grace helping us. And by and by that blessed promise will be completely fulfilled, when in death, by the faith of CHRIST, the GOD of peace shall have bruised Satan under our feet shortly.

Hail! then, thou glorious almighty Conqueror, thou LORD JESUS CHRIST! thou hast indeed spoiled principalities and powers; thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; thou hast taken the prey from the mighty, and even the lawful captive delivered! Thou hast beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven; and, blessed be thy name, thou hast given unto thy people, thy redeemed, power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! give all thy children grace, that as their day is their strength may be; and to all thy redeemed ones, who are still exercised, as Job was, by reason of the devil's hatred, with trials and temptations, manifest in all our remaining skirmishes with the accursed foe, that greater is He that is in us, than all that are against us. GOD is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but with every temptation will make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter, the complaints of Job. The whole, from beginning to end, is an unceasing lamentation. The afflicted mourner dwells much upon the miseries of life, and the happiness of death.

REFLECTIONS

PONDER, my soul, over this view of Job; and behold in him, whose patience is so highly testified of by the HOLY GHOST, what man is in his highest attainments. Oh! precious JESUS! lamb of GOD, where shall I look for excellence, but in thee! Remark, further, my soul, in this complaint of Job, still the grace of GOD restraining the

devil's power. Though Job was provoked by the adversary to curse the day of his birth, we do not hear a word of his cursing GOD. Whereas the accusation of Satan was, that if the LORD touched all he had, Job would curse GOD to his face. Do not, my soul, neither let the Reader, overlook this. The reason for which the LORD permitted Satan to exercise his servant so greatly, was not for the discovery, whether Job was a man subject to the same sins and infirmities as others of the fallen race of Adam; but Satan had accused Job of hypocrisy, and that he had no real love of GOD in his heart: here therefore was the issue of trial. Will Job, under these dreadful trials, abjure GOD? Will he give up his GOD? No! Though he laments himself, and laments his state, yet not a word against the LORD. Here let my soul look to JESUS, who in his unequalled sufferings, though for the while deserted of his Father, that his people might not be deserted, forever, never lost sight of his dependence upon him, when he uttered that dolorous cry; My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me! Lastly, from the representation made in this chapter, let both Reader and Writer learn, if Job's sufferings were so great as to induce him to lament the day of his birth, even while grace within restrained the power of the enemy; what must be the horrors of that place where no grace is felt, and where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Oh! precious JESUS! what everlasting praise must be due to thee, what love ought thy redeemed to feel in the contemplation, that thou hast delivered us from the wrath to come, when thou didst give thy soul an offering for sin, and didst die, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD. Blessed be the day of every sinner's new birth in thee! And blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This chapter opens with the controversy between Job and his friends, which runs through the whole book, until, at the close of it, GOD settles the dispute. Eliphaz begins, and his expostulation with Job is pursued through all this chapter.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! here are some very sweet instructions to be gathered from this chapter. In whatever light Eliphaz, the Temanite, be considered, still the HOLY GHOST can and will make his conduct minister to the glory of GOD, and the good of GOD's children. His observations, in several parts, plainly teach GOD's people, whose remains of indwelling corruption are too apt to break out in murmuring under their afflictions, that there is no case, nor situation, in which a child of GOD can be placed, that for a moment can admit of dissatisfaction. But his observations no less teach at the same time, even in this point of view, that godly men make too light of GOD's afflictions, when they add to the smart, by giving unseasonable addition to the afflicted, in saying or doing whatever may serve to irritate and aggravate their sorrows. Certain it is, that Satan's grand artifice was to vex Job; so to conduct himself that, in the impulse of the moment, he might charge GOD foolishly, and curse him. And if the conversation of Eliphaz, however plausible; had a tendency to accomplish the same end, whatever the Temanite was in himself, he was evidently Satan's instrument to cast down the godly. Methinks I would therefore learn from hence, caution, even in a zeal for GOD and his glory, not to add to an heart that is vexed; but sweetly draw off the mind of any poor sufferer, which comes within my way, from brooding over the affliction; to look at the GOD of all our mercies in the affliction; or, to use the beautiful words of the prophet, to call upon the sufferer to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it. And how should I do this so effectually, either in mine own sorrows, or the sorrows of others, as by looking to thee, thou blessed JESUS, in whose unequalled sorrows every child of GOD would soonest learn to forget his own. Oh! thou blessed JESUS! how doth thy bright example tend to dignify the path of suffering, and to give a lustre to the tears of the heaviest affliction. Oh! for grace to follow thee by faith, to the garden, to the wilderness, to the cross, and there meditate, until the soul goeth forth in the interesting enquiry, Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by: behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The speech of Eliphaz is continued through the whole of this chapter. He dwells upon several circumstances concerning sin and its consequent affliction, and recommends in affliction a crying unto GOD.

REFLECTIONS

THE best improvement that we can make under GOD the HOLY GHOST, from this discourse of the man of *Timan*, is to consider the whole scope of his reasoning, not as it concerns Job only, but all the exercised family of the faithful upon earth. As far as we have already advanced, in the history of this patriarch's sufferings, we trace enough to discover some of the sweet designs of the LORD in his affliction! GOD will manifest that Satan's charge is false. Job's integrity shall be proved. And therefore Job's integrity must be brought to the trial. The enemy charged him with hypocrisy. And Job's friends are endeavoring to prove it, During the sharp exercise the LORD will sustain him.

Reader! remark from what we have already seen in Job's history, that a suitableness of mind and heart under trial, is one of the highest attainments of faith. There is little or no exercise for faith, when all things go well. When the LORD in his providence, neither suffers our desires to be crossed, nor thwarts our wishes; then it is smooth sailing down the stream of life. But if GOD raiseth a storm; permits the enemy to send wave after wave, and when we cry the LORD gives no answer, but seemingly stands aloof from our prayers; then in the prospect of shipwreck, still to hang on and trust GOD, when we cannot trace him; this is the patience of the saints!

But oh! precious JESUS, how sweet is it to eye thee, thou blessed Author and Finisher of faith in such moments. While we look at thee what strength doth it induce! when we lose sight of thee, what poor creatures the best of thy servants are! Oh! LORD! I would say for myself and Reader, give us to believe! help thou our unbelief.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter Job's answer to Eliphaz. He entereth upon his defense, in which we see the workings of the afflicted mind; and the mingled state of grace, with human infirmity, variously displaying itself.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us ponder over the situation, in which the HOLY GHOST hath represented Job in this chapter, and gather from it those precious instructions, which we may humbly suppose, the LORD the SPIRIT, graciously designed to convey.

Though we hear Job thus expressing himself, in the bitterness of his complaints, and speaking unadvisedly with his lips, yet it is not the complaining *to* GOD when under trouble which causeth sin, but the complaining *of* GOD. Here lies all the difference. Paul the apostle hath told the church, from the authority of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. And every saint's own experience bears witness to the truth. Nay, unless we feel our trials, how can they be sanctified, Reader! mark the striking difference, and observe how we are taught, neither to despise the chastenings of the LORD, by making too light of them; nor faint under them, as if they were too heavy. If a child manifests stubbornness under a father's rod, as though he felt it not, and appears determined not to regard it; what must we think of him? And if on the other hand, he sinks and faints under the rebuke, how would this improve?

But here, precious JESUS, as in every other thing, so in this, thy bright example, thy blessed pattern, shows what thy followers should be. When in thine unequalled conflicts, thy soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, yet we hear no complaining word, no angry expostulation. As the prophet had described thee, so the Evangelist records of thee, that thou wast led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as the sheep before her shearers is dumb, so didst thou not open thy mouth. Oh! LAMB of GOD! give me to be everlastingly keeping in view thy meekness! and while I behold thee,

condescending to the deepest abasement; feeling all indignities, bearing all our sins, receiving all thy Father's wrath, and enduring all that contradiction of sinners, which in the days of thy flesh, thou didst sustain for me and for my salvation: oh blessed JESUS, let me ask my soul, was it for me, that thou wast oppressed, thus exercised, thus tempted, thus buffeted, thus crowned with thorns; and all for me? Oh! give me grace in all my lesser trials, which were not worthy to be mentioned, to be looking unto thee. And though at times, my poor weak and corrupt nature, feels tempted to cry out under them, like Jonah or like Job, as though I did well to be angry; yet, LORD, if thou wilt strengthen me with one view of thee, then in thy power shall I take up the cross, and follow thee, thou LAMB of GOD, whithersoever thou goest, and be more than conqueror, through thy grace helping me.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Job prosecutes the same subject in this Chapter as in the former. He is looking forward to death and the grave, as the period of repose from his troubles. He is partly speaking to his friends; and part of it is a prayer to GOD.

REFLECTIONS

LET me call upon my own heart, while I call upon the Reader's also, to make the necessary improvements from what this chapter of Job's sufferings affords, as it may suit our own circumstances and situations in life. No man hath any cause to wonder at afflictions. Our life, as Job saith, at the best is but wind. A life, therefore, so much like the vapour, must be marked with vanity. And if the LORD marks this life with trial, it is because some blessed end, some gracious design is to be the result of it. And if we could but see the kind and gracious hand of JESUS in all, what a blessing would be in it. Here lies all the difference between the sufferings of one man and another. All men, more or less, are born to trial. For he that follows the world, as well as he that follows JESUS, must take up a cross: but while the one hath that cross lightened by JESUS, the other finds his

the heavier for want of JESUS. My Brother! are these lines under the eye of a troubled soul? Do you feel sorrow? Do you see the hand of JESUS in that trouble? Are you prayerful under it? Are you humbled with it? Is it sanctified? Doth it lead you *to* the LORD, and not *from* the LORD? Put these questions close: see to it that the answers are what they should be. And mark this down as a circumstance never to be questioned or disputed; the trouble that leads the heart *to* GOD, never did, nor ever will, do any harm. And, on the contrary, the affliction that doth not accomplish this end, never did, nor ever will, do any good, Precious JESUS! make all my trials to bring about this grand and important purpose. Chuse thou for me, O my GOD; send what thou knowest to be most suited to thy glory, and my everlasting good. LORD! let not my way-ward fancy direct, but thy wisdom. Let the affliction be what thou seest proper. In what measure, to what extent, how long, and how lasting; sure I am, all will turn to my good, if JESUS be in it. Lead me, LORD, when my heart is at anytime overwhelmed, to the Rock that is higher than I; and then, though in the world I may and shall have tribulation, yet in thee I shall have peace.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here a new speaker, but to the same old account. Bildad the Shuhite, seconds what Eliphaz had advanced; and in his condemnation of Job, seems to rest the conclusion of the argument upon this issue, that GOD would shortly interpose, and prove Job's hypocrisy.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE we look on and behold the exercises of Job still heightening, and distresses, in the unkindness of his friends, coming from a quarter from whence he was looking for relief and consolation, I would beg the Reader, as I desire to observe the same conduct myself, to be regarding no less how gracious the LORD supported his mind while Satan thus assaulted him, and even his

supposed friends joined in the temptation to cast him down. Surely Job might well have said, as another sufferer did in an after age of the church, *If the LORD himself had not helped me, it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.*

Reader! it is very precious to look back and see how the LORD hath been helping us in past exercises, when we at the time were perfectly unconscious of his presence and his favor. Like some besieged city, against whose walls the battering cannons of mighty foes threatened every moment to take the place by storm, and put every soul to the sword; but by the LORD's throwing in succours unperceived, and garrisoning it by his divine presence, the city is saved, and the foe put to flight: so GOD's people are kept in a thousand instances where they have been many times ready to surrender, and to give up all as lost. Reader! depend upon it, thus it is with the people of JESUS. And according to the degree and strength of that sweet assistance JESUS gives the soul, so their faith is made to hold out and to be maintained. If JESUS communicates of his fulness and all-sufficiency, let the affliction be ever so great, the temptation ever so powerful, and the continuance of it ever so lasting, the succour from within bears up the soul, and makes the poor believer more than conqueror. JESUS is present, and that is enough. If the LORD be for us, what need we fear who is against us? If GOD justifieth, what care we who condemneth? Oh! for grace to be always upon the lookout for the justifying love and mercy of GOD our FATHER, the atoning blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the sealing, heart-satisfying, and soul-rejoicing testimony of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This is a most beautiful and highly interesting chapter. Job here enters again upon his defense: in which we find nothing of reproach concerning the unkindness of his friends; but delightful testimony of GOD's wisdom, power, and justice; and humbling views of himself.

REFLECTIONS

PERHAPS no part of the Old Testament writings is more calculated, under the blessed SPIRIT's teaching, to impress upon the soul a deep sense of sin, and to lay the soul lower in the dust in the view of it, than Job's humbling language of his spirit in this chapter. Reader! let us pause and consider. Surely, however light and unthinking minds may pass over the consideration, yet it is a solemn question, *How should man be just with GOD?* Never was there a soul, really and truly brought nigh by the blood of JESUS, who thought lightly of this question. Abraham, the friend of GOD, felt his soul strongly exercised when he cried out, under a deep sense of GOD's holiness, and his uncleanness; *Behold, now* (said he) *I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes.* And all the saints of GOD, in all ages, have thought the same. My soul! I charge it upon thee; is it not indeed a very solemn thing? Even now in ordinances aid means of grace, surely thou durst not draw nigh with lightness and indifference: and though thou art looking forward, as here in ordinances, so then in death, to come before GOD in JESUS' blood and righteousness, that this, and this alone is thine only plea; yet when thou callest to mind, that in that solemn, awful hour, in the final event of which thine everlasting all depends, thou art to come before GOD as thy Judge, to receive a full absolution for the whole of life, is not thine whole nature struck with solemnity and awe, though thine eye is all the while upon JESUS?

And if such be the very awful process to every true believer in CHRIST; if David's flesh trembled, as he tells us it did, when contemplating GOD in judgment, though he was directing the eye of faith to JESUS as his blessed Surety; what horror will seize the soul of that man who comes before that tremendous judgment-seat void of an interest in CHRIST, and without the Mediator to plead his cause, or the Mediator's righteousness to justify his person. Oh! Reader! think, I beseech you while reading Job's confession, that snow-water cannot impart cleanness to the sinner, and nothing but the fountain of JESUS' blood can take away guilt; think of the blessedness of those who are looking to JESUS, and have a CHRIST, a Mediator to plead for them in his blood and righteousness, while law and conscience both accuse. Oh! precious, precious JESUS? how

increasingly precious is thy salvation every moment. Oh! give us to see that we have redemption in thy blood, and are justified from all things, from which none of the sons of Adam could ever be justified by the law of Moses.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

Job continueth in a voice of complaint through this Chapter. He seems to express himself, as one so borne down with sorrow that he knows not what he sayeth. He pleads hard with GOD, for a little respite of ease before his death.

REFLECTIONS

OUR views of Job in this chapter are various. In one part of it, we behold him in the exercise of grace. In another under the frettings of nature. Alas! What is man in his highest attainments, when for a moment he loseth sight of JESUS? My Brother! if you know anything of your own heart, you will know also, if so be that the LORD hath quickened you, to a new and spiritual life, that you are still in the body; and a body of sin and death, which drags down the soul. Much of nature as well as grace, is in the best of saints. If you have the spirit of CHRIST, you have also a body of flesh. If you have strong faith, you know what it is to have strong corruptions. And hence, were it not that perpetual communications are imparted, to keep the soul alive amidst the rubbish of corruption, what believer would be able to withstand long the many powerful foes of his salvation, which he hath to encounter?

We see Job, in this chapter, giving way to much impatience. But it will be a profitable view of the subject, if from the view we are led to see where our strength is, and by whom alone the best of men are kept, from similar backslidings. My Brother! it is JESUS alone that keeps his people in the hour, and from the power of temptation; and to have an eye steadfast upon him, to live to him, to believe in him, to delight ourselves in him, to lie passive in his hands, under every dispensation however trying, to be pleased with him as a sure friend when all things frown, as though he was turned to be our enemy; to

depend upon his word, his faithfulness, his truth, when every method whereby he can be faithful, seems for the time to be lost; and like the prophet, when the fig trees blossom, and the fields fruit both fail; yet even then to live upon an unchangeable GOD in CHRIST, when all outward circumstances are changed; this, this is the patience of the saints. This is what GOD the FATHER is pleased with, in the grace of his dear Son, manifested in the faith of his people, and while the believer thus gives glory to GOD, GOD will give peace to the believer. Them that honor me, said GOD, I will honor. Oh! then for grace to live to his glory, in dark seasons as well as light, and to make CHRIST all and in all.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the remonstrance of a third friend of Job, and much to the same purpose as the two former. Zophar the Naamathite takes up the subject against Job, and reasons on GOD's justice in Job's calamities.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how happy is it for you and for me, that we live under a brighter dispensation, than Job's counselors, and are taught by him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Yes! blessed JESUS! thou hast taught that great afflictions not only may abound among those whom GOD loveth, but that heavy trials and temptations, when found in the path of godliness, are rather testimonies vine favor. Thou hast said thyself; *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* I beseech thee, therefore, blessed Master, that I may eye thee in every dispensation, and then sure I am, that I shall discover love at the bottom of all thine appointments, and wisdom guiding and regulating all. My JESUS, while he governs as my GOD, will never forget that he is also my Saviour, my brother, my husband, my friend. And if such views as these, will not stop the voice of complaint, nothing will. And dearest, blessed Master, while I thus beseech thee to grant me grace and strength equal to my day,

that I may be always on the lookout for thy wise and loving government in all things: yet when it shall please thee, as most suited to thy good will and pleasure, to hide from me thy plan, and as with Job, things are mysterious, and discouraging; yet even then, blessed LORD, never, oh never, remit the communications of thy grace within, that faith may be in lively exercise, and that I may find strength from thee, to trust thee when I cannot trace thee. Let the storm from without beat ever so violently, yet if my JESUS support the roof within, my poor frail tabernacle will not fall. Oh! for the sweet consolations and lovely teachings of JESUS, by his SPIRIT, that I may be able to say, at the worst of times, I see enough of JESUS in this dispensation, to be assured it is in his appointment! It must therefore be among the all things which work together for good. It shall be well. I shall wade through this affliction, as I have, by the LORD'S leading me, through many before. Here then, blessed LORD, I will rest. Though I see thee not in all these providences of thine, it is enough that thou seest me? and art not only looking on, but tempering my trials to my strength, and hast promised to stay thy tough wind in the day of thy east wind. Though, like the disciples, my soul may fear as I enter the cloud, yet JESUS will be there, and he will shine out, and shine through all. By and by, every intervening cloud will be forever taken out of the way; and he that is now my GOD and my salvation, will be my everlasting light, my GOD, and my glory.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

In this chapter, Job makes reply. He still dwells upon the same arguments of his own integrity, as it concerned his trust and dependence upon GOD. He manifests great strength of understanding, concerning the afflictions of the righteous, and contends that they are by no means marks of GOD'S displeasure.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I shall go over this sweet and interesting book of Job to very little good, if we do not, as we read it, look up

for the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, and seek from it to search our own interest in what we meet with in the several chapters. Our own life is the most important of all lives to be well versed in: and depend upon it, what we meet with in the history of Job and his friends, may, in numberless occasions, under the SPIRIT'S teaching, be made profitable to our own. It was a blessed command the man of GOD had in commission to give the church, when he said, 'thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy GOD led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no'. Under this idea, is there nothing in what we have already reviewed of Job's history, applicable to ourselves? is not Satan accusing us as he did Job? Hath our gracious GOD permitted him to harass us with his devices? Have we the unkindness of friends, or the malice of open enemies, to grapple with also? Hath the LORD brought us under any bereaving providences; any bodily or spiritual afflictions? How are we exercised on any of these occasions! Pause, Reader! look into your own heart, as I pray GOD to search mine. How are we dealing with GOD; and how is the LORD dealing with us? Oh! Sir, depend upon it, that is ever a sweet mercy, however harsh it may at first seem, which, in the close, brings the soul to JESUS. The medicine we take may be nauseous, but its effect is salutary. Job was stripped of all his earthly comforts: but Job lost not his GOD. This brought him up. Let our bodies be ever so poor, ever so sickly, ever so sore, yet, if we have JESUS formed in our souls, the hope of glory, here is enough to sing Hallelujah in the whole. And if the trials the LORD sends come with a commission to lead to JESUS, surely love was at the bottom, and by and by our praises will be called forth in acknowledgment. LORD, I would say for myself and Reader, give us both grace to be ever on the lookout, for the LORD'S manifestations to us, and our proper and wise use of them; and then we shall assuredly find that *at evening time it will be light*. Mercy and goodness have been following us all the days of our life, until we come to dwell in the house of our GOD for ever.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

Job prosecutes the subject of his expostulation with his friends through the greater part of this chapter. He leaves discoursing with them, for a short space, and makes an earnest application to GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I pause over this view of Job's confidence, and ask our own hearts whether, in our approaches now in ordinances, and looking forward to our appearance shortly before the judgment seat, when we shall stand before the throne, we have this well grounded assurance of acceptance in JESUS.

It is a grand question, and of all others the most important to be rightly known. Some are for postponing this enquiry, as if it could not be fully known until the last day. But let those who know not the scripture, neither the power of GOD, be content so to defer it. Let you and I see whether the knowledge is not attainable now, and under the conviction that it is, bring the blessed effects of it into present possession and enjoyment, that we may be the patient followers of them who now, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

The LORD hath said he will be sanctified by all them that draw nigh unto him. Hence, when the HOLY GHOST is about to convince a sinner of sin, he sets up a tribunal in his very heart, and the work of grace begins in making the poor sinner to know and feel a sensibleness of his own lost and utterly undone estate, as it stands before GOD. Thus breaking up the fallow ground of the heart for the seed of righteousness, the HOLY GHOST next brings the convinced sinner acquainted with the person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and so powerfully convinceth him of the suitableness and all-sufficiency of JESUS for salvation, as to incline the sinner's whole soul to the belief, and to the cordial and hearty acceptance of redemption in this blessed way of GOD's own appointing. And when these blessed works are wrought in the poor sinner's soul, like Job, he hastens to plead the whole before the throne. Reader! is this your privilege, your happiness, your confidence? If so, these precious things speaks for themselves. It is by these things, men live, and in

this is the life of the soul. Oh! for grace thus to bring the LORD JESUS, and his finished work, in the arms of our faith in all our approaches to a mercy-seat in ordinances here below, in prayer, in communion, and in all our intercourse with GOD, while this side Jordan; and when we pass the river of death, this will be our sure and safe pleading against all the accusations of Satan, the fears of our own conscience, the terrors of GOD'S broken law, and the just judgments of Almighty GOD. Yes! blessed JESUS, I will now and forever say, Thou hast answered, and thou wilt answer for me, O LORD, my GOD!

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

Job continues his discourse through this chapter. He seems, in what is here said, to be addressing himself more than his friends, and from the view he takes of the miseries of life to implore GOD for a mitigation of his sorrows.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we contemplate, from the perusal of this chapter, the low and depressed state of our fallen nature, born to trouble, and but of short continuance; and while such a view tends, under divine teaching, to induce all that suitable and becoming frame of mind belonging to sinful, perishing, dying creatures, let us turn the leaf of the chapter also to that interesting part of it, and read of that GOD-man, who, to redeem our nature from those ruined circumstances, condescended to be born of a woman, and to be also of a few days upon earth, and those days full of trouble. Indeed, all the sorrows of the human state sink to nothing, when compared to the sorrows of JESUS, wherewith he was afflicted when he stood as our Surety, and when the LORD afflicted him in the day of his anger. He took upon him our sins; was made a curse, counted a deceiver, a blasphemer, a devil, nay, the prince of devils, when in the same moment his holy soul knew no sin, and in his mouth there was no guile. From the first assumption of our nature, JESUS became subject

to the same feelings. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and all the miseries incident to man's life the blessed JESUS bore. He drank deep of that cup, the cup of trembling: and endured a contradiction of sinners against himself, compared to which, all the unkindness of Job's friends is not to be mentioned. The reproaches of them that reproached me (saith JESUS, speaking of the blasphemies of men against GOD), are fallen upon me. And if the prophet Jeremiah, under the persecutions he sustained, cried out, *Woe is me, my mother hath born me a man of contention to the whole earth*, what might the LORD JESUS have said concerning the opposition which he met with from every quarter!

O thou blessed JESUS! May it be my consolation, in every little exercise which thou art pleased to call me to, in the contemplation of thine unequalled sorrows, to lose sight of my own. And may it form one of my most sanctified hours to be following thy steps to the garden, and to the cross. There may I be looking on JESUS, there see my LORD, and from that view gather instruction. And while I view thine agony and bloody sweat, hear thy dolorous cries, and behold thy love still remaining firm and unshaken to thy redeemed; oh! May thy HOLY SPIRIT lead forth my whole heart and soul in all the earnest affections of love and adoration.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter Eliphaz reassuming the argument. He falls hard upon Job, still harping upon the string of Job's hypocrisy. He maketh use of sound reasoning however, only so far as it related to Job, it was misapplied.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over what we have been reading of the aggravated afflictions of Job. Was it not enough that the LORD was exercising his servant, but those three men must throw in their unkind and unjust interpretations of God's dealings? Surely those sharp and bitter reproaches could not fail to add to poor Job's misery.

We naturally look round in our sorrows for some to commiserate. But this distressed sufferer, instead of consolation, met with nothing but reproof.

But let us pass over the view of men, that are but instruments, and behold how the LORD produces good from evil. Though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. No calamity, no stroke of trouble, however heavy, however severe, can rob a follower of the LORD of his favor. Nothing can take away our CHRIST, that first, and best, and comprehensive gift of a covenant GOD! What shall separate us from the love of CHRIST? (saith Paul) Neither death, nor life, (saith the apostle) neither things present, nor things to come. Having him then, in him we possess all things.

But, Reader! let us not close this chapter of the relation of Job's sufferings, nor indeed any other, without looking beyond Job, to him that was the Prince of Sufferers, as he was the Prince of Peace. Yes! blessed JESUS! it behoved thee, that in all things thou mightest have the pre-eminency. Oh! thou gracious Redeemer! how do all sorrows sink to nothing, when we behold thee in the garden, and on the tree; when we behold thy agony and bloody sweat, thy cross and passion; and hear that heart-piercing cry, My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me? And all this, not for thyself, but for thy people; not that thy holy life needed ought, but for thy voluntary grace and favor to our poor, lost, ruined, and undone nature: thou didst suffer, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD; and didst even admit the being deserted of thy FATHER for a space, that we might not be deserted forever! Boundless love of a most precious, loving Saviour!

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

Job in this chapter is again entering upon his defense. He complains of the unkindness of his friends; pleads for more tenderness from them; shows the pitifulness of his case: and again, as to the charge of hypocrisy, contends that he is not guilty.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we behold Job bowed down under the very heavy load of sorrow, and hear the complaints issuing from him, as related in this chapter; let us not be too hasty, in charging the poor man with impatience. Alas! What can the coolness of reason accomplish, in the hour of warm distresses. No doubt it is our unbelief, which is at the bottom of all our rash conclusions, and unbecoming thoughts. And had Job instead of looking at second causes, been able to have had his faith always exercised, in resting upon GOD's faithfulness, and GOD's promises; faith would have triumphed more nobly. But where, blessed JESUS, where shall we look for this perfection of faith, but in thee the author of it? Oh! that had but grace in all my lesser exercises, to remember that thou art everlastingly pursuing one plan, and that a plan of pure love and mercy, in all the events which take place in thy church; and among thy people! Thou hast thine eyes upon them for good. And all is working together for good, even in the very moment when outward circumstances, or inward trials, seem to be most distressing. This we know by the sequel of Job's history, to have been the case in his instance. And it is the same in the instance of all the redeemed. How many a precious soul hath found cause in the close of some heavy trial, to look back through the dark passage he hath been brought, and then he could discern, though he could not while passing through it, the clear marks of JESUS's presence, and his leadings in the way! How many have kissed the rod, at the moment it hath been taking from them, which while exercising in GOD's hand, they have trembled under? Reader! let our improvement from this chapter, and indeed from all Job's history, be to arrive to this most certain conclusion; whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth. Precious JESUS! never, never remit those tokens of thy love to me, however painful to flesh and blood! Under the blessed teachings of thy HOLY SPIRIT, I am every day learning more and more, (though one of the most wayward scholars in thy school), that they are necessary. I see, gracious LORD, that the greatest enemy I have to contend with my spiritual warfare, is my own fleshly, sinful, corrupt, and unbelieving heart. I see that this flesh is always seeking ease and enjoyment, and forever opposing the holy pursuits, and desires of my better part. LORD! undertake for me. Stir up my soul. Unsettle my rest; hedge up

my path with thorns if thou seest it needful, so that if I seek after my lovers in any corrupt affection, I may not find them. And dear LORD, allure me, and bring me into the wilderness, and there speak comfortably unto me, according to thine own most sweet and gracious promise, that I may return unto thee, my Ishi, my first, and best, and truest husband, at length, perfectly convinced that in thee only, present peace and everlasting happiness are found.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Job continueth his discourse through this Chapter. He speaks of the grave as an asylum: still holding fast his integrity, he looks up to GOD with an hope, that the sufferings he was exercised with, would not afford an occasion of stumbling to the good, nor confidence to the bad; and points out his relationship with the worm and corruption.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I seek grace from the LORD, that we may gather from this chapter all the blessed improvements the HOLY GHOST intended from it, to convey to his church and people. For you and I may with equal justness, take Job's language as he did, and say, Our breath is corrupt, our days are extinct, and the grave is ready for us. Whether Job's afflictions, or Job's trials may be not our portion in going home through our pilgrimage state, we know not. These things are in a wiser and better appointment than our own. But whether or not a time of trouble come, death must come; for it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after this the judgment. And what an awful thing must it be, to be unprepared for what is so sure! Depend upon it, the man that lives at an uncertainty, will die at an uncertainty. How much doth the example of Job recommend itself to our notice and imitation; If like him, we were to deal familiarly with death; take a turn often to the grave, and fancy ourselves as there, before that in reality we are carried there; this would tend to lessen the apprehension, and lead the soul into a serious enquiry, of the

surest means of making it a peaceable and happy dwelling place. This would be to use the world as not abusing it, and to induce, under divine teaching, those blessed effects, which while prompting the heart to say to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister, would lead out the whole soul in desires after him, who by his death hath overcome death, and by his resurrection, hath secured the everlasting happiness of his redeemed. Yes! thou Great, thou Almighty Conqueror of death, hell, and the grave! This would be to become savingly acquainted with thee, and thy precious salvation, that both in a living hour, and in a dying hour, our hearts might be on the lookout for the Master's call, that whether it should be at midnight or at cockcrow, or in the morning, we might be found like those wise, servants, who wait for their LORD'S approach. Precious JESUS! write thy gracious warning upon each heart, and grant us grace, to live up to the constant exercise of it, by faith in thy blood and righteousness: Be ye always ready, for ye know not at what hour the Son of man cometh.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

In this Chapter Bildad comes forth to a second attack upon the man of Uz, and more violent than before. Chap. 8. His chief scope, through the whole of his discourse is, to fasten upon Job the conviction of wickedness and hypocrisy.

REFLECTIONS

Our reflections on this chapter will be rendered profitable, if so be the HOLY GHOST graciously make them so for us, in leading our minds to consider how very consistent it is, with the love the LORD hath to the persons of his people, as in the instance of Job, to chasten them for their departures and infirmities. Reader! only pause and consider how great, how dear, how inexpressibly costly our redemption was to GOD, And therefore how suitable it is, that there should not be the smallest abuse of his covenant mercy, by his dear Son. Though Job was no hypocrite, yet Job confessed himself to be a sinner, sprung from the common stock of whom it is with truth said,

there is none righteous, no not one. And there is in the best of men, even the most faithful servants of the LORD JESUS, so much of that commonness of corruption, belonging to a fallen nature, that if GOD's grace did not restrain it, the worst of sins would be the sad and deadly consequence breaking out in all. How blessed is it then to see in GOD's chastisement of our sin, though accepting the person of his people in JESUS, he manifests the holiness of his nature, and secures his own glory. And here, blessed JESUS, cause both Writer and Reader to pause, and contemplate the unparalleled instance of this regard JEHOVAH had to his holiness, and to his glory, when for sin in us he put thee to grief. Never, surely, was there such a proof ever given. And never can there be any more the like to it; as when he made thee to be sin for us, though thou knewest no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee. Hail! thou holy, blessed, spotless LAMB of GOD. Oh! what unknown, what unnumbered, what never to be fully accounted for, or fully recompensed riches, blessings, glories, are contained in the one offering of thyself once for all, by which thou hast forever perfected them that are sanctified. Oh! write this precious thought upon my inmost soul, and let death itself never, never be able to blunt the remembrance of it; JESUS and his glorious redemption hath more to plead for his church before GOD and his FATHER, than all the church's sins can plead against them. Neither can eternity itself recompense the infinite merit of the righteousness and blood-shedding sacrifice of a GOD incarnate.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Considered with an eye to CHRIST and Job's faith in him, this Chapter is one of the most interesting in the whole subject of Job's contest with his friends. Job maketh answer to Bildad; begs that he and his companions would spare their unjust censures; still urgeth his present misery, as an apology for his groanings, and concludes with professing his strong confidence in a Redeemer, and everlasting life in him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! have not you and I cause to blush, while we thus behold a man like Job, in ages so remote from the clear sunshine of the gospel, and overwhelmed as he was with such a pressure of woe, yet professing a faith so lively, so ardent, so strong, so steady, and unshaken in the Redeemer! while we with all the evidences of a crucified, a risen, and exalted Saviour, can hardly at times maintain a fixedness of soul upon him! Oh! that this view of the Patriarch may be made instrumental, in the kinsman Redeemer, Yes! thou dearest LORD, thou art indeed our goel, our LORD the SPIRIT'S Almighty hand, to quicken the faith of both, and lead out the souls of both, upon the person and work of our Lord JESUS CHRIST; thou ever livest indeed, for by thy death thou hast destroyed him that had the power of death. Thou shalt indeed stand at the latter day upon the earth. Thou wilt come to be glorified in thy saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Help me, LORD, to live daily, hourly, in this precious faith, and to be looking for thy coming, as one that looketh for his best, his dearest friend. Oh! the rapture which will break in upon my soul when I shall see JESUS, my Redeemer, as GOD in my flesh, in my nature, manifesting himself to every son of light. And oh! LORD! grant me strength and grace in this blessed hope, to be looking forward to the grave as to a chamber of repose; as one perfectly convinced that I shall rise again, when thou shalt come to call thy members, from the beds and chambers of their slumber; and when both soul and body united by thee, and in thee, to be separated no more, shall be taken home to thine, and thy FATHER'S court, to serve GOD in his temple, night and day. Build me up, dearest LORD, in this blessed assurance every day, until the last day shall come; and then may my soul ascend to join the spirits of just men made perfect; and my body sweetly fall asleep in JESUS, well convinced that *precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

Job having in the foregoing Chapter closed his answer to Bildad; he is appealed to in this, by a new address of Zophar. But the whole of what he advanceth is to the same amount as the former, and runs all upon the same mistaken idea, that misery and suffering can only mark the character of bad men.

REFLECTIONS

READER! instead of following Zophar's sermon with the conclusions he draws, let you and I look at the subject of the trials and exercises of GOD's faithful servants, according to what the gospel teacheth us; and what the blessed author of the gospel in his bright example proved, that great exercises imply great grace bestowed, and the fullest evidence of divine love in the appointment of both. What prophet, what apostle, what martyr of GOD hath been truly eminent as GOD's servant, but hath been as truly distinguished in suffering? Nay, thou blessed holy LAMB of GOD! what was thy life when upon earth, but that of a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief?

Reader! let us learn properly to estimate these things. Whenever sinful staggerings would arise at any of the little exercises we are called to; Oh! let us be looking to holy men gone before, and especially looking unto the LORD JESUS. Let us remember the gracious advice the HOLY GHOST gives by his servant the apostle. 'Consider him (saith the apostle) that endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your mind.' One view of JESUS directed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, and by him suitably impressed upon our souls, will quell a thousand carnal reasonings, on the subject of the exercises of the faithful. And while we eye JESUS going before us in the path of trouble, and hear GOD's faithful promises and covenant engagements to his exercised people under him; this will make us strong in the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS. We shall then feel some of Paul's animated spirit; like him be furnished from the LORD with all suitable grace for the trial; and say

as he did, I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

Job again takes up the discourse in this Chapter, and makes another appeal against the false reasoning of his friends. He contendeth, that the wicked sometimes prosper in this life, and therefore it is not less to be expected that the righteous should sometimes suffer: but in death they are alike.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over the perusal of this chapter, and, for the moment, drop the recollection of both Job and his friends, to bring the subject itself a little nearer home, as it concerns the same circumstances here described in the present day in which we dwell.

If we look at human life as it appears in the great mass of men, what a confused state of affairs it seems! In the bulk, no doubt, as to outward things, the ungodly and the despisers of GOD are the most prosperous. They are as Job hath here described them. Hence if we allowed ourselves to reason from outside show, we should frequently pronounce the sinner happy, and the saint miserable. But what an erroneous calculation should we then make! To form a proper estimate even of the real enjoyment of prosperous circumstances, we must look within as well as without. We must follow the great man, or the rich man, into his retirement. We must see him according to what he feels and what he confesses, and not by what the world have concluded concerning his real happiness. And if we were to do this, we should discover many an aching heart in a fine house; and many a miserable man, who to the world looks gay and smiling. So that even in respect to the happiness of this life, the prosperous sinner hath not the best of it. And uniformly is it found, that they who follow the world, as well as they who follow CHRIST, must and do take up a cross; and sometimes a very heavy galling cross to such it is.

But whatever be the enjoyments of the sinner here, what can be the frothy unsatisfying pleasures of the whole carnal world, compared with that glory which shall be revealed? Oh! precious JESUS! in the recollection of thee and of thy presence, how doth everything sink to nothing in the view of the soul. Truly hast thou promised that, in this life, they that love thee shall inherit substance, and that thou wilt fill all their treasures. And solid, satisfying, and substantial, all thy mercies are. But who shall describe, or what heart shall conceive, the nature, the extent, the durableness, the vast joys which thou hast laid up for, and which thou art thyself to impart to, thy redeemed in glory! LORD! let a conviction of them continually warm my soul, and animate my heart; and do thou enable me, oh! thou bountiful LORD! so to pursue thee, in all the paths of grace here below, that I may at length attain to that glory which shall be revealed; to the everlasting enjoyment of the presence of GOD and the LAMB, and those unspeakable felicities which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which are at thy right hand for evermore.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

In this Chapter Eliphaz brings a new charge against Job, which is the third he brought against him. He perverts Job's reasoning, it should seem, to a very different meaning to what he intended, in delivering his sentiments in the preceding chapter. Eliphaz very severely reproves the Man of Uz in, this: though, towards the conclusion, he gives some sweet counsel.

REFLECTIONS

READER the view here presented to you of Job's exercises, is the more profitable from being the more plain. In all the charges of the friends of Job before, there were none so palpably false and cruel; and therefore here we feel the more comfort, from the consciousness that Job himself found that consolation under them, which a mind of rectitude cannot but enjoy, under the false

accusations of the wicked. Indeed Job was too deeply drenched in affliction, from the sufferings of his body, not to be very sensibly affected also, however false the charges were, with what Eliphaz had said. The man that doth not realize his trials, and feel them as trials, will not truly profit by them. Yet, certainly, Job had a comfortable retreat in his own mind, in the consciousness of their falsehood. Our profit will be the more striking from this chapter, in what we behold under this particular. We are taught the blessedness of that state of mind, when, from being exercised with the temptations, or the accusations of Satan, we can look to Jesus, with thankfulness, when the tempter's malice is ill founded.

But what I would particularly desire from the perusal of this chapter, to have impressed both upon the Reader's mind and my own, is this a that when the malice of men, or the adversary, raiseth storms of trial, or persecution, falsely against us, this is the blessed moment to look after, and narrowly to watch, and eye the hand of JESUS in the permission. My brother! do mark this down as a never-failing maxim, whatever our trial be, it must be by JESUS's appointment. Be the instrument who, or what it may, yet JESUS is in it. His love, his wisdom, is at the bottom. Mark this down, as a rule never to be controverted. Then follow this up with another. Whatever the trial be, it is for good. Thy GOD, thy JESUS, my soul, cannot do iniquity. Mark this also. And this will bring out a third, as the sweet and blessed result of the two which went before: the end shall be as Job's was; glory to GOD, and salvation to his redeemed. When Eliphaz thus charged Job, when Shimei cursed David, and when, on an infinitely more important exercise than both, or than all the world of GOD's children put together, JESUS was traduced and blasphemed, what was the result? As it is beautifully expressed in one of the Psalms: 'I will cry unto GOD, most high, even unto GOD, that performeth all things for me.' Yes! Reader! it is very sweet and very precious, when the conscious soul, unjustly oppressed, can take refuge in divine favor, and divine strength, and say, Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD!

But chiefly let our eye and heart, upon all those occasions, be altogether fixed upon the person and work of JESUS. In all situations, he is the pattern, and forerunner of his people: and what he said of old, be saith the same to all his exercised family now: fear none of these things, which thou shalt suffer. Through Satan cast some of

you in prison, when he would cast, if he could, all: and when, instead of prison he wishes it were hell; yet, it shall be but for ten days, though he would have it to be forever. Fear not therefore; but be faithful unto death and I will give you (saith the faithful and true witness) the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

Job is again, in this chapter, described, as making still further his defense. From the decision of Man, he appeals to GOD; and opens his mouth in an earnest cry to GOD, for permission to approach him. He still insists upon it, the issue of this sharp trial shall be to his joy.

REFLECTIONS

READER, I cannot beg a greater blessing from our gracious Covenant GOD in CHRIST, either for you or for myself, than that a Spirit of grace may be poured out upon us both, to lead us with similar breathings of soul, and earnest desires of spirit, for drawing near to the footstool of the mercy seat, which Job here desired to approach. Depend upon it, the nearest and sweetest communion believers have with GOD, rests upon this very method, when their whole souls are going forth, in pleading justification before GOD, upon the pure footing of righteousness: not of our righteousness, you may well suppose, for we have none, but that of JESUS. This is the strength, Job saith, GOD will put in his pleading, praying people. And here, and here alone it is, that either now, at a mercy seat, or hereafter, at a throne of judgment, poor sinners can ever be delivered from their judge!

Pause, Reader, and contemplate the vast privilege! Count over, if it be possible, the immense mercy; and then think what everlasting love, what a revenue of everlasting praise will be forever offered to the Father's grace in providing, and the Son's tenderness and mercy in accomplishing, such a redemption, by his righteousness, and blood. Oh! Holy FATHER! never, never suffer me to lose sight of thy

rich, free, and sovereign grace, in thus providing strength for a poor sinner to lay hold of, to make peace with thee by thy dear and ever blessed SON! And oh, thou lovely, and all loving LAMB of GOD, that art as well the Lion of the tribe of Judah, give me to see how, in thy complete righteousness, my soul finds strength to plead for salvation, on the ground of justice. Yes, blessed JESUS! in thee, and thy strength and holiness, may come, even to GOD the FATHER's seat. I may tell him of justice, and plead for acceptance on the score of righteousness; for thou art made of GOD to me, both wisdom and righteousness; and therefore GOD is just, in being the justifier of every poor sinner that believeth in JESUS. All hail! thou holy, righteous Saviour of sinners! Oh! for more of this blessed communion at a mercy seat, in having fellowship with GOD in CHRIST! Oh, for grace to maintain a constant intercourse at the gate of heaven, in finding strength, even the strength of JESUS's righteousness, to plead this, and this only, before my GOD, for sure acceptance in the beloved.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

The general scope of Job's reasoning in this chapter, is much to the same purport as he had before made use of; namely, that from the outward circumstances, either of the wicked or the righteous, no right judgment could be formed to draw conclusions concerning either.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a blessed resource is it, at any time, and at all times, when beholding the seeming prosperity of the wicked, and the apparent, misery of the righteous, we take shelter, not only in GOD's sovereignty, but GOD's justice. When we lay this down as a sure and unerring maxim, that GOD is true, let every man be false, we are enabled from thence to draw as sure a conclusion, that however unable we may be to explain what we see, or to reconcile what we behold, yet they are all easy to be explained by GOD's right standard, and to be reconciled upon his divine principles of truth and justice.

Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Reader, make application of this doctrine in every difficult providence with which the LORD may be pleased to exercise you. Behold everything, and every event, as originating in his wise appointment. He cannot do iniquity. And when we are enabled to trace, in one point of view, the beautiful order that there is in all his dispensations concerning his church and people; what he hath done, what he is now doing, and what he will do: all the events thus brought into one connection; then the glory of his wisdom is made in some measure and degree to appear. Such views, as they concern ourselves in the common circumstances of life, serve to reconcile all things we behold in the apparent joy of sinners, and the seeming sorrow of saints.

But to what sublimity of thought doth the subject arise, when beheld with an eye to JESUS! The unequalled sorrows of the Son of GOD, when he tabernacled among us, and the taunts and reproaches he sustained from the ungodly, unless looked at in this point of view, would involve the mind in endless perplexity. But when I behold thee, thou blessed JESUS, as the sinners surety, sustaining the curse, being made sin, and standing forth the free-will offering of a righteous, spotless sacrifice for thy people, then, on these precious principles, I can well explain why it should have been, as it really was, that thou shouldest justly endure that wrath which was due to sin; and, having placed thyself in the sinner's stead, to receive all that was the sinner's due, that divine justice might be satisfied, the law of GOD magnified, and everlasting righteousness brought in, for the salvation of thy people. O sweet and glorious view of JESUS in his sufferings! Here Job, had he lived to these days, might have looked, and from hence drawn all his arguments, that GOD can be just in afflicting, as in the case of his dear Son, the righteous, and making him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might he made the righteousness of GOD in him. Precious JESUS! never, never let me lose sight of thee and thy sufferings, when anything perplexing ariseth. And when under my trifling exercises my mind is giving way, through unbelief; when all refuge fails me, and no man careth for my soul, then LORD be thou my refuge, my portion, and my hope, in the land of the living.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This chapter is but short, yet it contains precious truths. It forms the reply of Bildad to what Job had before said. It is not at all in reproof, but only an account of GOD's holiness, and the uncleanness of all created excellency in his view.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this short but sweet chapter; for very great and important are the improvements, which, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, may be gathered out of it. And first, mark in strong and solemn characters what is here said, of the greatness, sovereignty, and holiness, of Almighty GOD. Can any language be stronger in proof, what an infinitely great and glorious GOD, this GOD is, with whom thou hast to do! This is He, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, neither can any evil dwell with him? Next, ponder over the marked and glaring nature of sin and transgression; for as the LORD is infinitely holy, so thou art altogether vile; and in thee, that is in thy flesh, dwelleth no good thing, Next consider, and let it be a most solemn consideration, what the Shuhite here saith, How can man be justified with GOD? How shall he be clean that is born of a woman? Are these questions, my soul, solemnly, seriously, anxiously, brought home to thee? Dost thou feel their vast importance, as if the HOLY GHOST, in his convincing thee of sin, had stamped them upon thee never to be worn out, until an answer of peace be found to them? Pause, my soul, over the inquiry. Wilt thou seek a qualification in any purifications of thine own? Can thy tears and repentance make thee clean? Will these, with all thy best promises of amendment, cause thee to appear justified before GOD? Wouldest thou trust in these now, much less depend upon them at the bar of GOD's judgment? No, my soul, these are miserable comforters all, all physicians of no value. Look then to JESUS. His blood is a fountain to cleanse from all sin. And, what endears it still more, it is of GOD's own appointing. In that day (saith GOD, speaking of the gospel day) there shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a fountain for sin, and for

uncleanness. Here then, and here only, seek a cleansing. As it is a fountain of GOD's own appointing, how sure is it that the cleansing in it shall be effectual. And as it is an open fountain, why wouldest thou for a moment be prompted to fear that it is not open to thee. Beg of GOD the SPIRIT to do by thee as he did by Hagar at the well, and give thee to see that this fountain is both open and nigh to thee; that there thou mayest be cleansed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. And oh! the inconceivable rapture to a soul cleansed in JESUS's blood, and made holy and bright in his righteousness: he shall shine forth (for so the promise runs) as the sun in the kingdom of his Father. Precious JESUS! is this thy grace, thy righteousness, thy favor, to poor guilty sinners? Didst thou, holy LORD, condescend to become a worm, and no man, that thy people, who are sons of men, and but worms indeed, might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee! Oh! then, I shall behold thy glory, Holy LORD, when clothed in thy holiness: and in that day, as the Prophet hath said, the Moon shall indeed be confounded, and the Sun ashamed, when thou, the LORD of Hosts, shalt reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before thine Ancients gloriously.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

This Chapter, containing Job's reply, is but short. The man of Uz seems to intimate, that though Bildad had advanced the truth, yet it was nothing to refute what he had before said. Job beautifully dwells upon the infinite and unsearchable power of *GOD*.

REFLECTIONS

An interesting subject ariseth here, from the perusal of this chapter, in the departure of Bildad's discourse from the main point in question, by the instruction it gives to the ministers of GOD's word and ordinances, that they always regard the express wants of their people. That subject may be very profitable at another season, which, in a moment of sorrow, would be ill-suited, and ill-timed. What the Apostle calls, in season, and out of season, implies, that

those who visit souls in distress, as Job's three friends were supposed to have done, should suit their discourse to the alleviation of their misery. Dry argument, even though the subject itself be true, will not assuage the want of a poor thirsty sinner. Oh! how sweet is that sermon, which GOD the HOLY GHOST commissions to the heart, when a weary, heavy laden, and sorrowful soul feels encouragement to come to JESUS, and to cast all his burden upon him, who alone can sustain him. This is indeed to have the tongue of the learned, when a minister is enabled to speak a word, in season, to him that is weary.

But here, precious JESUS, as in every other instance of mercy, so in this, how can my soul ever think of the sweetness of the lips of consolation without calling to mind how thou, in the day of thy flesh, didst go about binding up the broken heart; and, like the good Samaritan, didst pour in oil and wine into the deadly wounds of our robbed and ruined nature. Thou art indeed the consolation itself of thy people, for there is no other; and thou speakest to the wants and necessities of thine, in all their multiform shapes. Thou art, as thy Prophet described thee, the rest, wherewith thou wilt cause the weary to rest, and thou art their refreshing. Be thou then, O LORD, now in the day of thy power, the unceasing comforter of thine heritage: visit distressed souls of thine in their affliction: graciously propose before them such sweet and constraining subjects, to manifest thy love; and proclaim thyself, O LORD, under that endearing character, I am the LORD, that teacheth thee to profit.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

Job's discourse is continued through this chapter. He still contendeth for his sincerity; points out the difference of the hypocrite from himself; and sheweth, that even the blessing's of the wicked, are by them converted into curses.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we have gone over many chapters now of the patriarch Job's controversy, and heard much on both sides. What conclusions have we drawn from all that hath been said? Certainly

the reasoning of Job is unanswerable, and as he expressed it in one of the chapters, It is meet to be said unto GOD I have borne chastisement. I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me. Job 34:31, 32. Sin and sorrow are twins and are born together. So that they are inseparable. It ought to be no wonder, that a sinful creature is a sorrowful creature. For man that is born in sin, is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. And if the best of men were to converse more with themselves, and compare self with the law of an holy GOD; this would lower all presumptuous reasonings in the seasons of our afflictions. Reader! let us from Job's sorrows make these improvements. Methinks while I read this man's trials, I would learn to consider more GOD's holiness and my unworthiness; and while I keep in view the divine law and human transgression; as sin then appears what it really is, exceeding sinful, the burthen of it will be heavy, and the affliction grow lighter; till at length the confession of the church in Babylon, or what is to the same amount, the prophet for the church will be found to suit every case: Wherefore should a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins? In an ocean of trouble there is not a drop of injustice. Thou art righteous, O LORD, in all that is come upon us (saith the church) thou punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve. Everything short of hell is mercy.

Precious JESUS! oh how sweet is it to fly to thee, who hast both borne our sins and carried our sorrow's. Thou drankest the cup of trembling dear LORD; and hast wrung it all out. One view of thine agony in the garden and on the cross is enough, when GOD the HOLY GHOST opens the eye to see, to silence every complaint and to dry up every tear, which falls for our sufferings, and to cause them to fall in showers, in the contemplation of thine. Blessed LAMB of GOD! I would say, as I view by faith thine agonies, Why LORD didst thou die for me? and whence this bloody sweat? Was it for me? Oh for grace to look, and love, and make the apostle's conclusion mine: If one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that henceforth they that live should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. Oh LORD! let my life be wholly thine. May I glorify thee in my body, and in my spirit, forever.

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

Job's discourse is still prosecuted through this Chapter. The man of Uz makes many striking observations in the display of the divine glory.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! art thou not the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD, for salvation to everyone that believed? And hath not every child of thine, who hath found thee, discovered that wisdom, whose value the topaz of Ethiopia, and all the gold of Peru, could not be compared to? And hast thou really and truly taught thy people this lesson of wisdom, which all the learning of men, or angels, untaught of thee, never could have discovered? Yes, blessed LORD! though these things are hidden from the wise, and prudent, yet are they, by thy blessed SPIRIT, revealed unto babes. Oh! give me to trace the outlines of that wisdom which is manifested in thee; for in thee are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Everything connected with thee in thy redemption work, opens a new source of riches in this treasury. What wisdom was manifested in thee, as setting thee up our glorious Mediator! What wisdom, in the constitution of thy glorious person! What volumes of wisdom in all thy ways, and words, and works; in all thy saving offices, and relations, and characters! What manifold wisdom of GOD was that, blessed JESUS, when thou wast made sin for thy people, when thy holy soul knew no sin, that they might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee! What manifold wisdom is displayed in the glories of thy person, work, and righteousness! What wonders of wisdom, that justice should be satisfied, in the very nature that sinned; and yet that punishment should lay the foundation for everlasting honour and glory. Oh, precious EMMANUEL! be thou to me everything of wisdom and knowledge; for everything out of thee, and without thee, is blindness and ignorance. And though thou art now, as much as ever, to men of carnal reasoning and human pride, as thou wert of old to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; yet art thou made of GOD, to all thy people, wisdom, righteousness,

sanctification, and redemption; that he that glorieth may glory in the LORD.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

Job continueth his discourse yet farther; through the whole of this chapter. He draws a pathetic picture of his former prosperity.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in this representation of Job, let you and I look beyond the man of Uz, and behold some of the sweet sketches of Him, who is all that is here said, and infinitely more, to all his people. JESUS is indeed our Lawgiver, our King, our Ruler. Who, when hearing him speak, but must refrain talking, and lay their hands upon their mouth! His government is universal; his power unlimited. To him it belongs to appoint laws in the gate, and to clothe his people with his own robe of righteousness, and his garment of salvation. Yes, blessed JESUS! it is thou that must solve all doubts; clear up all difficulties; and against thy judgment there can be no appeal; and there needeth none. Surely, dear LORD, thou art, and ever hast been, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. Who is there to comfort thy poor, and thy needy, but thee? Who to be with us in trouble, to console us with thy presence when afflicted, and to pluck thy poor captives from the hand of him that is stronger than we? Yes, yes! thou Almighty Samaritan, the blessing of them that are ready to perish shall come upon thee: for with the oil and wine of thy grace, and HOLY SPIRIT, thou hast visited them; with the robes of thy righteousness, and with the garments of thy salvation, thou hast clothed them in their perishing circumstances; with thy precious body and blood thou hast fed and sustained them; and through all these manifestations of grace and favor, thy love hath been better than wine! Hail, gracious LORD! the helper of the poor, when he crieth, the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof. Be thou everlastingly praised, and everlastingly beloved: give us grace, LORD, to love thee, who hast so loved us.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

Job is still prosecuting his discourse in this chapter. Having in the former, pointed out the day of his prosperity, he here draws a melancholy contrast, in a view of the state of adversity to which He is now brought.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, behold in the sufferings of Job, what is, and deservedly ought to be, the lot of human nature. Born in sin, and therefore born to sorrow. And shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Job stands forth, in this instance, a living monument of what our nature, universally speaking, is exposed to. And but for the interposition of grace, in the mercy and love of GOD our FATHER, in giving his dear Son, and the Son of GOD in coming, and the HOLY SPIRIT in bringing poor sinners acquainted with this rich salvation, all the temporal distresses of Job, aggravated by everlasting sorrows to have followed, would have been our portion forever. Oh! what shall we render to GOD for his mercies! Thanks, thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!

But my soul, while contemplating the sorrows of Job, and the gracious interposition of heaven to soften and remove them, wilt thou not again and again look at JESUS; while reading Job's misery, and, in so lively a type of thy suffering Redeemer, feel all thy tender and affectionate powers going forth in love, and praise, and attachment, and obedience to thy blessed and adored Saviour? Did JESUS, in the days of his flesh, endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, that his people might not be weary, and faint in mind? Oh! thou LAMB of GOD! how didst thou, in thy debased and low estate, submit to all indignities, griefs, sorrows, wounds, bruises! Who shall describe the dreadful pangs, and agonies like those of a travailing woman when bringing forth, in the garden and on the cross, the delivery of thy people from everlasting slavery and eternal death. Oh, precious GOD! thou shalt see the travail of thy soul, for so the FATHER promised, and be satisfied. Thou shalt justify many. The dew of thy birth shall be as the womb of the morning. And now, blessed Redeemer, having by thy death delivered thy

redeemed from death, and by rising to life again having begotten them to everlasting life: now thou rememberest no more the anguish of thy travailing pains in redemption work, for joy that thy children are born into the world of grace, and shall hereafter be with thee in glory. Amen.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

The subject of Job's defense is still prosecuted. He enters, somewhat more largely, into the particular justification of himself from that sin which he seemed so much hurt at having been charged with, hypocrisy, and closes the subject with this defense.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we behold the man of Uz in this chapter justifying himself against the unjust charges of his friends, and making appeal to the LORD to plead his cause, let not you and I mistake the Patriarch's meaning. It is one thing to justify our conduct against the unjust reproaches of men; and another to attempt palliating our offences committed against the sovereign majesty of Almighty GOD. At that throne of GOD's justice, Job pleaded always guilty. He repeatedly confessed himself to have been a sinner. When he looked at the holiness of GOD's law, he had nothing to say in his own justification. I have sinned (said Job), what shall I say unto thee, O thou Preserver of men. In our view of Job's justification of himself, therefore, let us not fail to have this in remembrance.

But Reader! how sweet a relief is it to every mind conscious of the manifold offences there dwelling, and seen perhaps to no eye but to His that seeth in secret, that blessed scripture which saith, 'If we confess our sins, GOD is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Here, Reader, let you and I seek justification before GOD in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and that righteousness which justifieth the ungodly which believe in JESUS. Though the patriarch Job was evidently taught concerning these precious means of saving and justifying poor

sinner, and undoubtedly had strong faith in his kinsman Redeemer, the LORD JESUS, yet, had he lived to know of that blessed Holy One what you and I know, and to read, what you and I may read, of the complete redemption wrought by him, how would his soul have rejoiced in the vast consolation! Precious LORD JESUS! let thy righteousness, as my glorious Mediator and Surety, be the everlasting comfort, confidence, and joy of my heart. Then shall I be enabled to stand out against all the accusations of Satan, of false friends or open foes; and cry out with the Apostle in the holy triumph of the believer, It is GOD that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD, who also maketh intercession for us.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

This chapter opens with a new speaker, one whose name is Elihu. His discourse is in reproof, not only of Job, but of his three friends: and he prosecutes the subject through the whole of this and several succeeding chapters.

REFLECTIONS

THE zeal of Elihu, his impartiality, his diligence, his faithfulness, modesty; how graceful they make him appear, even before he enters upon the great subject he hath to propose to Job and his three disputants. Such methinks should be the servant of JESUS. The apostle describes him when he saith, The servant of the LORD must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves. He that winneth souls is wise. And when the great difficulty of the ministerial employment be considered, and in what a diversity of ways it may and must be administered, so as to suit the various minds, tempers, state, and dispositions, of the several hearers, certainly it requires the zeal of Elihu, and his mildness and earnestness also, to know how rightly to divide the word of truth, and to show men that he is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. And when we look on,

and behold any congregation assembled, and consider them as they really are; some to be fed with milk, others with meat: the insensible and unawakened sinners to be roused; the trembling to be comforted; wanderers reclaimed; backsliders reprov'd; surely such a diversity requires all that prudence, wisdom, and grace, which Elihu appears in this chapter to be anxious in the exercising; so that the great purposes of the ministry might be accomplished. Happy the man that ministers in divine things, who, like the Apostle, in the close of his labours, can look up with humble confidence to the LORD, while taking a farewell of his people, and say, that he had kept nothing back that was profitable, neither had shunned to declare the whole counsel of GOD. But a who is sufficient for these things? LORD JESUS! do thou graciously impart suited strength to all thy sent servants, and let their weakness be made perfect in thy strength; that, like one of old, they may determine to know nothing among men but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified, having themselves experienced thee to be the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD for salvation to everyone that believeth.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

Elihu in this chapter enters upon his subject. It is directed to Job. He begs Job's attention: and, as Job had desired, in the eagerness of dispute with his friends, that he had some day's-man, or mediator, to judge for him; Elihu humbly proposeth himself, under this character. He makes a long discourse, and, at the close of the chapter, desires permission to proceed yet further.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let the sermon of Elihu call forth your most earnest attention. I pray GOD to render it profitable to us both. Surely it is a sermon full of gospel, full of grace, full of divine teaching; in which is set forth the tender mercies of GOD our FATHER, the preciousness and importance of salvation by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the blessedness of that instruction which GOD the HOLY GHOST

graciously gives his people, whether by vision or by dream, by private call or public teaching, in his dispensations and his providences, in trouble or in joy, in sickness or in health.

Oh! for grace to profit under all the various mercies by which GOD is forever calling upon the inattentive and ignorant minds of his people. HOLY SPIRIT! condescend to be the teacher, both of writer and reader: and though thou art so gracious as to speak once, yea twice, and our hearts regard it not; yet, oh! thou condescending LORD, go on we beseech thee, notwithstanding all our stubbornness and dulness, and little improvement, under thy various ways, of opening our understanding until the great purpose is accomplished, in making us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.

And oh! my soul, see to it, that all these gracious calls of thy GOD, upon thee, commissioned as they every one of them is in so much mercy, see that they have their blessed effect. Look diligently, and examine the foundation of thy hope. Art thou awakened! art thou seriously, truly concerned, for thine everlasting welfare? Hath the exceeding sinfulness of sin most solemnly convinced thee, that there is no salvation out of CHRIST? and hast thou under this conviction, so earnestly implored pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of the cross, that thou hast at length heard those soul-comforting words of GOD thy FATHER, saying, concerning thee, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. Oh! blessed deliverance; precious, precious salvation! Then *shall my flesh be fresher than a child's, and my life shall see the light.*

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

Elihu still prosecutes his animated discourse, through this chapter. He is still reproving Job, but in such a way of gentleness, that the Patriarch makes no appeal against it.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let not this interesting discourse of Elihu pass away from us without leaving behind it upon our minds the many precious

instructions it is so eminently calculated to impart; nor, in the view of the suitableness of it to Job, overlook the interest we ourselves have in it. Every perfection of JEHOVAH preacheth to us the same blessed truths as Elihu here contends for; namely, that GOD's sovereignty, and GOD's justice, independent of his covenant love and wisdom, have unanswerable claims upon all his creatures, for the most extensive and unqualified submission to his holy will in all things. That conclusion of Eli is, or ought to be, the conclusion of every one: It is the LORD, let him do what seemeth him good. But when we add to this view of GOD's power and authority, the sense also of his wisdom and his love, while the former demands our dutiful submission, as to the LORD's right, this latter adds another claim to this becoming frame of mind, because we know these glorious perfections are both engaged, and always in exercise, to arrange and order all things, as shall best and ultimately promote the happiness of his redeemed people, whatever outward events may be appointed for the accomplishment. And the consciousness of this brings the mind into the sweetest of all frames, when the heart is once fully established in the firm faith and assurance of it. For the soul of the faithful will then arrive at this happy conclusion, Wherefore should I be anxious at any one circumstance that occurs, when my GOD's power and sovereignty, and my GOD's wisdom and love, are all in exercise to do that for me which may best promote my GOD's glory, and my welfare? No, saith the believer, let my GOD, my JESUS, my wise and loving LORD, choose everything for me; for sure I am it will then not only be the wisest and best chosen, but that which ought to be, for his glory and my good. Reader, I pray GOD that both you and I may find grace thus to act, and thus to refer everything into his hands that concerns our present and everlasting welfare, from a perfect conviction of that unerring truth, All things work together for good to them that love GOD, to them that are the called according to his purpose.

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

We have a continuation of the speech of Elihu in this chapter. He is still prosecuting the same theme, in holding forth to Job's view the perfectness and glory of the LORD, in all his dispensations.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, here is a new field opened for thy further improvement in this highly finished reasoning of Elihu. And, surely, the HOLY GHOST graciously intended from it that the people of GOD should learn, that even good men, like Job, need to be perpetually on their guard, lest, in their view of things, they are found more attentive to their own ease than to the promotion of the divine glory. To promote this should be the first and great end of all our pursuit and all our desire. It was for this purpose creation work was first ordained. So the Song in heaven declared, when addressed to JEHOVAH, 'That the LORD had created all things, and for his pleasure they were and are created.' And, for the same end, redemption-work was accomplished, that GOD in all things might be glorified, in and through JESUS CHRIST. And oh! how blessed it is, and must be, when the believer is enabled by grace to say, It matters not what becomes of such a poor worthless creature as I am: but oh! let my God be glorified, and the work of redemption by the Lord Jesus be eternally praised, by giving glory to God in Christ.

Reader, how are you and I glorifying our GOD in his dispensations towards us? Can we, do we, bless GOD in all things, trials as well as enjoyments; dark seasons as well as light ones? Do we rejoice in all, and bless GOD in all, and thank GOD for all, and live to him through all? Do our discouragements leave these precious and blessed effects behind them, to endear JESUS the more, and the world the less? Are we more heavenly-minded, more disposed to prayer, less vain, less confident, more humble? Is sin more sinful to our view, more loathsome in itself, and are ourselves more loathsome also, from being the subject of it? Above all, Is JESUS more precious, increasingly dear, increasingly lovely? Are these the blessed effects in our experience? Oh! Sir, if these things be in us and abound, then is our state, be it what it may in outward

appointments, or in inward exercises, a blessed state, and everything is ministering to our good. Then, as the Apostle saith, if these things be so, they shall make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

Elihu still prosecuteth his discourse. He gives a better and a more proper reason than Job's friends did, concerning the cause of affliction, and shows, that it is by such providences that the LORD exerciseth his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let our improvement, from the perusal of this chapter, be to remark, that the glory of GOD is the great end of man; and by whatever method or way that glory can be exalted, the faith of GOD's people is to pursue that way, and studiously to desire that purpose. This was and is the great end of all creation. Hence the hymn in heaven: Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. And the same was and is the great purpose and end of redemption, that GOD in all things may be glorified in JESUS CHRIST. Hence the song among the redeemed in glory is to the same effect: Worthy is the LAMB that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing. It matters not what becomes of such poor, trifling, empty, and sinful creatures as we are, if GOD's glory can be but the more advanced. And hence, Reader, what a sweet thought is it, that, as by the glorious person and work of the LORD JESUS, more glory results to JEHOVAH than his justice could have received, had it taken vengeance upon our sins, by banishing our whole race from his presence to all eternity; so receiving us in him, and blessing us in him, and making us everlastingly happy in him; this gives all the glory where alone that glory is due. Both the blessings of creation and redemption are then seen to be the result of infinite wisdom, and

love, and power; and to open a revenue of praise and glory to the one blessed and eternal JEHOVAH for evermore.

One thought more, Reader, on this beautiful discourse of Elihu's before we dose the chapter. Let us both seek grace from that Almighty SPIRIT who thus taught Elihu how to form so just a conclusion of the divine dispensations, that we may also mark for our own exercise, the gracious design of our Covenant GOD in CHRIST, in every one that concerns ourselves. Are we exalted in circumstances? See then that JESUS is in every one of them. Are we depressed in trials? Where is the LORD JESUS to sanctify them? Do we hear his voice, can we trace his steps, mark his hand? Oh! how blessed it is when we are enabled to discover him, as the Alpha and Omega, the sum and substance of all our joy, the soother and softener of all our sorrow. Oh! thou dear Redeemer! cause me to eye thee, in my highest enjoyments; giving the finishing relish to all. Oh! grant my dearest LORD, that I may never be so taken up with any of thy gifts, how precious soever they may be in themselves, so as to overlook, or shut out of my remembrance, the Giver. But, oh! let thy fulness, thy beauty, thy glory, be ever uppermost in my view. And if it pleaseth thy wisdom to exercise me with afflictions, yet dearest LORD, if thou art beheld by me, as near to help, when my depressed soul be most in need, then shall I be enabled to esteem that affliction, that brings thee nearer to my view, as more blessed than the highest prosperity without thee. Yes, thou adored Redeemer! be thou all in all, and then in all things thou wilt be my joy, my consolation, my hope, my portion, in grace here, and in glory hereafter. Amen.

CHAPTER 37

SUMMARY

Elihu in this chapter concludes his sermon, and a noble sermon it is, Having in the preceding part of it shown the goodness, rectitude, wisdom, and mercy of the LORD, he here closeth with offering some highly finished thoughts upon the unsearchableness of his divine doings in his dispensations towards the children of men.

REFLECTIONS

READER, it is highly profitable to follow, with our profound meditation, the Lord in all his works of *nature*, and to be ever ready to bless him for all the goodness he is unceasingly bestowing upon the sons of men. He maketh (as our adorable Redeemer teacheth) his sun to rise, upon the evil and upon the good: and sendeth the blessings of his rain both upon the just and upon the unjust. *Oh! that men would therefore praise the LORD for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men!*

But when from the world of *nature* we are enabled to follow the LORD into the world of *grace*; and when, from the common blessings of his providence, in creation, we are led to behold the special blessings of his love, in redemption, this is like passing from the outer courts of his temple into the more immediate apartment of his presence. And, in JESUS, what a vast and unlimited contemplation is thrown open to a poor sinner's view.

Reader, cannot you tell (as Elihu beautifully expresseth it) how your garments make you warm, when the LORD quieteth the earth by the south wind? And will you any longer wonder that you are not able to explain how it is, that the robe of JESUS's righteousness becomes a complete justifying garment, to warm the soul of a sinner, and to make him, that is in himself unclean, yet now viewed in CHRIST, holy, blessed, and sanctified? Oh that men should be unbelievers in a point of so much mercy, when their daily experience in the most common things of GOD's providence, compels them to give a cordial assent to what they can no more explain, than how warmth or cold is induced by north and south influences!

But Reader, let you and I, from the reasoning of Elihu, not only gather improvement, both in the subjects of nature and grace, but look up to the same Almighty Teacher, which teacheth us, to profit, that from both our souls may be led on to the yet higher and more sublime point of all the same precious mercies and dispensations of our Covenant GOD in CHRIST, leading to *glory*. All here below is with a view to minister to this end. For this cause the Son of GOD came down from heaven to raise up our ruined nature from the miseries of the fall. And when by sin, storms and tempests, both in the natural, in the moral, and in the spiritual world, were introduced,

JESUS, full of benignity, grace, and truth, came to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore perfect order among all the works of GOD. Hail thou great, thou Almighty Repairer of the breach! the Restorer of the paths to dwell in! We bow down before thee, thou blessed precious LORD JESUS! Oh! do thou give us to see, that both in the kingdom of nature and providence, grace and glory, thou art the All in All, the portion of thy people, here and hereafter, and their life for evermore.

CHAPTER 38

SUMMARY

Hitherto, through the subject of dispute, we have been attending to the words of Job and his friends. In this chapter GOD himself becomes the speaker; and a most solemn address it forms. GOD challengeth Job, from the whirlwind, on divers subjects, by way of showing Job's nothingness, and the LORD'S sovereignty; and this in such language as manifests the wisdom of the Speaker; beyond all possible conception, of man's weakness, and the LORD'S strength.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I pause over this chapter, and amidst many other sweet thoughts, which arise out of the solemn review of what is here brought before us, let this strike our minds as among the highest improvements; I mean, to note down the wonderful grace, and goodness, and condescension, and love, JEHOVAH here manifested in reasoning with Job in the manner here set forth. JEHOVAH hath indeed said, that though he is the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, and whose name is Holy, yet that he doth humble himself to behold the things which are in heaven and earth. But that GOD should thus graciously condescend to reason and expostulate with his creature, under the dissatisfied and murmuring state of a repining mind! Oh! how great the mercy! And, yet, Reader, cannot we both find another instance of yet greater tenderness, in which the LORD hath surpassed every other testimony he hath afforded mankind, or ever can afford again, in all the stores of his omnipotency and grace? Did he not indeed perform an act of

condescension, at which all Heaven stood amazed, and Angels have long been contemplating with wonder and surprise, when JESUS, the only begotten Son, which lay from all eternity in the bosom of the FATHER, came at the call of GOD, and tabernacled in substance of our flesh? Nay more—not only tabernacled in our nature, but in that nature debased himself to the lowest possible degree of humiliation, until, by the accursed death of the cross, he had fully accomplished the redemption of his people! Well might the Prophet exclaim, *Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! for the LORD hath done it.*

Reader, over and above this view of divine love and condescension, let you and I learn from what the LORD hath said, what poor, shortsighted, ignorant creatures we are. Let us from henceforth rejoice, that we are under a wiser and better direction than our own. Whatever dispensation it pleaseth GOD to exercise us with, let our first and great object be, to see the hand of JESUS in it, and to rest in a clear assurance of our interest in him. The christian's, the true believer's motto should be, in every state when in union with JESUS, what the Prophet hath said, *The just LORD is in the midst of Zion; he will not, he cannot, do iniquity.* And oh! when the voice of GOD is heard in the dispensation, how dark soever it may be, the whole face of the dispensation is changed. Let a poor believer in the LORD JESUS be drenched in the deepest adversity of bodily afflictions, or soul distresses, or both; yet when JESUS is seen directing the event, there can be no room to question or enquire, much less to fret and grow uneasy, under the providence. Let a soul, but hear his precious voice; "Be still, and know that I am GOD." Surely a GOD in CHRIST, a GOD in covenant, a faithful GOD, a tried GOD, an approved GOD, buoys up the soul, like the anchor of a ship in a dark and tempestuous night, and the soul is made more than conqueror through his grace helping us. Reader, let us beg of GOD for this grace, that it may be to his glory, and our joy.

CHAPTER 39

SUMMARY

The whole of this chapter, like the former, contains the LORD's solemn, but tender expostulation with Job. In a very beautiful manner the LORD sends his servant to the inferior creation for lessons of instruction, and in showing him how merciful the LORD is, in providing for all the wants of the several creatures he hath formed, thereby to convince him; that it is impossible GOD should overlook the higher order, in his creature man; so that Job's charging GOD with inattention, and unkindness, was altogether unjust and ill founded.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let you and I, in the perusal of this chapter of GOD's tender mercies over all his works, draw the same conclusion from the review of so much love, as the Apostle did on another occasion, and say, Doth GOD take care for oxen, or saith he it altogether for our sakes? Doth GOD so clothe the grass of the field (saith our adorable Redeemer when admonishing his people to cast all their care upon GOD, who careth for them) which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven? Precious LORD; in the view of such things let our souls be firmly, fully, faithfully established in the unalterable assurance, that in JESUS all our interests are secured; all our concerns are everlastingly provided for. What is there that a believer in JESUS should be anxious about? Hath he not CHRIST for his portion; and can he fail when anchored here? Can he miscarry when JESUS himself hath said, Because I live, ye shall live also? Reader, oh for faith, in lively exercise to hang upon a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, when the outward circumstances of visible comforts seemed dying; for this is the very moment for the exercise. Had Job uniformly done this, and when the streams failed, in sensible comforts, had he removed to the fountain head, he would have found a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, whom he knew, and had professed to be his kinsman-Redeemer, sufficient to have borne him all the way through. Reader, let you and I derive this sweet and blessed conclusion from what the LORD hath so conclusively set forth in this chapter. He that caters for the birds of the air; He that affords suited

strength to the wild goats of the rock in bringing forth; that provides against the silly unconcern of the ostrich, and the unthinking horse in the battle; He will never be less provident to his own children, that call upon him. They are the gift of his love to his dear Son! they are the purchase of his Son's blood! they are the objects of his grace, and brought under the quickening influence, and divine teaching, of his blessed SPIRIT; and therefore he will arrange and direct all things for his glory and their welfare. They are brought within a wise appointed covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: they are under his own wise providence; they are encompassed with exceeding great and precious promises; and, to crown all, GOD is a faithful GOD, and a sure Covenant GOD in CHRIST. Hence begone, I would say, all doubts, all fears, all misgivings. Let nothing so unbecoming in me, and so dishonorable to my GOD, for a moment arise in my mind. Let creatures die; let all my substance, like Job's, be wasted; if my GOD sees it fit, it must be wise, it must be right. JESUS lives, and that's enough. Oh! how sweet his words: 'Am I not better to thee than ten sons?' Yes, precious LORD! thou art indeed in the place of millions of creature-joys; for millions without thee would be nothing; and having thee, I have all things: my joy here, and my portion forever.

CHAPTER 40

SUMMARY

The LORD having, in the former chapter, thus answered Job, agreeably to his wish, in the opening of this chapter demands Job's reply. Job most humbly gives it: after which the LORD takes up the discourse again, and continues it to the close of this, and through the whole of the next chapter.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, hast thou read, and pondered duly over, the instances here brought forward of divine power and sovereignty? and shall not the view induce the greatest lowliness and self abasement of spirit? Shall anything arise in the circumstances of thy GOD's providence

towards thee, after such a review as is here set forth, to tempt thee to murmur or repine at sovereign appointments? Oh! for grace to humble thyself as Job did, and to lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Surely the discoveries the LORD makes of himself are not less now, than when he thus graciously condescended to reason with the man of Uz. Think, my soul, of the immense greatness of the LORD. In this one view, there is sufficient to excite, in every breast, similar sentiments to the Psalmist's, and to say, as he did, *When I consider thy heavens the works of thine hands, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him!* And if we add to these thoughts, the solemn consideration of GOD'S holiness; that the heavens are not clean in his sight, and even his angels he chargeth with folly; surely every man, like the Prophet, may find cause to exclaim, *Woe is me, I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.* And what is there that can bring relief to the soul under impressions like these, except the gracious, merciful, and sweet intimations of divine love, as given to us in the person, relations, office, work, and character, Of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Oh! thou adored Redeemer! how hast thou softened, to our view, the awful majesty of Heaven, that when at any time we feel the heart overpowered in the recollection of the offended justice and holiness of JEHOVAH, we may call to mind, and take comfort, that to this High and Lofty One, whose name is Holy, we are authorized to look up, through an Almighty Mediator; and that amidst our offences and short-comings, and pollutions, we have such an advocate with the FATHER as JESUS CHRIST the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins! Hail, blessed JESUS! to thee, LORD, would I come: *in* thee would I trust; *upon* the arm of thy righteousness lean, and here fix all my hopes and assurance of acceptance. And praised be thy holy name, thou hast said, *All that put their trust in thee shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.*

CHAPTER 41

SUMMARY

The LORD is still the speaker, through the whole of this chapter. Having before given an instance of the sovereignty of his power, in the creation and government of the largest of land creatures: in this the LORD assumes the like sovereignty of the sea, in the instance of the Leviathan, the largest of creatures in the ocean, A beautiful description is given of this animal, and this forms the whole of the chapter from beginning to end.

REFLECTIONS

READER, among many special improvements to be made, under divine teaching, from this chapter, there are two very striking lessons, which I pray the LORD, the HOLY GHOST, to impress with his grace on my mind and yours. The one is, if beasts of prey, and animals of slaughter, become so formidable to our apprehension, since the fall, that their terror make us afraid, think how dreadful it must be to fall, into the hands of offended justice, whose power as infinitely transcends these his creatures, as the great Creator transcends the thing created. And yet doth not every sinner literally expose himself to the tremendous judgment of incensed Heaven, who, despising the only plan of salvation revealed from Heaven by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, sets up a fancied righteousness of his own, and doth, to all intents and purposes, count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doth despite unto the SPIRIT of Grace.

The other improvement from the perusal of this chapter is, to take comfort and the surest confidence in the power, sovereignty, grace, and goodness, of this Almighty GOD, if in the way he himself hath graciously appointed, (even in the name and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST), we have sought his favor, and cast ourselves wholly upon his free grace in JESUS. Oh! how sure, how eternally sure and safe must be those who have a GOD in CHRIST for their confidence! Did the LORD create Behemoth, and the Leviathan? Doth he feed them, and sustain them, appoint their bounds of their time and existence? And will he not feed, sustain, comfort, and determine the bounds of his people's habitation? Oh! my soul, cast

all thy care upon thy GOD in CHRIST, for he careth for thee! ‘Fear not,’ he hath said, ‘I am with thee.’ And surely if the LORD governs with such care the greatest powers in earth and sea, the devils also must be subject to his power, and dare not resist his Command. Precious JESUS! let these views add another argument to make my soul perfectly happy under thy protection. I am thine, O LORD, and thou wilt save me: thou wilt have respect to the works of thine hands. I am thine, O LORD, both by creation and redemption; and therefore thou wilt have regard to the purchase of thy blood and righteousness. Henceforth I cast my soul, and all I have, and am, upon thee; for thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth.

CHAPTER 42

SUMMARY

This chapter brings us to the close of Job's history, in which we find the testimony which the HOLY GHOST gave by his servant James, to be true. The end of the LORD concerning him is, that the LORD is very pitiful and gracious. Job submitteth himself to GOD. The LORD having reprov'd his servant for what was in him wrong, now prefers his cause in what he was right, and in making the three friends of Job submit themselves. The LORD blesseth the close of Job's life more than the beginning. Job's age and death.

REFLECTIONS

AND now, farewell Job. We have seen, in thy most instructive history the blessed truth confirmed, that the end of the LORD, in the events of his servants ministry and lives upon earth, is very pitiful and gracious, Sweetly, under the HOLY GHOST's divine teaching, do we learn from hence, that the LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; and especially in the lives of his servants, that he ordereth and arrangeth all things, as shall best promote his gracious designs in the furtherance of his own glory and his people's happiness. Satan may be permitted to exercise a certain degree of power; but how painful soever this may be, during the operation, to flesh and blood, the whole must and shall minister to the enemy's disgrace, to GOD's faithful servants comfort, and to the display of

the divine wisdom, love, and goodness. No temptation shall overtake them but what is common to man, and with every temptation the LORD will make a way to escape, until at length the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under their feet.

But before I take a last farewell of Job, let me look once more, and behold in how many things he bore a striking resemblance to my adorable Redeemer. Yes, thou blessed man of Uz, surely the HOLY SPIRIT graciously intended to teach the Church, in thy history, somewhat, however faint in the outlines, of what the Church forever must be delighted to dwell upon; of Him who is the first and last, and never-ceasing object of her affection. Was Job the greatest man of all the East? And what was JESUS, the wisdom-man, set up from everlasting, but the greatest of all, and LORD of all, that in all things he might have the preeminency? Was Job perfect and upright before GOD, one that feared GOD, and eschewed evil? And what wert thou, thou blessed JESUS, in thy human nature, but holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens? Was Job suddenly brought from a state of affluence to a state of poverty and sorrow? And can we overlook thee, thou adorable LORD JESUS, who, though rich, yet for our sakes didst become poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich? Did Satan assault Job in his affliction, and buffet him in every direction? And can we forget thine unequalled temptations, O thou Prince of Sufferers, when from the river Jordan to the garden, and though the cross, Satan furiously made his attack on thee, in thy holy nature he could find no part vulnerable to his fiery darts? But oh! precious JESUS, what were the conflicts of the man of Uz compared to thine thou man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief? What persecution, from false friends, in Job's history, can bear resemblance to thine, when thou enduredst such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, lest thy people should be, weary and faint in their minds? Many of thy faithful servants, through thy grace enabling them, have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Yes, blessed JESUS! in all things it becometh thee to have the pre-eminence, in suffering as in glory, that thou mightest be the first-born among many brethren. It is sweet and precious to follow the teachings of the HOLY GHOST, and to trace, in the lives of thy people, in those early ages of thy Church, any outlines of character as typical of thee. It is highly profitable to

eye Job shadowing forth some faint resemblance of thee in his original greatness, with which his history begins! in his humiliation, in his interceding for his friends, and in his final exaltation. But oh! blessed LORD, enable me to look through all these shades to thy bright manifestations, when coming from thy glory in heaven, and tabernacling upon earth in substance of our flesh, thou didst pass through sorrows, sufferings, reproaches, persecution bearing our sins in thine own body on the tree, and dying the just for the unjust, to bring us unto GOD. Hail, thou Almighty JESUS! now hath GOD our FATHER turned thy captivity, and blessed thee above thy fellows. Now hath he constituted and appointed thee as the Great High Priest and Intercessor for all thy redeemed; and thee, and them in thee, he accepts. And now hath be given thee a family of both Jew and Gentile, to bless thy name, to sing thy praise, and to adore thee forever. And now shall every knee bend before thee, and every tongue confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

I cannot close this part of my feeble labours, without desiring to fall down before the mercy seat in thankfulness for such distinguishing mercy as hath been manifested in permitting so unhallowed a pen to be thus employed, imploring pardon and forgiveness for all that is here offered. I find cause, at every review, to take shame in the consciousness how far, how very far short it comes of the divine original. Blessed Master, I would say, manifest thine accustomed compassion to the errors, of this humble work. Preserve all that read it from injury in the perusal: and, if it shall please thee to commission it for good but to one of thine, to the sovereignty of thy grace shall be all the glory, in condescending to make use of so poor an instrument to so great a service, to work in thy people both to will and to do according to thy good pleasure.

PSALMS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THIS inestimable book of GOD holds within its sacred bosom so much of his mind and will, of his covenant-grace and mercy, as revealed to us in the person and work of his dear Son, that it may be well considered as forming an epitome of the whole gospel. And when the great Author of it, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, vouchsafeth to open the saving knowledge of it to the Reader's heart, and the Reader's heart to receive it, and enjoy its blessedness; then the gracious design for which it was written is answered, and GOD *in all things is glorified* by JESUS CHRIST.

The general title of this book is taken from the original word *Tehillim*, which signifies Psalms, and particularly Psalms, or Songs of praise. But there are two other words in the Hebrew by which the Psalms are distinguished, namely, *Zemer* and *Sher*. The *former* is derived from a root which signifies *pruning*; and is used, perhaps, in allusion to the man whose name is the Branch, because he was pruned, or cut off, for his people. And the latter, *Sher*, relates to *power*, or rule and government: and this also, most probably, in reference to JESUS, whose government and kingdoms shall have no end. And if both these titles were given to the Psalms on account of CHRIST being so much the subject of them, there is an uncommon degree of beauty as well as propriety, in the measure. For as the *former* refers to his humiliation, in being pruned or cut off; so the *latter* to his exaltation, when *he had by himself purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*. And both confirm what the Scriptures record, that the whole scope and subject of prophecy, which holy men of old delivered by the SPIRIT of CHRIST which was in them, was meant to signify, *the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory which should follow*.

Several were the penmen whom the HOLY GHOST was pleased to commission to be the writers, under his gracious inspiration, of the Psalms. The greater part of the book (which altogether contains 150 Psalms in number) was written by the patriarch *David*. But, beside him, there were a few others, such as *Heman*, and *Ethan*, and *Asaph*, and even *Moses*, to whom they are ascribed. So that it is not possible, in these general observations, to state the precise period in which the whole were written, concerning the greater part of them, as written by David, we may safely set down the time, he himself living about 1000 years before the incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

But it will be much more to the Reader's purpose to enquire diligently concerning the great object for which the Psalms were written, and of their importance, in reference to the Church in all ages, than of the very period in which they were first given. The HOLY GHOST in this precious part of Scripture, had most blessed designs in view, when he caused it to be given to the Church; and this, it will be our highest wisdom, in reading this book of GOD, to search after.

And it is hardly possible to enter upon the very threshold of this divine treasury, without having our minds strikingly arrested, in viewing the solemn and sacred contents, everywhere abounding. The very first word opens with Blessed: and the last closes with Hallelujah. And although in the first reading of the Psalms much apparently seems to be said of the several writers, as if referring to themselves; and we meet with much concerning David and Solomon; yet when the eye is enlightened *to compare spiritual things with spiritual*, we are frequently constrained to cry out, as we prosecute the perusal, *a greater than Solomon is here*. For not only here and there, in certain passages, many things are said, which never could with truth be said of any but the LORD JESUS CHRIST, but there are also other expressions which would be little short of blasphemy, to be spoken of any other. And, as if the church in all ages should be on the lookout, whenever the book of Psalms was brought before the people, the beautiful illustration which GOD the HOLY GHOST put into the mouth of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, seems to have been intended for this express purpose. The apostle decidedly asserts, that what David had said in 16th Psalm, of *his flesh resting in hope*, wholly referred to the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

And therefore, upon numberless other occasions of a similar nature, the blessed Spirit teacheth the mind to transfer our thoughts from David to CHRIST in the reading of the Psalms; by which means we may truly say, as one of the Psalms records, *My meditation of him shall be sweet.*

If we admit the Psalms in this point of view, as referring, for the most part, in their fulness and doctrine, to the person and work of EMMANUEL, nothing can more illustriously set forth his glories; nor, under the influence, of the HOLY GHOST, more contribute to awaken and call forth into exercise, all the devout desires of our hearts. That the LORD JESUS himself so used the Psalms, seems most evident; for he not only took part of his discourse from the Psalms, when in his way to Emmaus, with the two disciples, He made their hearts burn within them, while he spoke to them of the things concerning himself; but it should seem that the hymn sung at the table of his passover, the night before his sufferings and death, was taken from the Psalms. Some indeed have gone so far as to assert that this hymn was what is called the grand Hallelujah, beginning with 113th Psalm, and ending with 118th, as they regularly follow each other. But whether this be so or not, certain it is, that the LORD JESUS referred to this precious book of GOD, as pointing to him. Here, therefore, as often as I open the book of the Psalms, would I pray for the illuminating grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that I might make discoveries of JESUS. Here I would say, (as I turned over the several pages of it), here it was from whence JESUS expounded to his disciples, and proved the truth of his mission; that the words which He spake, while he was with them, and all things which were fulfilled in him, were written not only in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, but in the Psalms also, concerning him. And under the blessed conviction that here JESUS is to be found, as the most precious treasure in this part of the field of his Scripture, I would search for him as the pearl of great price, and look up to him as having the key of David, *and say, LORD! open mine understanding, that I may understand thy law.* And surely under his gracious teaching, by the influences of his HOLY SPIRIT, I shall enter into the most heartfelt enjoyment *of all* that concerns him. I shall discover somewhat of the wonders of his person, and the wonders of his work. I shall trace the outlines of his advent, incarnation, life,

sufferings, conflicts, victories, death, resurrection, ascension, sovereignty, power; and all the great events connected with his promised return to judgment. I shall behold the sweet sketches of his blessed offices here, as fulfilled when upon earth, and now still carrying on and executing in heaven. And *my* soul will be delighted and ravished as I go along, when I behold JESUS, as described by the HOLY GHOST, through the medium of these inspired writings, in all his lovely offices, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church. Yes, indeed, thou blessed JESUS, if thou wilt open mine eyes that I may see the wondrous things of thy law, I shall gladly trace thy footsteps, and mark the tendencies of thy grace towards thy people, as sweetly set forth in this book of GOD. And oh! LORD I do again beseech thee, that thou wouldest cause me so to read, so to learn, and so to understand, those scriptures which concern thyself, that *all my fresh springs may be in thee.*

Reader, I will detain you no longer from immediately entering upon the perusal of this blessed book of GOD, than only just to remark, that everything you meet with in the Psalms concerning JESUS will be rendered yet more blessed and endearing, if we are enabled by the SPIRIT of Him concerning whom we read, to discover our personal interest also in all that relates to him. If JESUS be, as he most certainly is, the head of his body the Church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, it will then as certainly follow, that the several members of that glorious head do participate, by their union with him, in everything that he is, and that he hath wrought for them. Do we read of his having a body given him, and tabernacling in substance of our flesh; let us never forget that it was *for us this Child was born, for us this Son was given.* Do we read that, when neither sacrifice, nor offering, nor burnt offering, would atone for sin, and that JESUS therefore cried, Lo! I come, let us sweetly connect with this view of JESUS, that, *by that one offering of himself, once offered, he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.* And when under the spirit of prophecy is celebrated the triumphs of GOD'S HOLY ONE over the grave, oh! may we by faith realize the assured interest that all his redeemed have in it, in that he thereby became *the first fruits of them that sleep.* In a word, in all and everything belonging to JESUS in the book of Psalms, let us be seeking for grace to mix faith with all we discover, that what he was, and is, and ever will be, is for his people; for by this we make him

our own, and find our love *to* him, faith *in* him, and dependence *on* him, will grow exceedingly. Blessed LORD! I would say, both for myself and Reader, grant to us this vast privilege, of knowing that we are thine, and that, by virtue of it, we have a right of appropriation in all that belongs to thee; for then we shall discover, as we read these precious things which are written of thee in this book, the truth of what thy servant John said, upon another similar occasion, that *these things were written, that we might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of GOD; and that, believing, we might have life through his name. Amen.*

PSALM 1

SUMMARY

This Psalm is supposed by some to have been written by Ezra, but upon what authority is not said. It is a short, but beautiful description, of the different features which mark the godly man from the sinner.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let you and I, while reading this precious Psalm, in the very opening of the book, look at, and study, and meditate upon it, as an introductory subject, concerning the LORD JESUS, to what we shall meet with concerning him and his work, through the whole of the sacred contents of the Psalms, as JESUS is represented in them. Let us, in that part of it which thus beautifully speaks of the perfection of our nature, never lose sight of CHRIST. And while we thus look up to him in this holiness of character, let it be our delight and our joy to tell GOD our FATHER, what a perfection of beauty, glory, and holiness, was in him, who is our divine head. Yes, thou dear Redeemer! I would so read of thee, and of thy holiness, as to have my whole soul rejoicing in the contemplation. For do I not know that thy righteousness is for thy people? thy obedience and delight in the FATHER'S law, becomes the justification of all thy redeemed. And in thy holiness, all thy people are accounted holy before GOD, because our GOD and FATHER hath an eye to thee as our

glorious head, and beholds thy saints complete in thee. Hail, then, thou HOLY ONE of GOD! Thou art the LORD, our righteousness! And thou art made of GOD to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. And do thou, blessed LORD, grant us faith to know, and to consider ourselves as perfectly secured in thee. Give us to flourish in thee, and from thee, as the tree planted near the river's side? even from the streams of that river of life which cometh forth from the throne of GOD and the LAMB. Then, when the faithless and unbelieving shall die away as the heath of the desert, which knoweth not when good cometh, our souls may be as the well-watered garden, whose waters fail not, but deriving all from thee, thou wilt be in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

PSALM 2

SUMMARY

This glorious Psalm is all over gospel, and speaks of nothing but of GOD, and his CHRIST, from beginning to end. The HOLY GHOST, by his servants Peter and John, in one Scripture, and by his servant Paul in another, hath not left the Church to any uncertain reasonings and conjectures respecting this, but decidedly shown to whom the whole belongs. Here is the kingdom of CHRIST set forth under the type of David's kingdom, and all kings of the earth exhorted to bend to it.

REFLECTIONS

HERE Reader, let you and I pause over this sweet gospel Psalm, and contemplate in the person and victories of JESUS, the glorious Mediator, and head of his church and people, and the sure events of that salvation, which JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of person, hath appointed for the final happiness of his redeemed. Hell may and will oppose; the world, with all its powers, will join the confederacy; and poor fallen man, while continuing in the unrenewed state of nature, will be as outrageous as either. But the opposition is in vain. JEHOVAH with his own right arm hath gotten himself the victory; and all the enemies of the cross, and of the

crown, shall be broken in pieces, as the vessel of the potter. And oh, how blessed the thought! behold we already see JESUS the King on his throne. All power is his in heaven and earth. The decree is gone forth, and he himself hath declared it. Precious LAMB of GOD! let my eyes, by faith, gaze upon thee with unceasing rapture! Let me behold thee, not only exercising all authority in heaven, but in earth, with a plenitude of power, bending the nations to the sceptre of thy dominion, until every knee is brought to bow before thee, and every tongue, constrained to confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD THE FATHER. And oh! grant thou Universal Almighty, Monarch, grant me the blessedness of acknowledging thee to be my rightful Sovereign, by the FATHER'S gift, by the purchase of thy blood, and by the conquests of thy grace; and may every thought be brought into captivity, to the obedience of CHRIST!

Reader, let us seek grace while meditating on all the great things recorded of our adorable LORD, and the FATHER'S appointment of him, as in this Psalm, that we may exercise such faith upon his glorious person, whose praise is here celebrated, so as to feel our own personal interest in him, and in all that is here said of him. Is he the FATHER'S king in Zion? Then is he also our GOD and King. Is he set upon the holy hill of Zion? Then let him be King in our hearts also. Hath he subdued all his enemies? Then hath he subdued our enemies also. And is he set down upon his throne, remember his blessed promise to all his people that overcome in his name, that they shall sit down with Him in his throne, even as he hath overcome, and is set down with his FATHER in his throne. Even so, LORD JESUS! Thou hast made us kings and priests unto GOD and our FATHER, and we shall reign with thee forever. Amen and Amen.

PSALM 3

SUMMARY

The title of this Psalm best leads to the contents of it. The first and literal sense of this Psalm should seem to refer wholly to David; but, to an enlightened eye, there is much to be seen in it of CHRIST.

Amidst the afflictions here complained of, There is much of the consolations of JESUS, and his great salvation.

REFLECTIONS

CAN I, my soul, read this Psalm of David's distresses in his flight from Absalom, and not behold David's LORD in his agonies and conflicts, the very same spot of the Mount of Olives? Must I not suppose that the HOLY GHOST was shadowing forth in the instance of David, as in numberless other cases, in the trials and afflictions of the faithful, in the Old Testament scripture, the outlines of the LORD of his church, to be brought forward in the after ages of the New? And shall not such scenes, which the LORD of life and glory passed through in the days of his flesh, when enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself, endear the LAMB of GOD to my heart, and animate me in all my exercises, that I may never be weary nor faint in my mind?

Learn, my soul, from what is said of David in this Psalm, what a holy composure, faith in GOD's love, and dependence upon GOD's grace, is capable of inducing under the most afflicting circumstances. It should seem that David meditated this Psalm, if he did not immediately write it down, when he was in such a situation of hurry and confusion, as was enough to have discomposed the stoutest mind. And so it would, had not the LORD been his shield, his glory, and the lifter up of his head. Oh I precious JESUS! do I not learn from hence, that the only security and defense against all danger is the leaning upon thee and thy great salvation. Oh! LORD, let the arm of thy strength be under me, and the light of thy countenance shining upon me, and then will I not fear though ten thousands set themselves against me round about.

Reader! behold from the perusal of this sweet and blessed Psalm, what must be your confidence now in your nightly slumbers, and what alone will be your confidence then, when laying down in the long slumber of the grave; even sleeping in JESUS. You need not be afraid in the recurrence of every night to drop asleep, if so be your soul is sustained by its union with JESUS. And a consciousness of the same interest in all that belongs to JESUS, will be the well grounded security, when the body falls asleep in JESUS unto the day of the resurrection. Everything speaks in the language of a covenant GOD, as the LORD did to the Patriarch: fear not to go down into Egypt,

even the Egypt of the grave, for I am with thee. Blessed JESUS! it is thou, that by thy death hast overcome death, and made the grave a sweet chamber of repose, until thou shalt call upon thy members to arise at the great day of everlasting joy. *Then thou shalt call and I will answer thee, for thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*

PSALM 4

SUMMARY

This Psalms opens with prayer; then an address showing the folly, as well as danger, of pursuing vanity; the close of the Psalm determines that the happiness of man must be alone found in the favor of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I never lose sight of the LORD JESUS while reading this Psalm. He is the LORD our righteousness. And, therefore, in all our approaches to the mercy-seat, let us go there in a language corresponding to this, which calls JESUS the GOD of our righteousness. And while men of the world from the world are seeking their chief good, let us desire his favor which infinitely transcends corn and wine, and all the good things which perish in using. Yes! LORD, thy favor is better than life itself. Thou causest them that love thee to inherit substance, and fittest all their treasure, yea thou thyself art their treasure.

And oh! thou gracious GOD and FATHER, hast thou in such a wonderful manner set apart one in our nature for thyself? Hast thou indeed chosen one out of thy people? Hast thou beheld him in the purity of his nature, as one in every point godly? Hast thou given him as the covenant of the people? And hast thou declared thyself well pleased in him? Oh! then, well may my soul be well pleased in him also. Now do I know that my GOD and FATHER will hear me when I call upon him in JESUS name, and when I look up to him for acceptance for JESUS sake. Yes! my heart is fixed, O LORD, my heart is fixed; JESUS is my hope and righteousness: the LORD will hear me

when I call. And henceforth will I both lay me down in peace, and sleep securely in JESUS, accepted in the beloved: for *this is the rest wherewith the LORD causeth the weary to rest, and this is their refreshment.*

PSALM 5

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here at his devotions. If David in the first instance of the petitions had an eye to his own personal persecutions, yet, there can be no doubt but that the HOLY GHOST designed to instruct the Church, through David, as a type of the LORD JESUS, that what is here said had a more immediate reference to CHRIST, and GOD THE FATHER's gracious attention to him.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS JESUS! how blessed to thy people art thou in every view; and in those views most eminently in which we behold thee going before thy church, as our great High Priest and Representative in the service of the sanctuary! Here would our souls unceasingly contemplate thee, as engaging thine heart to approach for us before JEHOVAH, in the vast undertakings of our Mediator. Thou didst draw nigh to GOD, as an absolute GOD. Thou didst personally engage to approach to the throne of infinite holiness and infinite power. Thou wert found worthy, from the holiness of thy nature, to draw nigh without a Mediator, for thou neededst none, and GOD declared himself well pleased for thy righteousness sake. And now, LORD; we can and do approach and draw nigh in and through thee. Yes! blessed, forever blessed be thy name, we have access by one SPIRIT to the FATHER through thee; and, having such an High Priest over the house of GOD, we may come boldly to the mercy seat, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in all time of need. Holy FATHER! I would now say, my voice shalt thou hear betimes in the morning; I will look up in that dear and ever precious name, in whom can never look up in vain. I will make mention of JESUS. I shall find boldness in his blood and righteousness; for thou, LORD, wilt bless him, and bless his people in him, and defend all his redeemed here, and crown

them with endless joy hereafter, for his name and righteousness sake. Amen.

PSALM 6

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here under affliction. He crieth to GOD. In the conclusion, he takes comfort in the consciousness that his prayer had been heard, and he shall triumph over all his enemies.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! see, I charge it upon thee this day, see that thy perusal of these precious portions of scripture be all directed to the discovery of him, to whom all the prophets gave witness; that wheresoever in the blessed book of GOD thy meditations are directed, thou dost search for JESUS as for hidden treasure. He will be found of them that seek him. He will never say (for he hath never said) to any of the praying seed of David, seek ye my face in vain. And oh! thou blessed HOLY ONE of GOD! wilt thou not now, as in the days that are past, wilt thou not draw nigh to those who desire to draw nigh unto thee, and, by the sweet teachings and influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, make precious discoveries of all things which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning thyself?

My soul! pause one moment longer over this divine Psalm, that contains in its bosom so much of JESUS! Did thy LORD thus groan, thus cry out, and was his precious soul thus deeply exercised, when he stood forth as thy Surety? Did JEHOVAH thus bruise him, and put him to grief? And in the seasons of these chastisements, did the FATHER love him with a love that passeth knowledge? Nay, did the FATHER therefore love him because he laid down his life, and made his soul an offering for sin? Oh! then, learn henceforth how rightly to estimate afflictions. *Whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;* Nay, my soul, recollect, if we endure chastening, GOD *dealeth with us as with sons.* Oh LAMB of GOD! cause me to forget my afflictions in the view of thine. Thou

drankest the very dregs of the cup of trembling; that thy redeemed might drink of the cup of salvation. Thou, the glorious Head of thy church, didst take out all the sting of sorrow in the sting of death, which is sin, that thy members might feel no sting in their sorrows, from their interest and union in thee. Hail! thou now risen, exalted, and triumphant Saviour; thou hast now conquered all thine enemies, and our victory is secured in thine! Even now, in thy strength and righteousness, we bid all workers of iniquity to depart from us; for our persons and prayers are accepted in thee, and ere long we shall sit down with thee in thy throne, even as thou hast overcome, and art sat down with thy FATHER in his throne. Amen.

PSALM 7

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here appealing unto GOD, against the false accusations of his enemies. He expresseth a well-grounded confidence that he shall be heard and just fled.

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! how refreshing is it, in every view the HOLY GHOST is pleased to give of thee, to behold thee as our glorious Head. In persecutions, as well as in sufferings, in reproaches, as well as unjust judgment, thou shalt have the preeminence. Oh! for grace to eye thee in the path of tribulation going before thy church and people, and marking the way by thine own spotless example. But oh! for larger portions of that meekness of spirit by which thy walk was distinguished. Of JESUS only could it be fully said, that when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously!

Reader! in our improvements of the divine subject which this Psalm holds forth, under all the persecutions which in our lesser trials we meet with in the way, let an eye to JESUS animate our minds and comfort our hearts, that finally and fully, we shall find cause to

sing the same song as is here sung, in praising the LORD according to his righteousness, and singing praises to the name of the LORD most high. This will be our everlasting song; neither should the oppositions of the ungodly put our minds out of tune for singing it with grace in our hearts now. In JESUS and his great salvation, we are already led to anticipate the triumphs which must ere long be our own over all the enemies of our faith; and the promise is absolute in him, and the power of his might, which saith, *that the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly,*

PSALM 8

SUMMARY

This Psalm is pure gospel from beginning to end, for it celebrates the glories of JESUS, as the Monarch of his people, and of heaven and earth. Under the spirit of prophecy, and with an eye to CHRIST, the sacred writer of it expresseth his astonishment at the incarnation of JESUS, and then soars in the loftiest strains of adoration and joy at his wonderful glory.

REFLECTIONS

MY SOUL! pause over the wonders contained in this hymn of praise. Let him have all thy praise, and to him be all the glory offered, whom JEHOVAH delighted to honor. Contemplate JESUS the Mediator. Behold him set up from everlasting. See his goings forth for the salvation of his people. Trace the footsteps of his mercy in all that long train of revelations concerning him, when his name was secret, and when he stood forth in covenant engagements, but yet not having tabernacled in substance of our flesh, the Mediator of his people. Behold how he longed for the fulness of time to come, when he should become sin for his people, that his people might be made the righteousness of GOD in him. Wherefore, precious JESUS, (suffer me to ask thee) wherefore didst thou so often assume a visible appearance, when all the while to us thy name was secret; and wherefore didst thou present thyself before thy redeemed sometimes as a man, and sometimes as an angel? Was it not that, by such

palpable testimonies, thou mightest show how much thou didst love thy church, thy spouse, the poor ruined nature of man? And wherefore was it, O thou HOLY ONE of GOD! that thou didst thus manifest thyself otherwise than thou dost to the world, but to testify what a longing desire thou hadst to the work of redemption, which the FATHER gave thee to do, and which thou didst voluntarily undertake for the salvation of thy chosen? Oh! well may every redeemed soul cry out with the Prophet, *What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?* And wherefore is it now, dearest LORD, that since all power is thine in heaven and in earth, that thou still condescendest to regard the humblest, the poorest of thy people, but to show, equally so, that no change of place hath made any change in thine heart and thy love towards them. *Having loved thine own which are in the world, thou lovest them unto the end.* Oh! for grace, that this love, this favor, this mercy, this good will, may be carried in the rich streams of it from thy heart into mine. Oh! for grace to bow the knee, the whole soul, and body, and spirit, before thee, and to praise JESUS, who is the supreme Monarch of all creation. Oh! for grace to join this hymn of praise, and to sing aloud, with all the redeemed both in heaven and in earth, O LORD, *our LORD, how excellent is thy name throughout the world, and whose glory is above the heavens!*

PSALM 9

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here again at the throne of grace, praising GOD for past mercies, and preferring petitions for future favors. In singing or reading this Psalm, it will be profitable to have an eye to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED Redeemer! let me, as often as I peruse this Psalm, learn to celebrate thy triumphs, and to keep my eye and heart stedfastly fixed on thee, that I may hear with the ear of faith, and catch an holy flame from the devout song, while thou art praising

JEHOVAH, for all the blessings of the salvation wrought by thee for his Church and people.

Yes! thou holy LORD, I would desire to shout in the sacred joy, from a conviction, that in thy victories all thy people partake. And while, by faith in thee and thy salvation, I behold all the enemies which now impede our progress in the wilderness state of thy Church, put to a perpetual end, I shall even now sing, though so often feeling the effects of their malice, sure and certain deliverance, through thee, from all my sins, sorrows, and trials, being more than conqueror through thy grace helping me.

And oh! come LORD, by the influence of thy sweet SPIRIT, come and dwell in the midst of Zion, and show forth all the praises of JEHOVAH; that thy redeemed may echo to thy praises, and their hearts rejoice in thy salvation. Yes, precious JESUS! thou wilt be, thou hast been, thou now art, a refuge for the oppressed. Thou art my hiding place, and my strong tower, against all my foes. And in the consciousness of my interest *in* thee, my union *with* thee, and my unceasing dependence *upon* thee, I will go forth, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. And until thou shalt call me home to see thy face, and dwell with thee forever, the sense of thy love shall keep my soul in tune, to praise thee here below, in the every-day song of faith, and by and by faith shall be swallowed up in sight, and grace consummated in everlasting glory.

PSALM 10

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is still before the mercy seat at his devotions, The subject is that general one, of the oppression of the wicked, and their triumphs. Deliverance is humbly sought for, and due confidence in divine mercy professed.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let you and I pause over this divine Psalm. Whether it be the blessed Mediator, as man's surety, thus pleading concerning his own afflictions, and the afflictions of his people, under the

hidings of the FATHER’S countenance; or whether it be the cries of his church, or any individual of the church, thus pleading before the throne; in either sense, we may feelingly remark how heavy, and how grievous the burthen, when exercised saints are under the double distress of the persecutions of the ungodly, and the frowns or hidings of the LORD. “How long, O LORD, how long?” is the cry of his poor, needy, and sorrowful ones, when the enemy triumphs, and our GOD conceals his face.

But reader, even here, and under the deepest soul-sorrow, let us take comfort, that their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. We cannot run with them to the same excess of riot; we cannot think, much less speak, lightly of our GOD. They are, as the Apostle speaks, covetous, proud, boasters, implacable, unmerciful. Their wine is the wine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall; their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. Precious LORD JESUS we thank thee for thy distinguishing tokens of grace, even when our souls are most afflicted, and when the enemy triumphs.

Lastly, Reader, under all your exercises, look to JESUS, and never, never forget that the LORD is King forever and ever; and the Heathen are perished out of his land. Yet a little while, and the ungodly shall be cut down as the grass, and be withered even as the green herb; while the righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree, and spread abroad as the cedar in Lebanon. Blessed JESUS! in thy light we shall see light. There is a rest that remaineth for the people of GOD. Into that rest, which is thyself, thou wilt ere long bring all thy people, and thy ransomed shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and they shall obtain joy and gladness; *and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

PSALM 11

SUMMARY

In the circumstances of evil, from the persecutions of ungodly men, the Psalmist is here represented as reposing in the sure

protection of GOD. Much consolation is found in this security, and the firm reliance of a happy termination to all sorrow.

REFLECTIONS

How blessed it is, to have a GOD in CHRIST to flee unto, and to put our sure trust in, when storms invade the church, or when the enemy comes forward with a high hand. Though a lost encamp against me, said one of old, yet shall not my heart be afraid. And it is here alone, in the well-grounded confidence of salvation by JESUS, that a true believer finds an adequate support for every affliction. And what real, solid, and substantial comfort must every truly regenerate believer who hath JESUS for his hope, and righteousness, and salvation. Reader, how stands the case between GOD and your soul? Is JESUS your hope, your consolation, your security? Then, and not otherwise, will the soul be borne up, and carried through, all the difficulties of a spiritual conflict: for if GOD be for us, who can be against us? JESUS, LORD! be thou my everlasting security, my hope, my righteousness, and portion forever.

PSALM 12

SUMMARY

This is a short and pathetic lamentation over the languishing state of the Church, and the decrease of the faithful. The sacred writer, however, takes comfort in the assurance, that GOD will preserve a seed in the heart.

REFLECTIONS

READER, there never was a period of the Church, when this Psalm seemed to be more applicable. How few are there asking the way to Zion! How many the vacancies made by death in the congregations of the faithful! And who is there pleading, crying, wrestling with Zion's King in prayer, and determined to take no denial, that the LORD would fill those vacancies, and raise up a generation to call him blessed? Alas, alas! may it not with too much truth be said, all seek their own, and not the things of JESUS CHRIST?

Blessed LORD, help us to look to thee. O for grace to be poured out from on high on churches, ministers, people; that the LORD would yet make Zion a praise in the earth. Oh! that the cause of truth, of GOD, and of his CHRIST, were become the most interesting concern of all his people. Oh! ye servants of JESUS, cry, cry mightily to the LORD; and tell him how Zion languisheth. And ye who love her courts and ordinances, pray, pray for the peace of Jerusalem; for they shall prosper that love Zion. But oh! from men, my soul, look thou to the LORD. Tell thy JESUS, that Zion must be dear to him, when her walls are always before him, and her name graven on the palms of his sacred hands. O, then, LORD, let my soul hear, by the ear of faith, thine own most precious promise, again and again repeated. Now for the oppressions of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD. Come, LORD! take thy glorious cause into thine own most glorious hand: then wilt thou turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon thy name, and serve thee with one consent; even from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, thy suppliants, even the daughters of thy dispersed, shall bring thine offering.

PSALM 13

SUMMARY

Here the Psalmist is represented as crying out under grief of mind, from an apprehension of GOD's having withdrawn his face. He accompanies his prayers with professing faith in GOD's return, and concludes with praise.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in following the sweet steps of soul exercises which are marked in this Psalm, while GOD the HOLY GHOST is our Guide, how lovely is it to eye JESUS as having gone before. Yes! thou HOLY ONE of GOD! what sorrow, what trial, what distress or anguish of spirit can any one of thy redeemed be called to, where thy bright and blessed example doth not hold forth precious views to console, as well as gracious paths to follow. Oh, LORD! vouchsafe to sanctify every appointment to our furtherance in the greater knowledge of

thee, and of our being conformed to thee in all things. And when, LORD, In dark seasons, the enemy cometh in like a flood, O let thy blessed SPIRIT lift thee up to our view, as a standard against him. And oh! our gracious GOD! let it please thee to grant, that when, from the darkness of our mind, we cannot see thy beauties so clear as at other times, nor our own personal interest in thee; then, blessed JESUS, may we have grace still to trust thee. If we cannot sing the song of triumph, still let us not bang the harp upon the willow, but cry after thee. Still let faith have its perfect work: and may we venture all upon thee, amidst all the darkness around, or the darkness within. Yes! precious JESUS, if thou wilt grant but faith to trust thee, to believe in thee, to hang upon thee, and to commit all into thy blessed hands, under all the emptiness and barrenness in our own hearts; faith thus acting all its workings upon thee, will at length find strength, and light, and life, in thee, and from thee; and thus our heaviness will be turned into joy, and we shall join in the same song, as the Psalmist here hath recorded, and sing unto the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with us.

PSALM 14

SUMMARY

This Psalm comes home recommended from the comment the HOLY GHOST was pleased to make of it, by the Apostle Paul. Romans 3:10. The principal subjects of it are; The universal sin of man; his enmity against GOD; and the prophet's prayer in consequence, that salvation would speedily arise out of Zion.

REFLECTIONS

READER, what blessed improvements, under the SPIRIT's teaching, may be drawn from the perusal of this Psalm? Surely the HOLY GHOST intended it for the greatest benefit to the church: and therefore let us look up for his divine influence to be upon us, that we may gather what is his mind and will in our improvements from it. And, first, shall not the picture here drawn, of universal corruption, be blessed to our view, in the conviction of the truth, and

the consciousness that we are involved equally by nature in the same melancholy ruin? If all have sinned and come short of GOD's glory, all are implicated in the guilt. And it is a decided mark of grace, when a sense of our lost state hath induced a sense of our unworthiness and helplessness to our own recovery. Surely the very hope of GOD's favour is begun in a consciousness of guilt, and the desire of deliverance from it. If then GOD, by his HOLY SPIRIT, hath given this conviction in the heart, and put a cry there, *What must I do to be saved?* then the same earnest longings as holy men of old put forth for salvation to arise out of Zion, will appear in the devout breathings of our souls also, that we may be brought into a saving acquaintance with, and heart-felt enjoyment of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Yes, thou precious Redeemer, thou, and thou only, art the salvation of our poor ruined and undone nature! Thou hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. Thy holy life, thy spotless death, thy perfect obedience and sacrifice, as the Surety of poor sinners, have raised up our nature from the ruins of the Fall. And therefore, LORD, we now join the petition of Old Testament saints, that the salvation by thee may be manifested to all thy people, to bring the prisoners out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. And oh! LORD, hasten all thy comings here in grace, and bring on the full manifestation of thyself, in thy kingdom of glory.

PSALM 15

SUMMARY

Every portion of this beautiful Psalm is gospel. It treats first of CHRIST, and then of his people in him. Here is the Citizen of Zion described in his person, life, and conduct.

REFLECTIONS

READER, here let us sit down, and contemplate our JESUS, the King and Citizen of Zion. First, view his spotless person, in the beauties and loveliness of our nature, holy, harmless, and undefiled, and as such justly entitled to an everlasting residence on the holy hill, in the heavenly tabernacle; and then our right of inheritance also, by virtue of our union with him.

Here is his just and striking, though short description, when he came forth for the salvation of his people. He was to earn the crown before he put it on. He was to manifest the holiness of his nature, before he ascended the holy hill of his everlasting abode: Hence he took upon him our nature, in the purity of that nature, and in that nature was found without guile before GOD. Not a single thought of his heart was foreign, or in opposition to the law of his FATHER, Hence he could and did say, I delight to do thy will, O my GOD; yea, thy law is in my heart. And as he rejoiced to do the will of his FATHER, by a perfect conformity to all his precepts, so did he become a willing sacrifice to the breaches of the law which its people had committed, by his death; that, both by doing and by dying; he might recover what man had lost, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And thus it became him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to be all this, and infinitely more, that he might be "the LORD our righteousness."

Now then, Reader, here it is, by virtue of his holiness and purity, that our nature hath recovered the original holiness and purity which our first father lost; and by JESUS alone, a better paradise than Adam forfeited, even an heavenly one in the Zion above, whither, his people are entitled to ascend, and eternally dwell with him. United to him in spirit, by virtue of his SPIRIT's influences, we are quickened and kept alive in grace, and by and by shall be with him in glory. And although while we carry about with us a body still open to corruption, and daily ripening by corruption for the grave, and as such we feel, at times, the sad breakings out of the remaining foes to our peace lurking within, yet the hour is hastening when this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Hail! thou Almighty LORD! in thy light shall we see light. Be thou our portion while below! Help us to ascend by faith now the holy hill of thy dwelling, and in thy righteousness to contemplate thy person and complete work, until thou shalt bring us home to behold thy glory, and dwell with thee forever. Amen.

PSALM 16

SUMMARY

This blessed Psalm is so directly applied, under the influence of GOD the HOLY GHOST, by the apostles Peter and Paul, to the person and work of the LORD JESUS, that we must wholly overlook David the writer of it, (except considering him as a prophet,) so as not to lose the great object intended by it, in supposing that ought of David is meant by what this Psalm contains. Here CHRIST, and his faith in covenant engagements, are beautifully set forth.

REFLECTIONS

GRANT, most blessed JESUS that as oft as I read this blessed Psalm I may read it as the *Michtam* of David, because it treats wholly of thee. I would forget David, and all the excellent of the earth, to contemplate thee, and thy matchless love, as here beautifully set forth. And, dearest LORD, as thou wert looking to JEHOVAH, so would I look to thee. Surely thou art my ADONAI, my LORD, my HOLY ONE, my righteousness! O for grace to set thee always before me. I know thee indeed to be on thy right hand, I shall not be moved. And oh, for grace to rejoice in the blessed hope. My flesh shall rest in hope, for thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth! As thy holy body saw no corruption, so thy members, though seeing corruption, must partake in thy triumphs over death and the grave. Living or dying, all thy redeemed are thine; so that they die, whenever their hour comes, in union with thee. And sweetly their bodies slumber, waiting thy call in the morn of the general resurrection. Thou wilt then call, and thy redeemed will answer, for thou wilt have respect to the work of thine hands. *For, if we believe that JESUS died and rose again, even so all them that sleep in JESUS will GOD bring with him.* Hail, Almighty LORD! thou art indeed the resurrection and the life. Thou art gone before; thou wilt come again to take all thy redeemed to thyself, that where thou art, there they may be also. Thou wilt show us the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.

PSALM 17

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here again at the mercy-seat, pleading his cause against the ungodly. In a tried GOD, who had before manifested his faithfulness, he now confides, and closeth with the assurance of a happy issue.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! help me to be looking unto thee, and, under the trials my soul is exercised with, teach me, LORD, so to pray, and so to commit my cause unto thee, that in thy righteousness I may find confidence, and wait thy precious decision among all thy redeemed.

And do thou keep me, LORD, as the apple of thine eye; keep me from the world; keep me from the men of the world; keep me from the snares of the world, that neither its smiles nor its frowns may seduce my soul to sin. Keep me, LORD, in thyself, and by thyself, that I may rise above every difficulty, and be made more than conqueror, through thy grace helping me.

Be thou my portion, blessed JESUS, for he hath no need to glean in the fields of worldly men, who hath JESUS for his treasure. None but thou, and wholly thou, canst be a portion to live upon through time and to all eternity. Hence, dearest LORD, I would pray, that thou shouldst be my all in all. For thou art the bottom and only solid foundation of all that can be truly called blessed. And as thou art the foundation, so thou art the superstructure, to complete our blessedness. Thou comprehendest all, sweetenest all, and suppliest all. LORD JESUS! be thou my daily portion now, and when I shall have done with time, and awake up after thy likeness in eternity, I shall be satisfied forever with thee.

PSALM 18

SUMMARY

We met with this Psalm in David's history, 2 Samuel 22 and had it referred to David only, I see no reason why it should make a part in this book. Indeed, doth it not seem, by being placed here, to intimate that we are to look beyond David for the highest and best sense of it? The Psalm itself treats of deliverance from enemies, and is an hymn of praise to this effect from beginning to end; and if read with an eye to CHRIST, is beautiful indeed.

To the Chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song, in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. And he said,

REFLECTIONS

Now, LORD, having beheld thy victories and the triumphs of thy redemption-work, let my soul pause over the same, and look up to thee in all those endearing characters, in which thou hast manifested thy grace and glory, when thou camest forth for the salvation of thy people. Do I not behold, in all that is here so sweetly expressed of thee and thy great undertaking, how graciously the FATHER'S hand was with thee, in and through the whole of the work the FATHER gave thee to do? And shall I not by faith, while remembering thy victories this day, follow thee in the praises of JEHOVAH, and call GOD my FATHER in thee, my Rock, and my strong Salvation? Oh! precious, precious JESUS, how inexpressibly sweet and refreshing to my soul is it to see that, from the intimate connection in which all thy redeemed stand to thee, what thou rejoicest in, we also rejoice, thy triumphs are our triumphs, and thy victories our victories. Thou art our glorious Head, and thy church is thy body; thou art the fulness of all fulness, to fill all in all.

And now, LORD, lead all thy redeemed forth to the same victory, in the casting down all the strong holds of sin and Satan. Subdue *in* us, blessed JESUS, as thou hast subdued *for* us, every remaining lust within or foe without, and hasten the glorious hour, when all that would now oppose our everlasting enjoyment of thee shall be destroyed; and, like Israel on the shore of the Red Sea, beholding

their foes destroyed before their eyes, may we see their faces no more again forever. Oh! for grace to begin the song of redeeming love, and to chaunt every verse of it daily, as we travel home to our FATHER'S house: *Salvation to GOD and the LAMB!* And oh! for glory to break in upon our souls, when the pilgrimage is ended, and when we shall sing aloud that glorious song: *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our GOD, and the power of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever.* Amen.

PSALM 19

SUMMARY

We have here another by hymn, if not to the victories of JESUS in the works of grace, yet to his glory as manifested in the works of creation, and in the gospel of his salvation. In the former part, the wonders of GOD'S power, as displayed in the creation of the heavenly bodies; in the latter, the still more marvellous power as set forth in the new creation of the soul.

REFLECTIONS

READER, as oft as you and I look up and behold the heavenly bodies all ministering in their appointed order, and contemplate GOD'S covenant love, existing and confirmed at this hour as much as when first GOD promised that seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night should remain; oh! let the view bring home additional proofs of GOD'S faithfulness. I would say to my heart, as Moses the man of GOD, said to Israel, Know thou, that the LORD thy GOD, he is GOD, the faithful GOD, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.

And, Reader, let this confirmation of GOD'S faithfulness in the works of creation, become a blessed testimony to strengthen both our souls, of the faithfulness of JEHOVAH in the kingdom of his grace. Yes! blessed JESUS! thou art he whom GOD our FATHER hath given, as the light and life of thy people. In our nature, at the call of

JEHOVAH, thou hast tabernacled. Thou hast with unceasing brightness, from day to day, been illuminating thy gospel church. Oh LORD! let the law of thy mouth, and thy statutes; thy testimonies, thy judgments, thy commandment, and thy fear, be inwrought by thy grace in our souls. And give us to esteem thee and thy word more than our necessary food. Cause us, under the enjoyment of it, to cry out with thy church of old, thy lips drop as the honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue. Thy love is better than wine. Precious LORD! what shame and confusion of face ought we to feel, in the recollection of our numerous offences, numerous neglects, and forgetfulness of thee. LORD! revive thy work! awaken meditation! Oh thou, who art the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof! be thou my constant joy, my unceasing delight; and let my meditation of thee be sweet, and all my springs be in thee!

PSALM 20

SUMMARY

We have here a prayer, put up by the whole church in faith, for JEHOVAH's prospering the cause of his glorious Messiah, the Church's king. And the Church, already taking for granted that what is asked in faith shall assuredly be obtained, in the close celebrates the victory, and sets up banners.

REFLECTIONS

WHO can read this Psalm, and behold to whom it refers, and then call to mind the blessed victories of our King and Saviour, but must with heart-felt joy join in every part of it while celebrating the triumphs of the Redeemer? Yes! blessed JESUS! GOD THE FATHER did hear thee in the day of trouble, when thou didst stand forth as our Surety for the salvation of thy people! GOD, even the mighty GOD of Jacob, did defend thee. An angel from heaven was sent to strengthen thee. And GOD did accept thy sacrifice, when thou by thyself didst make thy soul an offering for sin; and by virtue of it thou hast made all thy people accepted in thee, the beloved. Here, Lord, thy redeemed upon earth set up their banners, and thy redeemed in glory are clothed in white, and have the palms of victory in their hands.

And now, LORD, while we rejoice in thy strength, as becometh all thy redeemed, do thou make us more than conquerors, through thy grace helping us, in all the remaining conflicts we have to encounter. In thy name we will greatly rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make our boast. And surely, LORD, while thou art the glory of our strength, we shall not be like those who trust to chariots or horses: but we shall be made strong in thy power, and thou wilt finally bruise Satan and every foe under our feet. Save LORD! JESUS, hear us when we call upon thee!

PSALM 21

SUMMARY

If the foregoing Psalm prayed for the Mediator's success in his great undertaking of redemption, here we have a thanksgiving Psalm for the answer of JEHOVAH to that Prayer, in the triumphs of the LORD JESUS. The Church is here blessing the LORD for those victories of her Redeemer and King, and expressing her sure confidence of everlasting triumphs in JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

READER, here let us pause, and with holy admiration, love and praise, contemplate the astonishing love of GOD our FATHER, in giving his dear SON, and the astonishing love of GOD the SON, in coming to redeem our nature, and by such a process of grace opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Surely never did GOD display such love, wisdom, and grace, as in the redemption by JESUS. And if the King rejoiceth in such great salvation, well may the happy objects of it, who, by his gracious undertaking, and victory, are made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER.

And oh, thou glorious Mediator! was it thine heart's desire, which GOD thy FATHER granted thee, that thou mightest see of the travail of thy soul, that thou mightest have thy church, thy spouse, thy fair one? Didst thou, blessed LORD, from everlasting set thine heart's desire upon thy people? Didst thou, from this desire towards thy people, come and tabernacle among them? And was such thine

ardent desire for the working out their redemption, by thy sufferings and death, that thou was straitened until that thy baptism of pain and agonies was accomplished? And as thou didst all along desire everything that had a tendency to bring about those blessed purposes, is it not now, blessed JESUS, thy desire for the time to come, in every individual instance of thy purchased ones, that their conversion may be accomplished? Dost thou not wait to be gracious? Dost thou not count thy people as the excellent of the earth, in whom is all thy desire, all thy delight? And do we not know, that those desires of thine will never be fully gratified, until thou hast gathered all thy redeemed around thee in glory? O thou glorious, thou almighty SHILOH! to thee shall the gathering of the people be. Yes, LORD, thou art the desire of all nations! Thou art the one glorious object of desire in every awakened heart. LORD JESUS, be thou my King, my GOD! And as the FATHER hath put a crown of pure gold upon thy head, and declared thee to be his King in Zion, so would my poor withered hand, through thy grace, be stretched forth in faith, to put the crown of my salvation on thy sacred head, declaring thee to be my lawful, rightful LORD, both by the FATHER'S gift, the purchase of thy blood, and the conquests of thy grace. LORD! henceforth make me wholly thine, for I am no longer my own; thou hast bought me with a price, and therefore would I glorify thee with my whole soul and body, and spirit, which I pray thee to sanctify, and to preserve blameless, until the day of thy coming.

PSALM 22

SUMMARY

Here is indeed a gospel Psalm, full of JESUS, and of JESUS only, from beginning to end. it consists of two parts: Of the sufferings of CHRIST, and then of the glory that should follow: his cries, agonies, discouragements, desertions, death; his glory, and the blessedness of his salvation.

To the chief Musician upon *Aijeleth, Shahar*. A Psalm of David.

Is not CHRIST discoverable in the very title of this Psalm? For who is *the Hind of the Morning* but JESUS? *Aijeleth Shahar* means Hind of the Morning, and so is rendered in the margin of our old

Bibles. Sweet thought! JESUS was so from the everlasting morning, when set up from everlasting. And when in time, was he not hunted and slaughtered by the dogs spoken of in this Psalm? See Song Of Solomon 8:14.

REFLECTIONS

READER, where shall we begin, or where end, in our views of the LORD JESUS, as set forth in this most precious scripture? Let us, as we are most bounden, bless our GOD and FATHER, for this most gracious gift of his dear SON. Let us, as we are most bounden, bless JESUS, the Son of his love, for the wonders of redemption, and the wonders of his love to us, in thus dying for us, and causing us now to participate in his triumphs. And let us, as we are most bounden, bless and adore GOD the HOLY GHOST, for having raised up prophets in his church, thus to shadow forth to Old Testament Saints the grand features of the LORD JESUS in his humiliation, and the glory that should follow; and hereby to have taught New Testament believers also, the blessings in which both Old and New are all alike equally interested, by the glorious person, and glorious work, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Well may every soul cry out, Blessed be the LORD JEHOVAH, for JESUS CHRIST!

But oh, thou precious Redeemer! what praises shall we offer thee now, or what shall we say to thee to all eternity, for thy great undertaking? Never shall we be able to express sufficient thankfulness, for such unparalleled love. And not only, dearest LORD, that thou hast accomplished redemption for us, but that thou didst accomplish it in such a way. Was it not enough, O thou glorious Benefactor of mankind, that thou didst overcome death, and hell, and the grave, for thy redeemed; but that in the vast work thou didst take away even the bitterness of death, for thy people, and didst drink the cup of trembling thyself, even to the dregs, that they might have the cup of salvation? How many of thy redeemed have gone to heaven triumphant, in the merits of thy cross, whilst thou thyself didst die under extreme sorrow? David feared not the valley of the shadow of death, because thou wert with him: and Paul gloried in suffering that thy power might rest upon him: whereas thou, blessed JESUS, didst groan and cry under the pressure of death's pains.

Didst thou, indeed, take all the curse; all the sin, all the load, all the sorrow, on purpose that thy people, in their dying hours, should feel nothing of the sting of sin? Oh, thou Lover of thy people! help me to adore thee, to love thee, to live to thee, and, with thy servant the apostle, always to keep in remembrance that love of thine, which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of GOD.

Now, heavenly and triumphant Saviour, hasten thy kingdom. Let thy church bless thee; let all thy redeemed give thanks to thee. Fulfil, LORD, and complete thine own blessed promise: let thy seed forever serve thee on earth, until thou shalt come to call home all thy redeemed to heaven: and the whole church shall be brought into one fold, both Jew and Gentile, and all the nations of the earth shall be converted to the LORD, as the waters cover the earth. Amen.

PSALM 23

SUMMARY

The Psalmist here expresseth his entire confidence in the LORD, and considers him under the beautiful and interesting character of a shepherd: a well known office of JESUS CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou great Shepherd of Israel, thou that ledest Joseph like a flock! May I not humbly look up, and call thee, blessed JESUS, my Shepherd also? Surely thou hast been sent, and appointed, by the FATHER, to take upon thee the sheepfold of all thy redeemed, whom thou hast purchased with thy blood. And dost thou not gather every one of them out of their state by nature, before that they are brought within thy fold? Dost thou not go after every wanderer into the mountains, to seek and search them out, whither they have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day? And when thou hast found them, blessed Shepherd, dost thou not lay them on thy shoulders rejoicing? And when thou bringest them home, dost thou not cause thy angels to rejoice with thee over them that were lost? Surely, LORD, thou hast done all this for me; thou didst seek me out, for else never should I have sought thee. Thou hast brought me into the fold of thy church, and never, never shall I want. Tell me, O thou whom

my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou causest thy flock to rest at noon! Yes, thou wilt feed me in wholesome pastures, even thy blessed word, and by thine ordinances; thou wilt cause me to drink of that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of GOD; thou wilt heal me when diseased; thou wilt bind me up when torn; thou wilt defend me from the lion's den, and the mountains of leopards; thou wilt clothe me with the garment of thy righteousness; thou wilt separate me from the goats, and the unclean; thou wilt cause me to lie down, with present joy and safety, upon the green pastures of thy glorious person and glorious work, thy covenant righteousness, relations, and characters; and I shall lie down hereafter in thy bosom, where thou puttest the lambs of thy flock. Yes! yes! thou almighty Shepherd, all this, and infinitely more, wilt thou do for me, and in me, and by me, until thou bringest home all thy flock into one fold; when everyone shall pass again under the hand of him that telleth them, to manifest that of them the FATHER hath given thee none is, or can be lost; that none of thy sheep can perish, nor any pluck them out of thine and thy FATHER'S hand. And at length, blessed JESUS, thou wilt bring thy whole fold around thyself in glory, where thou wilt lead them to fountains of living waters, and all tears, shall be wiped away from all eyes.

PSALM 24

SUMMARY

Here is another gospel Psalm, in which the HOLY GHOST, by the pen of his servant David, describes the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the glorious Mediator; head, and King of his Church. He is first described as Him by whom JEHOVAH made the world; and then he is pointed out both in his kingdom of providence and kingdom of grace; and a demand is made upon the heavenly gates to receive this glorious Mediator, returning from the great work of redemption with triumph and holy joy.

REFLECTIONS

READER, short as this Psalm is, yet what glorious things are contained in it! What volumes are folded up in its bosom. Here is enough to excite inquiry, and to exercise contemplation upon the person and work of JESUS to all eternity.

Let us seek grace to gather every improvement from it, which GOD the HOLY GHOST evidently designed, in causing it to be written for the use of the church; and while we learn from it, that the earth, and all its inhabitants, the lower and the higher world, the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace, are all his right, both as one with the FATHER, GOD, and by donation as GOD and man, Mediator; let us cheerfully give our GOD and Saviour the glory due to his most holy name, and know that none but the man CHRIST JESUS ever had, right in himself, from the perfect holiness of his nature, to ascend the holy hill; and the only claim of his people is founded in him. Reader, let us pray for grace, that we may tremble to seek acceptance in any other way. Let JESUS have all the glory, for the whole work hath been his.

And blessed it is to look to JESUS, as a whole Saviour, to whom we come in the last moment of our pilgrimage state, as we came the first moment we found our need of a Saviour, poor and needy in ourselves, and made rich only in him.

And oh! thou glorious HOLY ONE, before whom heaven's gate and everlasting doors were thrown open for thine entrance, give me to see, LORD, that every bar and obstruction which stood in thy way to my heart thou hast thrown down. Do thou, blessed JESUS, for thou art strong and mighty, even the LORD mighty in battle, do thou drive out the strong men armed, that have kept me so long in the vassalage of sin. Come in, thou blessed LORD! wherefore standest thou without. Take full possession of my poor heart, and bring down every thought into captivity, and every imagination to the perfect obedience of thee, my GOD. Oh for grace to be thine now, and thine to all eternity. Amen.

PSALM 25

SUMMARY

We have here expressed the state and fervour of the soul towards GOD; suited strength and help is earnestly desired, and that upon the promise of the covenant.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us never lose sight of CHRIST, as JESUS, the CHRIST of GOD and our appointed High Priest; in all the fervent prayers we meet with in the written word: for as we cannot pray profitably without his SPIRIT helping us, so neither can our prayers ever come up before GOD and our FATHER unless presented with an eye to JESUS, and his finished salvation, and by him as our great Intercessor.

But, blessed JESUS! who is it that thus addresses the FATHER but thee? Who is enabled to lift his heart to GOD but thee? Thou thyself hast graciously taught us, that without thee we can do nothing. Do thou, therefore, gracious LORD, both teach us how to pray, how to appear before thee in the way that thou shalt choose, and how to lift up our whole heart's affections and desires after thee; for thou art the LORD our righteousness. And as GOD our FATHER pardoned all the sins of thy redeemed, though they were heavy, great, and grievous, because thou didst bear them all, and take them as thine own; so, LORD, for thy great name's sake, pardon ours, notwithstanding their heavy nature, and the many provocations with which they have been marked. Precious JESUS! may our souls find confidence in the blessed hope that, as thou wert made sin for us, when thou knewest no sin, so thou hast redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee: and art made of GOD to us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the LORD.

PSALM 26

SUMMARY

Under the spirit of prophecy, the Psalmist in this Psalm describes the LORD JESUS as his church's representative, making an appeal to GOD's justice, in the consciousness of his own integrity. He implores deliverance from unjust accusation, and closeth with praises.

REFLECTIONS

READER, how truly lovely it is to behold JESUS in the immaculate lushness of his nature! For with that holiness we should ever connect the interests of his people. And of all the pleas for a poor sinner to use at a throne of grace, the holiness of JESUS, as his justification, is the highest and the best; indeed the only plea. Oh! what unknown arguments are contained in that sanctity of CHRIST, which could, and did appeal to JEHOVAH, to examine and prove and try his reins and his heart. Precious LAMB of GOD! methinks I feel the confidence of it! Surely it hath a double assurance; for the FATHER'S grace and the SON'S righteousness are here blended. And can I have any just apprehension of my GOD's condemning me for sin, while I am looking up, in GOD'S own way, for acceptance in the perfect justifying righteousness of his dear SON? Here, then, blessed JESUS, would I adopt thine own words, as oft as I go to the mercy-seat, and say, Judge me, O LORD, for I have walked in the integrity of JESUS; I have trusted in his righteousness, therefore I shall not slide. Surely, I will say, in the LORD have I righteousness, and strength even to him am I come; for thou hast said, *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

PSALM 27

SUMMARY

We have in this Psalm the blessed effects most fully described of strong confidence and faith in GOD. The happiness of communion

with GOD is also very beautifully set forth, and the certainty of GOD answering prayer.

REFLECTIONS

READER, how beautiful is that scripture which hath CHRIST for its one glorious object, and that by holding him forth to the church's view, in the blessed work the FATHER gave him to do, represents him at the same time to his people, as their glorious Head, and as their glorious example. We shall derive all the blessedness which faith can derive from the many delightful encouragements held forth in this precious Psalm, if we keep up an unceasing dependence upon our glorious Redeemer, and approach to plead, for every blessing here sought for, from our sole interest in him. JESUS is our light, our life, our salvation, and the lifter up of our heads. Without him we have neither life, nor light, nor strength, nor confidence. In him, we find all: the source, the fountain, the means, the end, of every temporal, spiritual, and eternal security. And while we thus behold him, as our great Mediator, desiring to be everlastingly in communion with the FATHER, let us behold our vast privileges, and plead for some sweet and spiritual enjoyment in him, and through him, who is the one object of desire, to his redeemed in all nations. And, Reader, let us seek grace to resemble the blessed JESUS, who, in the days of his flesh, was assaulted by all the powers of darkness, by waiting until the hour of deliverance arrives, which will preserve us from fainting, or from being weary in our minds. Let us pray him, who hath gone before in the trying path, that we may be looking unto him, until we find our souls strengthened with his SPIRIT'S might in our inward man. And depend upon it, while that grace within imparts strength to resist enemies without, neither the remains of unbelief, nor the corruptions of our nature, no, nor all the powers of darkness, will cast us down; but his strength will be perfected in our weakness, and we shall be more than conquerors, through his grace helping us.

PSALM 28

SUMMARY

We have here the same speaker, under situations not unsimilar, to what went before, in the preceding Psalm. The opening of this blessed scripture, is with prayer, and the close of it, with praise.

REFLECTIONS

Here, my soul, take a lesson from the ever blessed JESUS, David's LORD, how to cry unto GOD as thy Rock, thy JESUS, thy sure salvation. He will not be silent to this cry, for he hath said, Before my people call, I will answer. And learn moreover, that thine oracle, unto which thou art to approach, is a sure hearing place for poor sinners, and a sure answering place from GOD in CHRIST to poor sinners. Deliverance must come in GOD's own appointed time, and in the LORD's own appointed way. Let the inhabitants of the Rock, even them that inhabit the refuge in JESUS, sing.

And wilt thou not, my soul, from the beautiful example of this Psalm, close every prayer with praise? What, shall a mercy-seat ever be a witness against thee, that thou didst depart without giving thanks to the LORD? Forbid it, gracious LORD. Surely thou knowest, thou canst not indeed but know, never was a petition put up in JESUS's name unheard; neither was it ever unanswered, though not always according to our wish of things, either in time or manner, but according to GOD's purpose, whose promises are all yea and amen in CHRIST JESUS. Learn then, my soul, us one of the sweetest tokens of a spirit of grace and supplications, with thanksgiving in prayer, that blessings follow prayer, as suitably as mercies are returned to supplication. Yea, LORD, I would desire grace in all things to give thanks; and as this blessed scripture expresseth it, in this Psalm, so would I, in every renewed approach to the throne of grace, follow up the same devout doxology, and say, The LORD is my strength, and my shield: my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and in my song will I praise him.

PSALM 29

SUMMARY

The very particular manner in which the voice of JEHOVAH is here celebrated, should lead us to a serious Inquiry of the importance of the expression. All sovereignty and authority of earthly rank is demanded to give praise unto it, as well as all nature.

REFLECTIONS

HEARKEN, my soul, to the voice of GOD! Hear it on the waters of the sanctuary, in the thunders of his law, in the soft whispers of his gospel. Surely there is enough in it when JESUS speaks to awaken sinners, though dead in trespasses and sins. And hast thou, my soul, so heard that solemn, awful, gracious, pleasing voice, as to give GOD the glory due unto his name, and to worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness? Blessed voice of JEHOVAH! thou dost indeed divide the flames of fire, for thou hast been in my soul as a Spirit of judgment, and a Spirit of burning. Oh! how powerfully have I at times felt thy word! how it hath enlightened my mind, softened my heart, and subdued my will. Yes, truly, LORD, thou hast said, and I have found it true, *Thou art the LORD, who teachest me to profit.*

And now, blessed JESUS, let me hear more and more thy voice, in all the gracious manifestations of thy love. Thou hast given, and thou wilt give strength, unto thy people. And as thou art thyself our peace, and hast made our peace in thy blood of the cross, so, LORD, be thou my all in all, that though in the world I shall have tribulation, in thee I shall have peace. Truly, LORD, thou shalt be our peace, when the Assyrian shall pass through the land.

PSALM 30

SUMMARY

The title of this Psalm tells what it is. The Psalmist praiseth GOD for his goodness, and he calleth upon others to do the same from the same cause.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us behold our glorious Head in this beautiful Psalm, and then, in his name, we also shall set up our banners. When he had by himself purged our sins, and when, by the sacrifice of himself once offered, he had forever perfected them that are sanctified, think how highly the FATHER exalted him, and, as our glorious Mediator, gave him a name, which is above every name. Hail, thou risen, holy, exalted, high, and glorious Saviour. We bow the knee before thee, and with joy confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD THE FATHER. And now, LORD, in thy light, shall we see light. Beholding thy personal triumphs, and feeling, by the sweet constraining tokens of thy love and grace, how highly we bear a part in all that concerns thee, we begin already the Song in thee, and extol our GOD and King, who hath delivered us from the pit wherein is no water, and will bring us from the grave of death, to a joyful resurrection, when the LORD shall come to gather his saints together, and to be admired in all them that believe. And although, while going home to our FATHER's home, we meet with a chequered path in the way, yet the everlasting day, which hath no night, is hastening. Heaviness may endure for the night, but ere long all heaviness will be done away. The LORD himself is our everlasting light, and our GOD our glory.

PSALM 31

SUMMARY

This is a memorable Psalm, in that it contains some of the very words pronounced by our LORD on the cross. So that here also, as in

numberless instances, we may discern somewhat of JESUS. The Psalm opens in prayer, and ends in praise.

REFLECTIONS

STAND still, my soul, and make a solemn pause over the perusal of this most precious Psalm. Did David, indeed, by the spirit of prophecy, here describe CHRIST? Was the HOLY GHOST so graciously attentive to the interests of the church, as to cause such a treasure to be laid up, concerning the Redeemer's exercises, so many ages before his incarnation? Well then mayest thou regard every portion of it as blessed, and while hearing JESUS, in those exercises, thus pleading with the FATHER, rejoice in contemplating the gracious fruits of his intercession. Yea, my soul, let such views of CHRIST, as thy Surety, support thee in all the lesser exercises of thy warfare, and give thee comfort in the assurance, that, as CHRIST was heard in that he feared, thy prayers in him will come up at all times with acceptance, upon that altar.

And oh! thou blessed LORD, didst thou indeed, in thy suretyship engagements, thus smart for it; and wert thou made a reproach and a derision? Was thy life consumed with grief, and thy years with trouble? Oh LAMB of GOD! cause me to contemplate with increasing earnestness, and increasing delight, at every renewed view, thy marvellous love in thus exposing thyself to evil for the everlasting happiness of thy redeemed.

And do thou, blessed SPIRIT, impress upon my mind such a deep sense of the infinite preciousness of JESUS and his salvation, that in him and in his righteousness I may go forth from day to day, humbly casting myself upon the covenant faithfulness of JEHOVAH, as my strong rock and house of defense against all my enemies. May my soul rejoice in the LORD, and triumph in the GOD of my salvation. And in all the exercises and events of this short pilgrimage state, may it be my joy that my times are in the LORD's hands: and when he shall appoint the time of my departure, may I be enabled from long acquaintance, long proved and well-founded confidence in the merits and righteousness of JESUS for salvation, to make a full and perfect surrender of soul, body, and spirit unto him, humbly adopting the same blessed words: *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth.*

PSALM 32

SUMMARY

The blessedness of having sin cancelled, and the blessedness of being brought into a state where there is no iniquity, are here both set forth. The joy and comfort of having favour with GOD, and having GOD for a hiding place, are also set forth in strong expressions of delight.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how very gracious the LORD is, in the blessed provision made against the evil effects of sin and iniquity in our poor fallen nature? How sweet is it to feel the effects of grace leading to repentance. But, Reader! let you and I keep in remembrance, that although a gracious GOD in CHRIST, when we confess our transgressions, will forgive the iniquity of our sin; yet this pardon ariseth not for our repentance and confessions, but for the sake of CHRIST the LAMB of GOD, who hath taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself. It is not our tears, our repentance, our sorrow, our confession, which entitle us to mercy; for what glory, or what recompense to GOD's righteous laws, which we have broken by sin, can the LORD find from these and ten thousand more of our endeavours to restore the honour of his holiness and his glory, which by us is impossible? Surely, if we think at all, we cannot but conclude, that there is nothing in us, or in our greatest exertions, which can satisfy divine justice, when we ourselves are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses as filthy rags. But it is JESUS, in his holiness and covenant righteousness, it is his blood which cleanseth, and his obedience which justifieth, without any other procuring cause on our part, and which brings us, into a state of acceptance before GOD. Reader! are you fully established in these truths? Then will you enter into a real, heartfelt enjoyment of the blessedness this Psalm speaks of. It is indeed, most blessed, when in CHRIST we behold righteousness imputed to us, who are poor sinners in ourselves: and it is most blessed when the load of guilt is taken away, and the sin of our souls is so completely covered, that, like the sin of Judah, though written by nature as with a pen of iron, and graven upon the tablet of the heart, yet, by grace in CHRIST, when

sought for, it shall not be found. GOD saith I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. Blessed JESUS! in thee these blessings alone we find. Thou art the LORD our righteousness. Clothe me, holy LORD, with thy garment of salvation, and cover me with the robe of thy righteousness; then will mercy indeed compass me about, and my soul will shout for joy with all the upright in heart.

PSALM 33

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here engaged in praise, and this holy joy and thanks giving is founded upon the consciousness of GOD's faithfulness, and truth; and mercy. The hymn closeth with a determined trust in GOD.

REFLECTIONS

LET every justified soul rejoice in the LORD, and rejoice always, for surely the rich redemption of JESUS is enough to fill all hearts that are the partakers of it with praise. But, my soul! what hast thou learned of this sacred and hallowed song? Canst thou go over the several parts of it with an eye to thine own interest in it, and make the responses, as thou goest along, from a real heartfelt and personal enjoyment of it? Thou canst sing indeed of *creation*, for the LORD in mercy hath called thee into existence, and thou canst testify, as this Psalm of praise records, that by the word of the LORD the heavens were made; and by his SPIRIT hath he garnished the heavens. Thou canst sing of his *providence* also, for his counsel must stand, and the LORD will perform all his will. Thou canst sing of *grace* no less, because thou hast seen how the LORD led out Israel, blessed him as a nation, and chose him as a people for his own inheritance. But, my soul, though these subjects are blessed aids to call forth hymns of continual praise; the question is, what part dost *thou* thyself bear in it? If, as this Psalm records, the LORD looketh from heaven and beholdeth all the sons of men; if the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, and upon them that hope in JESUS, the mercy

promised; hast thou a well-grounded hope and assurance that his eye is upon *thee* in grace, because thou art hoping in JESUS? Pause, my soul! Art thou acquainted with GOD's mercy in CHRIST? Hath he delivered thy soul from spiritual death, in having found a ransom for thee to keep thee from going down to the pit? Hath he kept thee alive in famine, both before thou knewest him in grace, and now in the numberless instances since thou hast known him in mercy, when thy fears have been alive, and thy hopes dying from unbelief, and the temptations of the enemy? O then, my soul, if these things be so, and thou canst set to thy seal that GOD is true, look up to JESUS, look up to thy GOD and FATHER in him, and under the continued influences of the HOLY GHOST, daily, hourly, adopt this sweet prayer of faith, and tell thy GOD that thy hope is in him; and never can any wait long for his blessing, who live upon JESUS's mercy. See, LORD, my expectation is alone in JESUS: and therefore, JESUS, be thou with me and upon me, according as my hope is in thee. Amen.

PSALM 34

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is celebrating divine goodness through the whole of this Psalm, and from his experience calling upon the whole Church to engage in the same delightful employment.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think how gracious GOD the HOLY GHOST is, in calling again and again upon the Church to view CHRIST in his ministry and in his triumphs, to prompt all, his redeemed to triumph in him and through him, when the LORD at any time gives new cause for praise. And shall not you and I, in JESUS's name and righteousness, take up the same language? Is there a day, or a portion of a day, but what we find cause to say, The praise of a GOD in CHRIST shall be continually in my mouth? And shall we not invite the humble and the exercised to come, and magnify the LORD with us, and that we may bless his name together?

Blessed Mediator! let thine eyes be upon thy people for good! Let thine ears be ever open to their prayers! Surely, LORD, thou hast

never put thyself into those near and tender connections with our nature for nothing! Thou hast come down to us in the most endearing ties of relationship for this express purpose, that we might unite unto thee, and that our eyes may be always up unto thee as the eyes of a servant unto the hand of his master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress! And therefore, blessed JESUS, we would have our whole soul centered in thee, that our faces may never be ashamed.

O Holy FATHER! thou hast heard the cries of the poor man! thou hast delivered him out of all his troubles. And now, LORD, hear thy redeemed in JESUS. For his sake do thou redeem the souls of his servants, and let our souls never be ashamed nor confounded who trust in him, world without end. Amen.

PSALM 35

SUMMARY

The prophet David is evidently here typifying CHRIST and speaking of him. The Psalm, is a subject of prayer, with strong faith and assurance. In the close a song of thanksgiving is added.

REFLECTIONS

READER! methinks I would pass by every other consideration while going over this precious Psalm, and overlook all other persons and characters, to contemplate Him, and Him only, who here, under the prophetic inspiration given by GOD the HOLY GHOST to his servant David, is so strikingly set forth! Let us behold him here as our surety; sustaining every indignity, reproach, and suffering which we merited, and he endured: and as the holy, harmless JESUS, who had done no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, appealing for the justice of his cause to his most righteous FATHER. And while you and I read the sorrowful account, oh! for grace so to take interest in what we read of JESUS, as the CHRIST of GOD, as to feel our whole souls drawn out in love and affection to him. Yea, blessed JESUS! I would say, did false witnesses arise up against thee; did they nail thee to the cross, and insult over thy sacred person in those

unequalled seasons of sorrow! Did they add cruelty to injustice, and bid defiance to thy sovereignty, grace, and love; and wert thou thus oppressed, detested, and despised for me and for my salvation? Didst thou indeed give thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not thy face from shame and spitting? And all this for me! Oh! love inexpressible, in comprehensible, and passing knowledge! Henceforth, dear LORD, let me never, never lose sight of thee, and thy patience under sufferings. Give me, I beseech thee, grace in all the little provocations which I meet with in life in following thee and thy glorious cause; give me grace to consider at all times Him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, that I may never be weary nor faint in mind. LORD! let me esteem it my highest honour, my most distinguishing privilege, to be conformed to thee and to thy likeness in all things; that I may know the power of thy resurrection and the fellowship of thy sufferings. And oh! *let my tongue speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long.*

PSALM 36

SUMMARY

The Psalmist from his own knowledge here describes the sad state of a fallen nature. He extols the mercy of GOD. He prays for the continuance of GOD's loving kindness, and foretells the ruin of the ungodly.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over the contents of this Psalm, and let us ask ourselves whether our own transgressions and daily short comings, have brought us to the same conclusion as the Psalmist? It is a blessed experience and among the first principles of a cure for disease, as well spiritual as bodily; when we are led to discover in what the disease consists. Yea, Reader! if the HOLY GHOST hath convinced of sin, then transgression within our own heart will say, and say it too sometimes in a daring manner, the fear of GOD is for a while lessened. Alas! what is man, what is every man by sin?

Reader! let us both look to him where alone is our remedy. It is wholly with JESUS, in JESUS. He is indeed the fountain of life, the fountain for pardon, for sin, and for all uncleanness. Oh! for grace to be seeking to him continually. Depend upon it, my brother, the more we come, the more we seek, the more we draw, the faster will flow the streams from that spring, which is inexhaustible, unchangeable, eternal. LORD, be thou in me a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life!

LORD! I beseech thee, fulfil that blessed promise of being abundantly satisfied with the fulness of thine house. Oh! LORD, what can satisfy the desires of an awakened soul, but thyself? Life *in* thee, and communion *with* thee, unceasing enjoyment *of* thee, and unceasing and increasing desires *after* thee; these, LORD, are the longings of my soul: and do thou, LORD, grant me to be, according to this sweet promise, both satisfied, and abundantly satisfied, during a pilgrimage state here, in this dry and barren wilderness, until thou shalt bring me to the fountain head of everlasting enjoyment with the church above; where, when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall indeed be satisfied with thyself, and in thee find an eternal fountain of joy for evermore. Amen.

PSALM 37

SUMMARY

This Psalm is a psalm of instruction. It should seem that GOD the HOLY GHOST was graciously pleased to make use of his servant the prophet's pen to give suitable information to the church, concerning the prosperity of the wicked, and the apparent distress of the righteous.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! from the perusal of this blessed Psalm, take the apostle's words as the best conclusion from the whole, and subscribe to the doctrine, as a doctrine perfectly conclusive and unquestionable: *Godliness is profitable unto all things; it hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Oh! ye children of sin, wherefore do ye oppress the righteous? Why is it that ye enlist yourselves under the banner of Satan? Why should you wear his livery, engage in his service, and oppose CHRIST and his little ones? What are your wages now? And what will be the just judgment of Almighty GOD hereafter?

Oh! ye feeble souls, who bear the image of CHRIST, and are persecuted for righteousness sake! What though enemies surround you, and the world, and sin, and Satan, sometimes make you afraid.; be strong in the LORD and in the power of his might. Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. In the mean time, see that ye live by faith. Lay hold of the hope that is before you, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of your faith. Think of him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be weary and faint in mind. The hour hasteneth, (nay the judge is at the door,) when those Egyptians which now harass you shall be seen by you no more. Be patient; stablish your heart; for the coming of the. LORD draweth nigh. He which testified these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Even so come, LORD JESUS. Amen.

PSALM 38

SUMMARY

Here is another of those blessed portions of the divine word, in which the Prophet speaketh much of CHRIST. The whole Psalm is a continued petition, in which JEHOVAH is appealed to for compassion.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how blessed is it to behold the attention of GOD the HOLY GHOST to the interests and happiness of the Church in all ages, in thus keeping alive the grand and leading points of redemption by the LORD JESUS in the minds of the people. Well might this Psalm be called a Psalm of remembrance, since it treasureth up so many tender and affectionate particulars concerning the LORD CHRIST. I would say for myself as I peruse it, to GOD the HOLY GHOST: Blessed LORD, I thank thee for so precious a record in the Old Testament scripture concerning my LORD. And I would add, Do thou, blessed

LORD, be the frequent remembrancer to my poor forgetful soul, of all the precious things which relate to my GOD and Saviour.

Reader, is JESUS here set forth! Is it indeed He of whom the prophet speaks? Oh! then for faith in this blessed surety to find deliverance from all the sins, sorrows, and punishments due, and justly due, to GOD's broken law. Oh! for grace and faith in lively exercise to believe the record which GOD hath given of his dear SON. Oh! for faith so to receive the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, and plead it at all times, and upon all occasions before the throne, as the very righteousness in which my soul now lives, in which my body will die, and in which both soul and body shall appear before GOD, and be clothed in, to all eternity.

Precious blessed JESUS! now I see how it is, and why it is, that thou art, as the CHRIST of GOD, so suited and so desirable to every poor, awakened, convinced, and broken-hearted sinner. Thou hast stood in our stead. Thou hast borne our sins in thine own body on the tree. Thou hast died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD. Oh! the beauties, the glories, the loveliness of JESUS! Let others glory in what they may; let others boast in what they will; be thou all my rejoicing, all my confidence, all my hope, my righteousness, my joy! This is the sum and substance of all my happiness here and forever. *The LORD is my strength and my song, and he also is become my salvation.*

PSALM 39

SUMMARY

This is a mournful Psalm, on the sorrows and uncertainty of life, full of pious breathings on death, and the solemn consequences of it. The Psalm closes in prayer.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let our improvements on this solemn meditation of the Psalmist, (for we are all, as men, equally interested in it,) lead out our thoughts upon the same necessary subject. Have we ever lifted the earnest supplication like him unto GOD for grace, so to

number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom? Have we so counted ourselves for strangers and sojourners upon earth, as like sojourners only to make CHRIST our home, our resting place, our one only pursuit, our one only desire? My brother! I would say, are you a stranger upon earth? Then surely your plan of life, your pursuit, your conversation, your daily walk, will be as the pilgrim, foreign to all the customs, manners, habits, pleasures, and delights of those around. If a sojourner only, then this is not your home, nor are these objects worth your regard. Are you then asking for the good old way the holy fathers trod? Are you seeking the way to Zion with your face thitherward? Is JESUS the pearl of great price, GOD your FATHER, the HOLY SPIRIT your guide, the church of CHRIST your inn, the ordinances of the gospel like waggons on the road to refresh you, and the holy sabbaths like so many wells of salivation to draw from? Oh! how blessed is it to sit loose and detached from all things here below, that we may have our conversation in heaven, that while going home to our FATHER's house we may use the world as not abusing it, knowing that the fashion of it passeth away; and, like the patriarchs, may be always on the look-out for that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD.

PSALM 40

SUMMARY

This is altogether a gospel Psalm; and most certainly, from the authority of the HOLY GHOST, we may safely conclude that here the SPIRIT of CHRIST, which was in the prophets, guided and directed the pen of David to speak of the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory which should follow. We have here the LORD CHRIST described by the prophet, as speaking in his divine office, both as the High Priest and the sacrifice offered to GOD.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! here look at JESUS with a steady fixed eye, until thou goest forth with all the affections of love, praise, thanksgiving, and every testimony of obedience, after him, and unto him, who so loved

thee, as to give himself for thee, an offering and a sacrifice to GOD of a sweet smelling savour!

Blessings be everlastingly given by all the redeemed on earth and in heaven, to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for this sweet scripture, explained as it is to the church in another scripture, by which we are enabled, without the possibility of a mistake, to discover to whom the whole applies. We thank thee, O thou blessed SPIRIT of all truth, for thus glorifying the LORD CHRIST to our view, and we beseech thee to supply us here below with continual grace, that we may see CHRIST our beloved thus sweetly set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood. Here would my soul say, as oft as I look to the cross of CHRIST, here is every poor sinner's strong hold, here is his sure, his only hope. When neither sacrifice nor burnt-offering would atone, JESUS came to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Blessings be everlastingly given by all the redeemed on earth and in heaven to GOD THE FATHER, for his unequalled love in the gift of his dear SON. Yes! most gracious GOD and FATHER, the holy Church, both in grace and glory, adores thee, not only for raising up this holy One mighty to save, but for setting him apart and constituting him our glorious Head, whereby he hath borne our sins, and through thy gracious appointment his righteousness is ours, and thou, even thou thyself, hast said that this is the name whereby he shall be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

And blessings be everlastingly given by all the redeemed on earth and in heaven to thee, thou holy, blessed, precious JESUS, for thy merciful, kind, and compassionate undertaking. And when neither the blood of bulls nor goats, nor the sacrifices on a thousand altars, could atone for our guilt, thou camest full of grace and love, and by the one offering of thyself, hast forever perfected them that are sanctified!

Hail! holy, blessed, gracious, undivided Three in One, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! May all the redeemed below praise thee, in the same strain of adoration as the church above, until both churches join in one to celebrate the glories of redemption in an unceasing hymn of love and thanksgiving through all eternity. Amen, Hallelujah, Amen.

PSALM 41

SUMMARY

Here is another gospel Psalm, and from our LORD'S own application of a verse in it to himself, and his own circumstances, we are sweetly taught to whom it belongs. The contents are the LORD'S attention over him, and man's treachery against him.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us pause over this Psalm. It will be profitable so to do. Surely JESUS may be seen in it. He was blessed in visiting the sick and needy. He was blessed when, in the debased state of sickness and need, he subjected himself to sorrow for our salvation. He was most blessed indeed when oppressed with griefs and sorrows; and he was most blessed when, like the good Samaritan, he rescued us from the thievish, hellish cruelty of Satan, who had left us more than half dead when JESUS passed by. And though in the pursuit of those gracious designs he was betrayed both by false friends and open enemies, yet JEHOVAH pronounced him blessed, and upheld him and carried him through all, and hath now set him before his face forever. Hail! thou glorious, risen, and exalted Saviour! Men shall be blessed in thee and all nations shall call thee blessed.

Blessed and adored Redeemer! grant thy people grace to follow thy bright example. LORD, cause us to sympathize with all thine exercised and afflicted ones. Make it our delight and our joy to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Oh for grace to give the cup of cold water, when we have nothing better to offer, in the name of a disciple, and to love all that love, our LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity and truth.

PSALM 42

SUMMARY

In this Psalm we have the devout breathings of the soul towards GOD, opposed by unbelief and distrust.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou ever living, ever flowing, ever refreshing source, to assuage the thirsty souls of thy redeemed in all their pilgrimage state here below; precious JESUS! be thou to me, as to the church in all ages, a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Thou art indeed in the midst of the throne above, leading thy church to fountains of living waters; but never to overlook or forget thy redeemed in the wilderness below.

No, bountiful LORD! there is enough in thee for all, and nothing can interrupt or cause to intermit even for a moment, thy attention to the thirsty souls of poor sinners. Thou hast said, If any man thirst let him come to me and drink: And, To him that is athirst will I give of the water of life freely. Come, HOLY SPIRIT, and give me that thirst of soul equal to the most vehement desires of the hart for the water-brooks, and cause me to be continually going forth in holy longings after JESUS; and the more he gratifies them, the more may these longings increase, until I appear before the presence of GOD, and drink my fill of JESUS at the fountainhead of bliss and glory!

And, my soul, I charge it upon thee, this day, cast all thy fears, thy doubts, thine unbelief, cast the whole to the wind; never, never more let these things rob thee of thy confidence in JESUS, neither thy GOD in CHRIST of his glory. JESUS hath promised to the thirsty soul a full assuaging of all his longings. Who then will arise to prevent? What shall ever exhaust a full, free, suitable, and all-sufficient Saviour? And if men will not leave the snow of Lebanon, which cometh from the rock of the field, or if the cold flowing waters which come from another place be not forsaken, shall my soul leave JESUS, the rock of ages; or shall the streams which come from the heaven of heavens (which is himself,) be forsaken, or feared, or doubted by me? Oh, my soul! keep a stedfast eye on JESUS. From the depths of thine own unworthiness, weakness, and misery, cry to the depths of mercy in JESUS. Hope thou in thy GOD, for I shall yet praise him on earth; and by and by eternally praise him in heaven, who is the health of my countenance and my GOD.

PSALM 43

SUMMARY

This Psalm is so much like the former, that it appears more like a continuation of it, than a new one. Here are the devout cries of a soul to be led by the SPIRIT to GOD, and for faith to rest upon GOD.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! amidst all the exercises of my mind, either from the oppressions of men, the persecutions of the enemy, or the unbelief and corruption of my own heart, let my soul be looking unto thee. Thou hast been, and still art; the refuge of all thine exercised family, and in thee alone repose is found for every weary, tried, and afflicted soul. And I beseech thee, LORD, by the sweet influences of thy spirit; lead me, and bring me to thyself. Thou art my hiding place, my altar, my sacrifice; my all in all. Most blessed shall I be while I behold myself secretly and mysteriously hid and secured in thy person and righteousness. For what shall come nigh to assault me when thou art my sanctuary and refuge?

Fie, my soul! wherefore didst thou doubt? Who ever put his trust in JESUS and was confounded? Who ever committed, himself for acceptance with GOD THE FATHER to the blood and righteousness of his dear SON, and was sent empty away? Oh! for grace to adopt these precious words, and this well founded resolution in divine strength, which thousands have done before, and thousands have found efficacy in, *Hope thou in GOD, O my soul, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my GOD.*

PSALM 44

SUMMARY

We have here the church, under a cloud, and in this state appealing to the LORD, in the recollection of former deliverances, for present mercy. It forms an interesting subject, though we are not

told to what period of the church it refers, or by whom it was written.

REFLECTIONS

READER, how sweet and blessed is it, in all our exercises; to keep in view the faithfulness of a Covenant-GOD in CHRIST. By turning back to the proofs of GOD's faithfulness to his church, in all ages that are past, and by having recourse to the evidences we ourselves have had of the same, we gather strength to our faith, to form proper conclusions for all that is to come. And oh! how very sweet and blessed it is to exercise faith upon the naked promise of a GOD in CHRIST, when nothing remains but the promise. When, as this Psalm saith, the soul is broken in the place of dragons, and we are covered with the shadow of death; then to lay hold of GOD's own words, his own promises in CHRIST; and to hang upon what GOD hath said, knowing what GOD can do, and what he hath promised he will do; thus giving him the credit of a GOD; because all the way of the LORD is mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies: this is faith in its best and highest exercises. And when the whole is brought home to the heart in CHRIST, as the CHRIST of GOD; these are the blessed triumphs of faith, and make the soul rejoice, even in the deepest affliction; so that we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. Precious JESUS! what everlasting praise must be due to thee, as the author and finisher of our faith, who, through faith, thus enableth thy people to abide by the promises, which in thee are all *yea and amen, to the glory of GOD by us.*

PSALM 45

SUMMARY

Here is another Psalm of gospel grace and truth, in which the Redeemer of his Church is celebrated in a Most illustrious strain of prophecy, as the Husband and Conqueror of his Church. And the Church as also beautifully set forth, as married to her LORD, and adorned with his grace and comeliness.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let both our hearts pause over the perusal of this divine Psalm; and, so far from hastily dismissing it, let us both seek the continued influences of the HOLY GHOST, to keep up an unceasing remembrance of what is here said concerning the person, and the kindness of GOD our Saviour. Remember, Reader, it is *a song of loves*; and when we call to mind his love of whom it speaks, the loveliness and beauty of his person as he is in himself and the love he hath manifested to us and our fallen nature, O how shall we better testify our sense of that love, than by a perpetual remembrance of him?

Precious JESUS! methinks I would realize to my wondering view, by the eye of faith, thy glorious person as GOD and man, in one CHRIST! I would behold thee as here so sweetly described, fairer than the children of men. I would behold grace, not only poured into thy blessed lips, but continually dropping, as the golden drops of the honeycomb, for thy people; and under this view my whole soul should go out, in the most fervent desire, that JESUS would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. And hast thou not, thou almighty Warrior, brought my proud, my stubborn, my rebellious heart; to submit to thy power? Hast thou not made my stiff knee to bend before thee? Do I not this day own thee for my Sovereign, my King, my Redeemer, my lawful LORD?

And art thou not also my Bridegroom? Hast thou not betrothed me to thyself? Hath not thy blessed SPIRIT made me willing to be thine, and brought me to thee, in thine own garment of salvation, and thy robe of righteousness? Yes, LORD! I call heaven, and earth to witness, that it is the one unceasing object and desire of my soul, to forget all, and leave all, and sacrifice all, to follow thee. And oh, LORD, grant, I beseech thee, that my whole soul, and body, and spirit, which are all thine, by gift, by purchase, by conquest, and by grace, and by a voluntary surrender, may be wholly thine forever. And in the constant enjoyment of thy presence now by faith, O prepare me for the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in sight; where, among the whole church of thy redeemed, the praises of our almighty King-Mediator, will call up our intellectual powers in endless joy, and the glory of GOD and the LAMB will be the church's song for evermore. Amen.

PSALM 46

SUMMARY

This is a song or Psalm of holy triumph. The prophet exhorts the Church to make GOD in CHRIST her confidence. A reference is made, towards the close of the Psalm, from beholding the desolations of the earth, to consider the blessed of those who have the LORD for their GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause and contemplate the happy state of those who have GOD for their refuge. All the perfections of the GODHEAD are made over for their security, who have a GOD in covenant to fly to in CHRIST JESUS. The wisdom of GOD is engaged to guide them. The power of GOD is pledged to protect them, and his word, and oath, and promises, are all sealed to be everything they need. Moreover, in CHRIST JESUS and his righteousness they find strong foundations whereon to plead for the fulfillment of GOD's covenant assurances. There is a fulness of merit, and a fitness of salvation, to answer every case and situation, of the church, which CHRIST hath purchased with his blood. And the HOLY GHOST, in his gracious influences, and breathings, and manifestations, so reveals the love of GOD to the heart, and so directs the mind into the patient waiting for CHRIST, that when our souls are living under these united sources of a believer's security, we may well exalt with the church and say, JEHOVAH is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Reader, mark down then for a rainy day, a day of trial, a day of trouble, this song upon *Alamoth*, for GOD's hidden ones. The city of GOD shall be refreshed and made glad with the streams of love, and grace, and mercy, which flow from a covenant JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. GOD hides them when he shows himself. They are taken in, and made secure in an impregnable city. The LORD hath founded Zion, the poor of his people shall trust in it. This city is the city of GOD. GOD is in the midst of her. GOD hath owned her. GOD will protect her. GOD will bless her, and GOD will reign in her forever. And the inhabitants shall be made glad with the river, the ocean, the sea of divine love. LORD JESUS! give our thirsty souls

now to drink of this river, the streams whereof rejoice the soul; and by and by bring us to that kingdom and city which is above, where thou leadest thy redeemed to fountains of living waters, and where thou hast for ever dried away all tears from all eyes. Amen.

PSALM 47

SUMMARY

In this Psalm the prophet seems to have an eye to the bringing up the ark of GOD to Zion. But as the ark itself was well understood by the faithful to be a type of the Messiah, surely we may conclude that the one great object of this Psalm which engaged the prophet's mind and pen, was to point to the ascension of the LORD JESUS. And in this point of view it is a beautiful prophecy of a glorious event.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou glorious, risen, ascended, and triumphant Saviour! Thou art indeed ascended up on high: Thou hath led captivity captive, and hast received gifts for men. Yea, LORD, for me, for many a poor rebellious sinner, that the LORD our GOD might dwell among them. And now, LORD, help me by faith to follow thee at the right hand of the Majesty on high. I know, LORD, and am fully persuaded, that all power is thine, in heaven and in earth. LORD! is it not thy blessed province, and is it not thy glory and delight, now thou art exalted as a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins? LORD, send down all thine ascension gifts, I beseech thee. Do thou rule *in* me, and rule *for* me. Grant me, and all thy church, all the blessings of thy kingdom of grace here, and glory hereafter. Set up thy kingdom in our hearts. Bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of CHRIST. And so sweetly constrain all the powers and faculties of the souls of thy redeemed into the holy love, and fear, and delight in thee, that songs of praise, and praises with understanding, may go forth from every heart, both here and forever to thee, the GOD of our salvation. Amen.

PSALM 48

SUMMARY

The prophet, in a beautiful strain, is here extolling mount Zion. It should seem to mean principally the Zion of JESUS, the gospel Zion. In this spiritual sense it is most lovely indeed. He speaks of her situation; GOD's relation to her; his love of her, and care of her; and what a terror Zion is, and ever will be to her enemies, while she becomes the present and everlasting joy of her friends.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if these be the blessings of Zion, What a mercy must it be to be a citizen of Zion? It is said of this highly privileged spot; where JESUS dwells, that the LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this and that man was born in her. It is a vast and an important question to know if you and I were born there. I mean by a new birth, which makes us fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of GOD. Reader! are we come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living GOD? Do we bow the knee, the heart, the whole soul, in dutiful obedience, in love, in affection, in regard to the king in Zion? Do we speak the language of Zion? Do we love the courts, the house of prayer, the ordinances, the worship of Zion? Is Zion the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth in our esteem? In a word, can we, and do we say; For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. Ye ministers of my GOD, ye that are watchmen, whom GOD hath set upon the walls of Zion, see that you hold not your peace day nor night; ye that make mention of my GOD, give him no rest, nor peace, until that he hath made Jerusalem a praise in the earth. And oh! that all who are citizens of Zion may have the interests of JESUS and his church uppermost upon their hearts, that they may prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy. And do thou, LORD, who art king in Zion, cause thy glory to appear. Be thou thy church's glory; the guide, the protector, the salvation of thy redeemed here upon earth, and their everlasting joy and glory in thy church which is above.

PSALM 49

SUMMARY

This Psalm is much in the style of exhortation. It is full of persuasion to show the folly and deceitfulness of all worldly dependence. Towards the close, there is a sweet allusion to JESUS, as the brother of his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while perusing this Psalm, and beholding the death of the rich voluptuary, do not forget that there are poor voluptuaries, as well as wealthy ones, to whom death, whenever it comes, is equally awful. The poor man, who lives without GOD and without CHRIST in this world, dies as awfully as the rich. And indeed in one sense he is a greater fool than his rich neighbour; for the man of wealth hath, according to his view of things, something to vaunt himself upon, and to make him put far away from his thoughts the remembrance of death. But for a man to be poor in this world, and to live so regardless of the redemption of his soul as to be poor in the world to come, is one degree of folly greater than his fellow. Reader, how blessed the thought! the redemption, the costly redemption by JESUS, is alike suited both to rich and poor. JESUS buys all his ransomed at the same price. It was sweetly said, with an eye to this, *The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for their souls;* Exodus 30:15. Blessed JESUS, thou hast purchased the redemption of thy people by thy blood. This redemption indeed is precious; and being once made, it ceased to need any further redemption forever. *By that one offering of thyself, once offered, thou hast for ever perfected them that are sanctified.*

PSALM 50

SUMMARY

This Psalm, like the former, is in the nature of exhortation. It speaks, in the opening of it, as in the person of JEHOVAH. It reproves

the Jews in their mistaken notions of sacrifices; points to the more spiritual services of the gospel; and in the conclusion, shows how the LORD will accept the services of the heart, with an eye to the sacrifice by CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is always profitable, by making comparative statements between the law and the gospel, to behold the gracious mercy of our GOD in the one all-sufficient, all-perfect sacrifice of GOD'S dear SON. Not indeed, that any other sacrifice was, or could be intended to take away sin: for neither the blood of bulls, nor of goats, possessed any efficacy to this end; but were shadowy representations of Him, who was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. But while we here behold the Jews resting in the means, and forgetting the end, taking up with the shadow, and overlooking the substance; let you and I be very jealous over our own hearts as Christians, that we do not fall into the same error. And is there not danger, even now under a gospel dispensation, if we rest in any ordinance, however delightful it may be in itself, and forget the LORD of the ordinance? If I go to the table of the LORD, and in partaking of that feast upon a sacrifice, I forget that it is the sacrifice of JESUS'S body and blood, and not the feast upon it, that is the means of my soul's acceptance with GOD? And are not all unworthy communicants of this kind? Doth not the LORD speak to all profane, to all self-righteous characters, as in this Psalm? Doth he not solemnly remonstrate, in a yet more especial manner, to such as minister in holy things, if they minister with unclean hands, and without an eye wholly to JESUS: What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? The LORD impress, both upon minister and people, a due sense of these things, that both may so offer the sacrifice of CHRIST and his righteousness, as that they may thereby glorify GOD THE FATHER, who hath set forth his SON as a propitiation through faith in his blood; and in their own souls be so sweetly taught of GOD, as to have clear views, and rich enjoyments of the salvation of GOD.

PSALM 51

SUMMARY

Here is a penitential Psalm, penned by David, as the title expresses it, upon a remarkable occasion; in which we trace the sorrowful workings of his soul in a devout humiliation before GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I look at this man after GOD's own heart, and tremble in the recollection of what man is in his highest attainments, if left for one moment void of grace. Oh! what an important truth it is, and must be, to be impressed upon the mind, that our poor fallen nature is the same in all men: there is, there can be no difference: a corrupt stock must produce a corrupt generation; and this in an endless succession from father to son. And that the seeds of sin do not produce an equal degree of blossom and fruit in all men, doth not arise from any difference in our nature, but from the preventing and restraining grace of GOD. Oh! how blessed is it to see this and to be convinced of it, that we may not only ascribe all the praise where that praise is alone due, but also may walk with such holy fear and caution, amidst the numberless temptations arising both from our own nature and the dangers everywhere around, as to be always on the watch-tower, and while we think we stand, to take heed lest we fall. And above all, to be forever looking up for grace from above, knowing that they that are kept are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation.

Reader, let us not dismiss the contemplation of a subject in which we are so highly interested, without gathering from the review, under divine teaching, another improvement, namely, that as the best of men are but men, and cannot keep themselves from falling; so when, from the strength of temptation without, and the weakness of our own powers within, we are at any time overtaken in a fault, it is well to be convinced that no exertions of our own can restore us to the divine favour. David knew this and therefore, in another of his Psalms, gives the glory to GOD for his recovery by grace. "Thou restorest my soul (saith he) thou leadest me in the paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake." Hence, therefore, from the LORD let us seek grace, and the renewings of the HOLY GHOST, to

raise us up when fallen, and to restore to our souls the light of his countenance.

And lastly, and above all, let us remember, and everlastingly keep in view, that all our pardons, all our recoveries after backslidings, our perseverance in grace, our final preservation to GOD's kingdom, as well as our first awakenings from sin; all and every one is the sole result of GOD's covenant love in CHRIST, and the merits of his blood and righteousness. Yes! thou precious, blessed JESUS, thou who art the LORD our righteousness! it is thy FATHER's merciful engagement to thee, and the efficacy of thy obedience and death, which become the everlasting cause and security of all our mercies. GOD is a pardoning GOD to all thy redeemed, because there is an everlasting acceptableness in thy Person and thy work, notwithstanding our manifold departures, backslidings, and sins. And though those departures wound our souls, though those backslidings daily testify our poor corrupt nature, though those sins plead against us, and Satan is ready to accuse; yet, precious JESUS, thy blood is a *speaking* blood, and speaketh more for us than all that are against us.

Oh! grant our souls the daily, hourly benefit of thy great salvation! LORD, let this be the continued joy of all thy redeemed, that we have redemption through thy blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of thy grace. Amen.

PSALM 52

SUMMARY

We have here David arrainging Doeg the Edomite for the murder of the priests, and pointing to GOD's justice, which must follow. David takes comfort, under such persecutions of the wicked, in the goodness of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, pause over the short relation, given in this Psalm, of the malice of the wicked; and, in the instance of this wretched Edomite, behold a representation of all that race. Children of the

evil-one enter with delight into his service, and manifest the bitterness of their hatred against the LORD, and against his CHRIST. Their wages in the present world are the pleasures of sin, the love of the world, the commendation and applauses of sinners like themselves, and the profits of iniquity. In the world to come, where should their station be, where indeed could they desire to be, but with him whom they here serve? Reader, amidst all the groans of the soul, under the remains of indwelling corruption, how, blessed is it not to be of this family who persecute the followers of CHRIST! LORD JESUS, I desire to praise thee in the distinguishing tokens of thy favour, that thou hast taken me into thy service; and if but a hewer of wood, and a drawer of water, O how blessed to be of the household of faith. LORD, keep me near thyself, that I may praise thee forever, because it is thou that hast done it; and grant that I may wait on thy name, for it is good, before thy saints.

PSALM 53

SUMMARY

Here is a short, but striking account of sin in a natural man's heart, as was given before, in the fourteenth Psalm. The sinner is expostulated with upon the occasion; and the Psalmist takes occasion, from such a state of man's ruin by nature, to pray for his recovery by grace in the salvation of CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

Having already offered an humble comment upon this Psalm, as numbered before the 14th, I think it unnecessary to detain the Reader with going over the same again in this place: the Reader can refer to what was there observed. It is true there is some little variation in one of the verses, but not so materially different as to render a commentary necessary: I shall only therefore just observe, that if we suppose (as we may) the repetition of it, as well as the apostle Paul's quotation from it, was designed to recommend it with the more earnestness to the attention of the church; this may, and indeed it ought to operate in a stronger manner to enforce the important doctrines it contains upon our hearts. And as it points to the natural

atheism which is in every man's heart from the consequences of original sin, as the sad cause and source of all our misery; so a deep sense of our guilt and ruin in this particular may, under GOD's grace, serve no less to endear to us that blessed and only recovery which is in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. May the LORD the HOLY GHOST grant, from the repeated perusal of it, this blessed effect and then if JESUS becomes more and more precious in proportion as we feel more and more our need of him, we shall find the same cause as Jacob to rejoice, and as Israel to be glad.

PSALM 54

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is at the throne of grace in this Psalm, in the exercise of prayer and praise. He cries to GOD for deliverance from his enemies, and concludes with thanksgiving; in the assurance that his prayer is heard and answered.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let you and I make the same conclusion from the perusal of this Psalm, as is here made, and the confidence in this will bear our souls up during the exercises of the passing hour, be they what they may. We shall feel no shrinkings, we shall make no false conclusions in our progress to the end of our pilgrimage, if our hearts are in the mean time *fixed trusting in the LORD*. By a steady, fixed, well-grounded faith on GOD's rich mercy in CHRIST, holding on our course, and holding out our assurance, whether the providences of our GOD seem to frown or look cheerful; by keeping fast hold of GOD THE FATHER's covenant, and CHRIST's merit, and the everlasting efficacy of his blood and righteousness, we shall find that GOD is still our helper, and *the LORD is with them that uphold our souls*.

Blessed Redeemer! give me grace to look to thee, and to call to my recollection thine exercises amidst the false friends and open foes, which in the days of thy flesh surrounded thee. LORD, help me so to consider thee, who didst endure such a contradiction against

thyself, that I may not be weary and faint in mind. And while the *Ziphims* of the present hour harass and distress me, and would deliver my soul into the hand of the enemy; oh! for grace to be looking unto thee, and deriving strength from thee, that I may discover thy gracious hand delivering me out of all my troubles, and making me more than conqueror in thy strength, and in the power of thy might.

PSALM 55

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is still at the mercy-seat, praying for strength against his enemies; and for strength and grace in his own soul. Here are some sweet things in this Psalm, typically considered, which refer to CHRIST, David's LORD, and also of the enemies of GOD's Anointed.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! leave every other subject, and every other consideration, in the perusal of this Psalm, to ponder over the several parts of it, and to contemplate thy GOD and Saviour as here typically set forth, and prophetically represented. David, king of Israel, was indeed betrayed by false friends, and persecuted by his unnatural son: and good men in all ages have been exercised with similar trials in their pilgrimage state. But what were David's trials, or the afflictions of others, compared to thee, thou patient LAMB of GOD, when bulls of Bashan compassed thee about, and all thy disciples forsook thee, and fled; when one denied thee, and another betrayed thee?

But chiefly, while I behold David going over the brook Kidron, and walking up barefoot, with his head covered, the ascent of Mount Olivet, let my soul call to mind how thou, my adored Redeemer, didst pass over the same memorable spot in the dolorous night of thy conflict in the garden. Oh! for my soul to take the wing of faith, and fly thither to behold thy sufferings! Was there ever sorrow like unto thy sorrow, wherewith the LORD afflicted thee in the day of his fierce anger? And chiefly, precious JESUS, let me connect with this view the

interest I have in it. Let me recollect that in all this, thou wast the surety, the sponsor, the representative of thy people: thou didst bear the whole for thy redeemed. And did Judas betray thee? did Peter deny thee? did all forsake thee? And so have I.—Didst thou drink of the brook in the way? And shall not I? And as into this brook the filth of the temple sacrifices emptied itself; so, LORD, all my guilt and defilement emptied upon thee; and through all thou madest a way for the salvation of thy redeemed. Precious JESUS! let me have grace to behold thee in all this as my surety, and may my soul pass on through all the trifling persecutions I meet with in this pilgrimage state, with a wise indifference, losing sight of all in the contemplation of thy unequalled sorrows, and reading in every one of them the HOLY GHOST's declaration, by his servant the apostle, CHRIST *hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.*

PSALM 56

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is again before the throne in this Psalm. Though in distress from men, yet happy in communion with GOD. His plea is for the LORD to comfort him, while his enemies buffet him. And in the review of past mercies he finds confidence for future deliverances.

REFLECTIONS

How blessed it is to read the *Michtams* of David with an eye to CHRIST. They are golden things indeed, when they become the medium of opening to our view the LORD as our surety; and when they bring home to our souls the tokens of his love and undertaking for his people. Yes! blessed LORD, thou wert indeed all this, and infinitely more, as set forth in this Psalm, when thou hadst engaged in those suretyship engagements for thy people. How exposed to the malice of men! how persecuted by the wrath of hell! and how sustaining, the just desert of our sins from the righteous judgment of GOD! But oh! thou heavenly Redeemer, how precious were thy tears

in the sight of GOD! How were they all counted and marked down. And most assuredly, blessed GOD, all must again be accounted for; and thy people remembered and saved by virtue of thy complete redemption-work, when the enemies of our GOD and of his CHRIST come to be recompensed for their deadly opposition to thee, and to thy righteous cause.

Help me, gracious LORD, in thy strength to be strong, and in thy righteousness to make my boast. Let men oppose, let devils rage, and all the enemies of thy great salvation threaten. The LORD is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped. I shall still walk before my GOD in the land of the living; and by and by, in and through JESUS, I shall walk before GOD forever and ever.

PSALM 57

SUMMARY

The Psalmist, still at the mercy seat, finds confidence and comfort. And from hence he gathers strength against his foes.

REFLECTIONS

READER it is very improving and profitable to observe in the example of David, and other saints of GOD gone before, how their faith and patience have been exercised, and what grace hath been imparted to them to help them forward in all their seasons of need. And it is intended, no doubt, by the HOLY GHOST, in recording the history of their contentions and the blessed issue of them, to animate our minds under our lesser difficulties, that we may be the followers of them, who now through faith and patience inherit the promises. But over and above all this, and infinitely more interesting than all, no doubt, the blessed SPIRIT intended by these *Michtams* of David, these *Al-taschiths* of inspiration, to glorify the LORD JESUS. Oh! how do all examples sink to nothing while we contemplate him. Oh! how precious to a poor believer under exercises is it to trace his blessed footsteps going before. And oh! how great the strength, the confidence, nay, the joy imparted in the deepest tribulation, when we not only look up and behold our Great Intercessor, who is now at the right hand of power, there appearing in the presence of GOD for us,

as once a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but now holding forth a suited grace to help us in all our exercises. Yes! blessed Redeemer! thy example is lovely, precious, and sweetly accommodating. Thou art everything, and in all things our glory and the lifter up of our head. Be thou exalted, LORD, in the souls of thy people, as thou art above the heavens, and let thy glory be our joy as thou art glorified above all the earth.

PSALM 58

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here reproving unjust judges: he appeals to GOD against them. He closeth the Psalm with the certain conclusion that GOD will judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgments unto the people.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, pass over and forget all lesser considerations, while perusing this Psalm, to behold JESUS, thy almighty Saviour, beautifully set forth under these *Michtams* of David. It is true, thou mayest gather much instruction from beholding David's exercises under ungodly judgment, and similar exercises of the church in all ages upon like occasions, as are here represented. But how flat and uninteresting do all these appear, in comparison with the views afforded of JESUS, in his unequalled meekness under unjust judgment? Who that reads of the mockings and scourgings the LAMB of GOD went through, and at length hears Pilate's unjust sentence, can willingly take off his attention to look at the sufferings of others? Surely all, and every part of the oppressions which have taken place among men sink to nothing, when the judgment-hall of Pilate, and the mount of Calvary, arise in contemplation before us? Every heart feels constrained to take up the prophet's lamentation, and to say, Behold and see, was there ever any sorrow like unto thy sorrow, wherewith the LORD afflicted thee in the day of his fierce anger?

Precious LAMB of GOD! help me to be continually not only beholding thy sufferings, but connecting with them their blessed effects. Yes, holy LORD, I would behold thee on thy cross, and I

would behold thee on thy throne: and in the united view and contemplation, I would desire grace to keep in mind, what the angels told the wondering disciples, that this same JESUS, who is gone into heaven, will come again to judgment, He will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Oh! for grace to be always on the look-out, that when thou shalt, come, my soul may arise with joy unspeakable to hail thy coming, and in thy righteousness to be found waiting thy approach, that the LORD my righteous Judge may give me at that day the crown of glory, as well as all them that love thy appearing.

PSALM 59

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here at prayer: the cry is for defense against his enemies, while complaining of their injustice. He closeth in praise.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, how JESUS, in the days of his flesh, was exercised! Behold the LAMB of GOD worried by the dogs of slaughter, when the mighty gathered against him, and when, though not for his transgression, neither for his sin, did the enemy find advantage against him. Precious LORD! if thine enemies belched out their slanderous words, with swords in their lips, against thee, thou holy, harmless, undefiled one: if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, well may they be expected to rail against the household.

But wilt thou not be the GOD of my mercy, dearest LORD, and prevent me! Surely, LORD, thou hast done it! All thy quickening grace, thy renewing grace, thy regenerating grace, converting grace; all, all are among the preventing mercies of thy love. It was thy preventing mercy that called me, when I thought nothing of thee: it was thy preventing mercy that saved me to the day of my calling: and it hath been thy preventing mercy that hath ever since kept me from falling. In all these, and a thousand unknown, unnoticed mercies, thou hast been the GOD of my mercy, my JESUS, my HOLY ONE, my Redeemer; and thou wilt be so still. Oh! then for grace to

trust thee, to stay upon thee, and to live unto thee, and to thy glory, that he that is the GOD of my mercy, my life, and my salvation here, may be my everlasting portion, and happiness, and glory, to all eternity. Hail then, thou gracious, blessed LORD GOD! I will sing of thy power, yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy: a GOD in CHRIST is my song, and my loudest notes are too soft and too faint to speak thy praise.

Precious JESUS! let no affliction, no trial, no one event, stop my song, or cause me to hang my harp upon the willow, for nothing can be sufficient so to do, or ought so to do, when once thy redeemed have learnt the song of Moses and the LAMB. Yea, LORD, help me to go on rejoicing in singing of JESUS and his love, of JESUS and his redeeming grace, his blood and salvation. In these sublime hymns of praise would my soul every day, and all the day be employed, and even in death the last note should not cease until the first note had begun in glory amidst that throng, where I shall find myself in the midst, surrounding the throne in forever singing praises to GOD and the LAMB, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*

PSALM 60

SUMMARY

In this Psalm the sacred writer is led out to a devout acknowledgment of GOD's hand, both in prosperity and adversity. He takes refuge in GOD's promises, and in them acts faith with full confidence of victory over all his enemies.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! Wheresoever I turn mine eyes, throughout the whole volume of thy sacred word, how precious is it to my longing soul to behold thee set forth by the HOLY GHOST, and glorified to my view. LORD, I pray thee, let this sweet Psalm be among the Michtams of my heart.

I will look to thee, O LORD, in all my afflictions. It is right, it is but just, that my GOD and FATHER should take displeasure at my wanderings. The land indeed may well tremble for the breaches sin hath made in our poor fallen nature. But look, LORD, I pray thee, to the Man at thy right hand, even to the Son of Man, whom thou hast made so strong for thine own self: look unto JESUS, who for his redeemed hath drunk the wine of astonishment, even until his precious soul cried out in the bitterness of it, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death*. Holy FATHER! was not thine HOLY ONE thus exercised, and made sin for his people, that they might be made the righteousness of GOD in him? Oh! for grace to believe this, and everlastingly to live in the enjoyment of it.

Precious JESUS! thou hast gotten thyself the victory, and thine own arm hath brought salvation. Bring me then, LORD, under thy banner; bring me into thy banqueting house. Help me by precious faith to rejoice now, in the blessed prospect of that glory that shall be revealed. Yea, blessed LORD, let me see myself sitting by faith in heavenly places, in and with thyself. And enable me to exult, as thy servant did of his *Gilead*, and his *Manasseh*, and his *Ephraim*, of my LORD JESUS, and his kingdom, and his power, and his glory. Surely if I am CHRIST'S, then am I Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise. Oh! let me hear thy voice day by day with this assurance, until thou shalt take me home to the everlasting enjoyment of my GOD and CHRIST forever.

PSALM 61

SUMMARY

This Psalm is but short, though sweet. The heart is in heaviness in the opening of it, but finds comfort before it closeth. In using it with reference to CHRIST, it promiseth rich consolation.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! let the reading of this sweet Psalm be so accompanied with thy grace, that it may incline my soul to be cleaving closer and closer to thee, my GOD, in all the exercises of

my warfare. Surely, LORD, it is good to be brought low, nay, to be overwhelmed in myself and all surrounding circumstances, if, from the multitude of oppressions, my soul is constrained to see thy blessedness, and to have my heart more earnestly directed towards thee. And oh! thou holy, blessed SPIRIT, do thou, I beseech thee, most gracious GOD, lead me amidst all those waves which would overpower me; lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. JESUS is my Rock, where, among the inhabitants, I would forever sing. In him I would rest; on him I would for ever dwell: to him would I daily perform my vows, and make mention of his righteousness, even his righteousness only. And as I would come to thee, thou ever full and ever gracious Saviour, as I came the first day, poor and needy, so let the continued supplies of thy grace only endear thee the more, and make me the more sensible of my wretchedness without thee. Be thou, indeed, all in all, and as thou art the all of everything that is blessed to thy people, so be thou all my blessedness and all my joy, and glory, now and forever. Amen.

PSALM 62

SUMMARY

In this Psalm here is a twofold subject: encouragement held forth to the faithful, in the assurance of GOD's love; and discouragement to the unbelieving, in the assurance of GOD's displeasure: It forms altogether, though short, yet a blessed view of divine faithfulness, in proving, what the prophet in after ages was commissioned to tell the church, that it should be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked.

REFLECTIONS

OH! the blessedness of having a GOD in covenant to trust in, and that GOD ever to look up to, and to lean upon, in and through a Mediator, who hath, by his perfect obedience and death, completed the salvation of his people. My soul, art thou so looking to him, so depending upon him, as to make him thine only rock, thine only defense and salvation? Manifest then the firmness of thy trust, in a

silent, patient, submissive waiting. Recollect at all times, that the LORD's time of deliverance is the best time, and learn to say upon every occasion of trial, He will come, he will be found of them that seek him; for the LORD waiteth to be gracious, he hateth putting away, he resteth in his love. I will trust, and not be afraid, for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength, and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Oh! ye sons of men, who know not my GOD, what think ye must be the final issue of despising such great salvation? Oh! think, before it be too late, what a tottering foundation ye rest all your hopes upon? Surely the rock of the ungodly, is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. Oh! kiss the SON, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

PSALM 63

SUMMARY

This Psalm contains the devout breathings of the soul. If we read what is here expressed as the language of CHRIST, and in him of his church, it will be blessed indeed. David's feelings in the wilderness of Judah, very plainly prove what GOD the HOLY GHOST graciously desires the use of this Psalm to be in the church in all ages, to express the suitable breathings of all the redeemed after a GOD in CHRIST, as their only joy.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! do not dismiss thine attention to this precious portion of GOD's word, until thou hast gathered from it, as the bee from the sweetest flower, the many divine instructions it holds forth to thy meditation. Behold in it what an entertainment of the richest provision the LORD can afford and satisfy his redeemed with, even in a wilderness situation, when he can spread before them so plentiful a table as his own divine presence alone furnisheth. Surely here may be seen to the full the truth of that scripture, that he maketh the wilderness to blossom as a rose. What though thou art in a wilderness state, and surrounded with wilderness dispensations, if

JESUS be with thee, and JESUS be thy portion; if thou canst call him thy GOD, and the GOD of thy mercies, will he not be to thee all that thou canst need, and all that thou canst desire? Pause, my soul, and count over thy right and claim to this covenant GOD in CHRIST. Art thou not his by creation, by redemption, by the conquests of his grace, the purchase of JESUS'S blood, and the right of the FATHER'S gift to his dear SON? And is not GOD the FATHER thy FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, by adoption and by grace? Is not JESUS thine by his betrothing thee to himself, and by the voluntary surrender of thyself to him in a oneness never to be dissolved? Hath not the HOLY GHOST given thee the earnest of JESUS'S love, and manifested that all he hath is thine, in taking of the things of JESUS and showing them to thee? Oh! then live up to thine high privileges. See to it, day by day, that the devout breathings of this Psalm speak thy very language. Do thou, my soul, be seeding forth an earnest cry for the GOD of thy life, and of thy salvation. Tell JESUS, that nothing can satisfy thy longings and thy thirstings but himself. Tell him that his ordinances are sweet, and the courts of his house are lovely; but unless the King be there, and unless thou canst hold the King in the galleries, there is nothing can give thee joy. Oh! thou holy One, thou lovely One, thou LORD our righteousness! let my desire be increasing every hour towards thee; let my love be always upon thee; let all my enjoyment be in thee, all my satisfaction from thee; and be thou the all in all to me, while I remain in the present wilderness-state, until thou shalt bring me home to the everlasting enjoyment of thyself forever. Amen.

PSALM 64

SUMMARY

This Psalm is very similar to many that we meet with. It contains the cry of an awakened soul against the enemies of his salvation, in which is contained an assurance of deliverance, from the well known character of a covenant GOD, and a well-grounded dependence upon him.

REFLECTIONS

How truly blessed it is to have a covenant GOD to fly unto, amidst all the reproaches of the enemy, and the malice of every deadly foe which lies in wait to deceive. But oh! how truly blessed is it to behold Thee, thou excelling pattern and exemplar of our nature, in all the conflicts thou, the LORD of life and glory, wast called to pass through, when thou didst condescend to endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, lest we should be weary and faint in our minds. Methinks I hear thy voice still vibrating in my ears, oh, thou meek and harmless LAMB of GOD, when thou didst cry out under the heavy load, *My GOD! my GOD! why hast thou forsaken me?* Thou wert indeed a worm, and no man, in their esteem; nay, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people. Never, oh never, blessed JESUS! let me lose sight of thee, while passing on the heavenly road. Give me to mark thy footsteps by the tracing of thy blood as I go on! and let me say, See, here the Redeemer trod, when, like his people, he walked through this vale of tears.

Oh! ye mistaken enemies of JESUS! short are your triumphs, and sure your misery. The GOD of our salvation sees all your conduct now; and shortly, very shortly, will he shoot at you with a swift arrow. Death is near, very near: and the Judge is at the door: then will be fully shown the difference between the righteous and the wicked between *the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth him not.*

PSALM 65

SUMMARY

This is a lovely Psalm: the sacred writer celebrates GOD's praise; points out the blessedness of GOD's chosen; and shows both their temporal and spiritual mercies.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, I charge it upon thee, by the outgoings of the morning and the evening, that in those constant recurrences of day and night, thou wait in the silence of the most awakened meditation, for goings

forth in praise and prayer, in humblings and rejoicings, before the mercy-seat of GOD in CHRIST. Say, my soul, canst thou really, truly, heartily, sincerely, adopt this language—praise waited for thee, my GOD, in Zion? Canst thou look up to thy JESUS, and say, Oh! thou that hearest prayer, to thee do I come?

Blessed GOD and FATHER, help me to adore thee, to love thee, to praise thee, for thy gracious choice of JESUS as my Surety. Never, surely, heavenly LORD, didst thou manifest thy grace and love to our poor fallen nature by any act of mercy equal to that, in which thou didst set up thine HOLY ONE to approach unto thee as our glorious Mediator. Oh! for grace to choose him whom GOD hath chosen, to love him whom GOD hath loved, and to trust him with our salvation, into whose almighty hands GOD the FATHER hath committed all his glory. LORD, make this, I beseech thee, a daily evidence of my interest in JESUS, and of my walking with him. Then, LORD, shall I be satisfied with the goodness of thine house. Precious will be thy sabbaths, thy word, thine ordinances, thy people; all, all that belong to JESUS, will be precious to my soul. Yes, my soul will sit down at the fountain-head of enjoyment, in feasting upon the body and blood of my LORD; thy covenant grace, thy love, thy righteousness, will be a perpetual feast of fat things while here below, until thou shalt call me from the church below to the church above, to the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in glory forever.

PSALM 66

SUMMARY

Here we have a song of praise, both for the public mercies of GOD to his church, and the private manifestations of the same to every individual of it.

REFLECTIONS

READER, while the HOLY GHOST is here calling upon all lands to celebrate the praises of JEHOVAH, say what part can you, from a heart-felt satisfaction, bear in the song? Can you bless GOD for creation? So can the various characters of the earth. Can you bless

GOD for providences? So can the Turk, the Jew, the infidel, the heretic: they can boast of their lands and vineyards, the fruitfulness of their soil, and the salubrity of their climate. Surely the Christian hath higher notes to sing besides these; and while he blesseth GOD as a GOD of creation and providence, he ought to bless him in louder strains of thanksgiving and love, as a GOD of redemption and grace.

Precious JESUS! let these be my notes: let my morning song, and evening hymn, while celebrating the nether springs of divine bounty, publish and proclaim the upper springs of grace and salvation; and all in thee! It is thou, LORD, that hast brought the glad tidings to thy people. It is thou alone that wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. Let this be my song of rejoicing all the day; and may I have grace to sing forth the honor of thy name, and make thy praise to be glorious.

And oh! ye ransomed souls, ye who fear, and know, and love, my GOD! come hither, and hearken to my relation of his mercy. I was brought low, cast out, and ready to perish: JESUS saved me, JESUS loved me, and will love me! Oh! put your trust in him alway, ye people pour out your hearts before him; hang upon him; cleave to him; and never give over your humble suit until he hath heard and attended to the voice of your prayer, so that you can, and do cry out, as all the faithful gone before you have done, *Blessed be GOD, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.*

PSALM 67

SUMMARY

The church rejoices in the love and favour of her LORD, and desires that the same blessings she enjoys in her beloved, may be the happy portion of both Jew and Gentile.

REFLECTIONS

IN the contemplation of the blessings contained in this devout hymn of the church, methinks, Reader, I would have your soul go forth, as I pray the LORD lead forth mine, in praising and adoring the GOD of all our mercies, for the sweet view here given of the harmony and love of the Jewish church towards that of the

Gentiles, in so ardently desiring the advent of those blessed consequences of her conversion to the knowledge and enjoyment of the LORD JESUS. Surely it will be a glorious church, a blessed church, an harmonious church, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be completed, and the Deliverer shall arise out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. LORD, I would pray, hasten the happy hour: GOD be merciful to us, and bless us: let thy way be known upon earth, thy saving health unto all nations. Bring, LORD, thy church, both Jew and Gentile, into one fold, under one Shepherd, and let the whole redeemed be gathered unto our glorious Shiloh, that GOD in all things may be glorified in JESUS CHRIST.

And, until this blessed era arrive, and CHRIST's kingdom come, let us look up, and daily pray for these vast blessings. GOD hath said, For these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. Be gracious, LORD, I would say, in making thy way known through the earth, and thy saving health in salvation-blessings among all nations. And oh! thou almighty Aaron! thou great High Priest and Melchizedec of thy church and people! do thou bless us in the name of the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT! May GOD the FATHER bless us, and keep us! May GOD the SON make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us! May GOD the HOLY GHOST lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace! Amen.

PSALM 68

SUMMARY

This Psalm is full of gospel from beginning to end, as the authority of GOD the HOLY GHOST fully shows, Ephesians 4:8. It was composed, probably, at David's removing the ark from the house of Obed-edom. And as the ark was well known, and well understood in the church, to have been a type of CHRIST we may well suppose the mind of David had this in view in all he celebrates.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over what thou hast read in this divine, this gospel Psalm. What though David sang the invocation in it, to thy GOD and Saviour, at the bringing up the ark, yet was it by faith in JESUS, who is himself the true ark of JEHOVAH, and on whom his glory rested. And do thou sing aloud his name and righteousness, as the ark of thy salvation, in time and to all eternity. Depend upon it, my soul, all thine enemies must flee before thy JESUS; for He, thy risen and exalted Saviour, is gone up on high; he hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for his people; yea, for the most rebellious, as thou hast been, and still art, even for thee; that the LORD thy GOD might come and dwell with thee, and, according to his promise, make his abode with thee. Do thou bless him then, my soul, who daily loadeth thee with benefits. Do thou praise him, who now goeth before thee, as he went before his people through the wilderness, as he fed them with manna, and sent a plentiful rain upon his inheritance, so doth he come down as showers upon the mown grass, who was, and is the living bread, the bread of GOD, which cometh down from heaven; and was, and is the life, and portion of his people, both then and forever. Hail! thou almighty Redeemer! Blessed for ever be thy name! Thou hast not only published and proclaimed thine own, and thy FATHER'S will for the salvation of sinners; but thou hast spoken the word, and great hath been the company of them that published it, as sent by thee. It is thou, blessed JESUS! which hast sent down the SPIRIT, and given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST! And now, blessed LORD! do thou bless the labours of those whom thou hast commissioned, and make them abundantly useful, in publishing thy name, thy grace, thy love, thy finished salvation, and thy glory; until *we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the SON of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.* Amen.

PSALM 69

SUMMARY

Here is another gospel Psalm, not of David's troubles, but of David's LORD. The references made to it, in many parts of our LORD's life by himself, and both then and afterwards by his servants the apostles, decidedly show to whom it belongs. Take it in one collected point, and it sketches many of the outlines of CHRIST's passion, from his birth to the cross. Like the 22nd Psalm, it begins with a view of CHRIST in his abasement and sufferings, and ends with the relation of his exaltation and triumphs.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I hope the LORD the SPIRIT hath given you to see JESUS is this blessed scripture; and that while reading the word your heart hath been warmed with the SPIRIT's manifestations of JESUS. Oh! it is sweet, it is blessed, it is indeed most blessed, to see JESUS the great Restorer of that which he took not away. Never, dearest LORD, never let me lose sight of thee as my Surety, on whom the LORD JEHOVAH hath laid all mine iniquities, and from whom he hath both demanded and received the full equivalent for all my transgressions. For by virtue of this only can I look up now for acceptance, or hereafter for everlasting life. And grant me, oh! thou Restorer of all we have lost, grant me to see that the favour of GOD, the image of GOD, the love of GOD, and fellowship with GOD, thou hast procured for all thy people by thy blood and righteousness. And oh! let the heavy displeasure of my GOD against those who rejected the LORD of life and glory, cause me to behold the severity of GOD, while I contemplate his goodness. Hasten, LORD, in thine own time, deliverance to Jacob. Arise, thou great Restorer of the ancient paths to dwell in, and turn away ungodliness from thy people. Bring both Jew and Gentile into one fold, one church, one salvation; and reign thou, and rule thou, the One glorious LORD, in thy kingdom of Zion forever. Amen.

PSALM 70

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here at his devotions, in the exercise of faith. He speaks of his situation as trying, and of the insults of his foes; but casts himself upon the faithfulness of his GOD.

REFLECTIONS

IT is always profitable in our soul exercises, to behold CHRIST in his sufferings; and when we go up to the mercy-seat, always to have our eye fixed on the great Intercessor. What a relief to the soul, under temptations, trials, difficulties, and the like, to look at him who, when here below, felt the whole force of such things, on purpose that, having suffered being tempted, *he might know how to succour them that are tempted.* To this effect is the apostle's advice; *for consider him who endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your mind.* Hebrews 12:3. And certain it is, that nothing affords equal consolation, under the several sorrows of life, as the conviction that CHRIST himself, when upon earth, was *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.* Blessed LORD! help me ever to keep thee in remembrance: let me by faith behold thee going before, dignifying the tribulated path by thy bright example! And Oh! for grace to hear in gracious words, as if addressed, not only to thy more immediate disciples, but to all they represented, *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my FATHER hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

PSALM 71

SUMMARY

This Psalm is without a title, which is not very usual. Perhaps, being intended for general use, it was on that account omitted. It hath much the same strain as the former, for it professeth sure

confidence in GOD; and therefore concludes with an assurance of finally rejoicing in GOD.

REFLECTIONS

LORD JESUS! may I always find grace, while beholding thee going before thy people in all the exercises to which our nature is called, to follow thee on, thou perfect pattern, in all that is amiable and lovely, until I arrive, in thy strength and righteousness, to dwell with thee and in thee forever. Blessed be thy name! I do behold thee in this sweet Psalm, while acting as our Representative and Surety, and fulfilling all righteousness for thy people, leaning upon the covenant-faithfulness of thy FATHER, and trusting in him for every suited support through all the periods of thy undertaking. And as GOD, thy GOD and FATHER, had given commandment to save thee, and given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy way; so I see, blessed LORD, that to this promise as to thy rock and fortress, thou hadst recourse in every time of need. Precious JESUS! give me grace to learn from it to whom I am to look, and from whom I am to expect aid, whenever the enemies of my salvation encompass me around. And surely I shall find grace equal to my need, and as my day is, my strength will be. Tell me, O LORD, as thou didst thy servant the apostle, that thy grace is sufficient for me; and that thy strength is made perfect in my weakness. Yes! thou almighty Redeemer! I will humbly adopt thine own words, and in thy grace and strength say, *But I will hope continually; yea, I will praise thee more and more. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation, all the day long; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in thy strength, O LORD GOD, and I will make mention of thy righteousness. even of thine only.* Amen.

PSALM 72

SUMMARY

This Psalm is entitled a Psalm for Solomon; but under that title we are taught by the divine word that it is a prophecy concerning the LORD JESUS; and a greater than Solomon is here. It is indeed,

take it altogether, a most beautiful description, typically considered, of the reign of the LORD JESUS, and the prosperity of his church, as to be accomplished in the times of the gospel.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let me pause, my soul, and contemplate thy King and GOD in the glories of his person, and in the blessedness of that reign which shall have no end! Truly, blessed JESUS, thou art a King, both as one with the FATHER, GOD over all, blessed forever; and as the Mediator, the Head of thy church and people, to whom the FATHER hath given all power in heaven and earth. It is thy sole right, both by inheritance and by gift, to govern thy church, which thou hast purchased to thyself by thy blood! And oh! how blessed thy government! How mild, how just, how equitable, how true is everything in thy kingdom. Thy poor subjects, gathered from the ruins of a fallen nature, shall be saved, shall be blessed, protected, and made everlastingly happy in thee and by thee! Not all the refreshing dew of falling showers can come down with an influence so genial, as thou, by thy SPIRIT, wilt refresh the souls of thy redeemed: and every blessing in thy spiritual kingdom here, and thy kingdom of glory hereafter, shall be suited to the greatness of thy power, and the glories of thy person. Men shall be blessed in thee; and so universal and everlasting shall be thy reign, that all nations shall call thee Blessed. Hail, then, thou glorious, eternal, almighty LORD! Oh! give my soul a place in thy kingdom! Let me daily see the goings of my GOD and King in his sanctuary! Acknowledged as thine, both by the FATHER'S gift, and thine own purchase, and the conquests of thy grace; LORD, help me to call thee mine by an everlasting union to thy person, and an interest in all thy redemption! then shall my soul continually exult in the same hymn of praise as all the faithful gone before have done; and the first and last of my hosannas shall be—*Blessed be the LORD GOD, the GOD of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever. Let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.*

PSALM 73

SUMMARY

The Prophet is engaged, in this Psalm, in a subject which hath called forth the astonishment of pious minds in all ages of the church; namely, the seeming prosperity of the wicked, and the afflicted state of the godly. The Prophet describes (somewhat at large) the trial, and then tells us where alone he found the explanation of it, in the sanctuary of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! gather from this blessed Psalm all the instructions the HOLY GHOST intended the church should derive from it, and look up and pray that it may be made blessed in the LORD's hand to teach thee how to draw proper improvements from the LORD's providences which are going on continually in the world, and with which the LORD is pleased to exercise his faithful also. May JESUS bless it to this end!

In the *first* place, my soul! do, as *Asaph* did, put it down as a truth, which no outward circumstances can for a moment give occasion to call, in question, *Truly GOD is good to Israel*, whatever afflictions Israel is exercised with; and the LORD cannot but love his redeemed which he hath purchased with his blood, whatever calamities they labour under, while the wicked and the ungodly seem to prosper.

In the *next* place, learn to look at all exercises of GOD's people, in the seeming prosperity of the wicked, and their triumphs over the righteous, as so many means in the LORD's hand for bringing about the greatest good. *By these shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.* The LORD is invariably pursuing one plan of mercy, love, and grace, to his people: *That the trial of your faith* (saith the apostle) *being much more precious than gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST!* Blessed process, when sanctified by grace! It weans from the world, from creature-comforts, creature-confidences, all self-exalting thoughts; and brings the soul humble, low, and submissive before GOD. Above all, it endears JESUS, proves

the importance of his salvation, and makes him increasingly precious day by day.

Lastly, learn to see love at the bottom of all, in the blessed conformity the people of GOD are hereby brought into, to the person and pattern of JESUS. *Whom he did foreknow* (saith an apostle) *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his SON—that he might be the firstborn among many brethren*. And what prophet, what apostle, what martyr of JESUS ever lived in the prosperity which *Asaph* describes in this Psalm? Rather let it be asked, what prophet, what apostle, what martyr, who was most eminent in GOD's service, but was most eminent also in suffering? Nay, what was the Prince of prophets, but *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*? Blessed then be the LORD for those marks of sonship and adoption, by which the faithful are eminently known! Oh! for grace to take joyfully reproaches, afflictions, necessities, for CHRIST's sake; that when *most weak in ourselves, we may be most strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might*. Precious JESUS! be thou my portion, and bring me into a holy conformity to thee, in all things, that thou mayest be my joy, my happiness, and my all, both now and forever. Amen.

PSALM 74

SUMMARY

There is somewhat of history in this Psalm, as referring to the desolations of the church; probably concerning the devastation made by the Chaldean. The Sacred Writer laments the sad event, and commits the cause unto the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

READER, behold in this Psalm, the best and strongest arguments for the church to plead in sad times, namely, GOD's great name, and the security of his own honour in the salvation by JESUS. Let the enemies of the church seem to triumph as they may, with a high hand; and though they but too often derive success to their cause from the unworthiness and backsliding of the LORD's people; yet their triumph is short, and the church's down-falling not long to

be continued; GOD will be gracious for his name's sake, and will make his mighty power to be known. The LORD will have respect unto his covenant: GOD hath taken his people into covenant relations with himself; he hath received a ransom for their deliverance, from their glorious Surety; he hath engaged for their salvation; and he will fulfil it. Oh! precious consideration, amidst all the Pharaohs of the present hour, and all the remains of indwelling corruption, under which the people of GOD groan.

Precious LORD JESUS! it was thou that didst break the head of Leviathan in pieces! It was thou that didst divide the sea before thy people, to make thyself a glorious name! It was thou that didst supply thy people through all the wilderness dispensation, in cleaving the hard rock, and in drying up mighty waters! Oh! do thou now, blessed JESUS, perform all that is needful for thy redeemed: for thou art the same JESUS yesterday, and today, and forever. Break down, and break through, all the power of the enemy, and make thy people more than conquerors, through thy grace helping them. Be thou, LORD, the all in all to them in every situation and circumstance; for then thy poor and thy needy will never go away ashamed, but will sing aloud praises to thy name.

PSALM 75

SUMMARY

This appears to be a Psalm of praise. The soul rejoicing in the covenant interest of GOD his Saviour, while he praiseth GOD, corrects the ungodly, and speaks with holy confidence of what the different ends shall be to the righteous and to the wicked.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS JESUS! thou art the name of JEHOVAH to poor sinners, for all that is fair, and lovely, and engaging, is found in thy name. LORD! (may the church of thy redeemed well say) *to thee do we give thanks; yea, unto thee do we give thanks.*

But how shall we sufficiently adore thee, O thou LAMB of GOD; that for us thou didst take the cup of trembling, and drink it up to the very dregs, that thy people might take the cup of salvation, and obtain redemption in thy blood! Was it for creatures such as we are? Was it for me, even for me, O thou gracious benefactor, that thou didst condescend to be made sin, and a curse, that I might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee? And didst thou die, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto GOD? Oh! for grace to live to thee, who hast died for me; and henceforth to know nothing among men, but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified. Oh! LORD! help me, as often as I look at thy cross, to connect with it this gracious view, JESUS drank the cup of trembling, that I might drink the cup of salvation: JESUS groaned on the cross, that his redeemed might triumph in death. The Head took all the sorrows and stings of death, that the members might have none to feel: CHRIST'S soul was full of horror and darkness, that their souls might be full of joy and light. Help me, LORD, often to commemorate this love unequalled at thy table. Yes, I would take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD: I would pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people; yea, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD. Amen.

PSALM 76

SUMMARY

This is a thanksgiving hymn. It was probably composed upon the occasion of some remarkable victory that the LORD manifested to the church over her enemies. Some have gone so far as to determine it to have been for the triumph, in the days of Hezekiah, over the Assyrians; 2 Chronicles 20:28. But this is but conjecture. The Psalmist celebrates the glory and majesty of JEHOVAH, eminently shown in his church; and, in the close of the Psalm, exhorts the church to a suitable reverence and godly fear.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, thou hast been looking at the happy state of Israel, when living under the divine presence, and beheld the blessedness of having the LORD JEHOVAH in the midst of his Zion, to comfort and to

strengthen her. There, indeed, as the prophet sang, *the glorious LORD was unto them as a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein no galley with oars from the enemy could go, neither any of their gallant ships pass by*: for if the LORD himself was the river and streams of his people, surely *upon all the glory was there a defense*. And are the advantages of GOD's people less now? No, in no wise. If in Judah GOD was known, and his name was great in Israel, is not GOD truly known in Him and by Him who sprang out of Judah? And hath he not made himself truly known in and by the revelation of his dear SON? Hath not the name of JEHOVAH been made great and gracious also, since JESUS came and proclaimed, in his own and his FATHER'S name, salvation to poor sinners in his blood and righteousness? Was the tabernacle at *Salem* glorious when the *Shechinah* was manifested there, and GOD's dwelling known to be in Zion by these marks and testimonies? And are these mercies less, or rather, are they not all abundantly heightened, since JESUS came down and tabernacled in our nature, and fulfilled the promise which John heard: *Behold the tabernacle of GOD is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and GOD himself shall be with them, and be their GOD*. Oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! it is thou, that hast brought us truly acquainted with GOD, and art not only come nigh *unto us*, but hast brought *us nigh* by thy blood. There, indeed, in thy tabernacling in our flesh, didst thou break the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle; for in our nature, and for our salvation, thou hast destroyed all the powers of the enemy, and thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. Hail! thou blessed and victorious Friend of poor sinners!

PSALM 77

SUMMARY

The church is here evidently under exercises. Some mighty foes come against her, and her resource can only be found in her GOD. The Psalmist thus speaks of his confidence, confesses that GOD's ways are dark and mysterious, but a happy end shall be to all his appointments.

REFLECTIONS

READER, ponder over the weighty contents of this blessed Psalm. Do we see CHRIST in it? Did JESUS so cry in the days of his flesh? Did he accomplish salvation for his people, when he bore their sins and carried their sorrows? Oh! then, let us delight to trace his footsteps amidst all the dark and hidden providences with which we may be exercised. Depend upon it, he is bringing all his redeemed by a right way to a city of habitation. He that led his people like a flock safely through the wilderness, by the hand of Moses and Aaron, is never inattentive to his people now. They may be exercised, they may be cast down; but they shall not be cast off, nor forgotten by him forever. Let us do as the writer of this sweet Psalm did; under our sharpest trials, let us call to mind the days that are past, and the years of GOD's faithful dealings with his people in ancient times; see whether we cannot find exercises, with which the faithful were brought to the test, similar to our own. This will help us, by the SPIRIT's sweet application of it, under numberless occasions. Faith will revive in the review. The soul will say, Was JESUS faithful then, and will he not be faithful now? He mightily delivered his people under their distresses, and is he not JESUS still to me under mine? Doth he not rest in his love? Doth he not hate putting away? Set up, my soul, this day, this very day, thy Ebenezer afresh. Hitherto the LORD hath helped. Though I cannot see at all times my path clear, yet let me see, LORD, thy faithfulness at all times the same. Ere long I shall see thy glory. Hallelujah! JESUS lives, and JESUS reigns: all shall be well. Thou art then the GOD of my salvation, on thee will I lean, and to thee will I come, and in thee let me be found now and forever.

PSALM 78

SUMMARY

This Psalm, as the title sets forth, is a Maschil, that is, a Psalm of instruction. It contains, in an historical method of relation, GOD's gracious dealings with Israel as a people. In reading it the believer

should have an eye to his own history, to mark the parallel between Israel and himself.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us make a solemn pause over the perusal of this most interesting Psalm. And when we have taken a careful survey of its precious contents, let us beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST, the almighty Author of it, to give us grace so to read, and so to improve it to our own use and benefit, that his gracious design may be accomplished, in having caused it to be *written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of this world are come.*

And to this end, LORD, we would pray that we may have a clear and distinct apprehension of the sacramental design of thy grace all along intended from the church's history. Didst thou bring thy people by thine own power, and with a stretched out arm, from Egypt? Didst thou lead them through the wilderness, manifest thy grace to them all the way, and finally settle them in Canaan? And hast thou not, by the sovereignty of the same wonders in redeeming love, brought thy church now out of spiritual Egypt, and art thou not leading thy people home to thyself in the everlasting Canaan, which is above, through all the wilderness dispensations with which they are exercised, while thy presence is ever with them, and thine arm conducting them along in safety?—Were thy redeemed blessed with the visible symbols of thy divine presence, the pillar of cloud going before them by day, and the pillar of fire protecting them by night; manna from heaven for their food, and the rock to give water for their thirst? And dost thou teach us that these were so many sacraments, types, and figures of the SPIRIT, the HOLY GHOST, shedding his illuminating, guiding, protecting grace; the manna of heaven, even JESUS the living bread, and the rock, even CHRIST the living water, to supply every need? Oh! LORD, grant, we beseech thee, that our souls, like the Israelites bodies, amidst the dust of a wilderness, the serpents and scorpions of a sultry soil, may thirst with a vehement thirst, as the hart for the cooling streams, panting, longing, and looking to JESUS, the only one to assuage the thirst of our souls. Didst thou, blessed JESUS, in the day-time lead them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire; oh! then, give us to see that thou art still with thy church, still loving, still protecting, still

feeding, and wilt never leave them nor forsake them, until thou hast brought them home unto thyself, that *where thou art there they may be also*. And do thou keep us, LORD, from the awful examples here set before us. Oh! for grace to believe the record GOD hath given of his SON! and, above all sins, preserve us from that dreadful, dreadful sin of a CHRIST-despising generation! May we never tempt CHRIST; never doubt either his power to save, or his willingness to redeem; nor murmur, as some of them murmured, lest, like them, we be destroyed of the destroyer; but with an eye to thee, in all thy rich dispensations, view thy sacramental designs in all the eventful history. Yes, blessed JESUS! our desire is to thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. May we eat of the same spiritual meat, and drink of the same spiritual drink; yea, may we drink deep into the full assurance of that blessed truth, that we are now, by faith, as much as the church of old, drinking of that spiritual rock that followed them, convinced that *that Rock was CHRIST*.

PSALM 79

SUMMARY

The church is here described as under great affliction. The burden of the complaint is to this effect; the Psalmist looks up to the throne for deliverance, and makes use of the strong plea of GOD's faithfulness for his support, and expresses his dependence on the divine mercy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail, from the perusal of this short but sweet Psalm, to remark how the church hath been exercised from age to age, and what a correspondence there is, and ever hath been, between the faithful in their experience all the way along. Yes! blessed JESUS! the exercises of thy people are among the earthly inheritance to which they are born, and to which thou hast begotten them: these are the spots of GOD's children; the marks of their sonship. Oh! for grace to discover, by these certificates, to whose family we belong.

Reader! see to it, that thy cries for deliverance are founded on the same plea: it is all in JESUS, the inheritance of his redeemed, the portion of his chosen. Every prayer is directed to the GOD of salvation, and every plea for mercy is founded in GOD's covenant-mercy, as it is in JESUS. And oh! for faith to depend on covenant-faithfulness, while pleading covenant-grace and covenant-promises. Yes! blessed Redeemer! all is founded in thine everlasting righteousness, and the eternal efficacy of thy blood; by virtue of which the name and faithfulness of JEHOVAH becomes pledged to his people, and their redemption is forever secured. Hail! almighty LORD! *thou hast sworn once by thy holiness, thou wilt not lie unto David.*

PSALM 80

SUMMARY

Here is another of the records of the day of Jacob's troubles. The church is still at the mercy-seat, and adopts similar arguments in prayer to those which were made use of in the foregoing Psalm, namely, GOD's love to his people, and their interest in him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if the church of old, with reference to CHRIST, as he who was to come as the Shepherd of Israel, thus prayed him to shine forth, and to show himself from between the cherubim, well may you and I look up to JESUS now, who not only hath come and led his sheep-fold, and gone before them, but, like the good Shepherd, hath laid down his life for his sheep. If the church's deliverance from Egypt is spoken of with such praise, and JESUS, who was then only looked to through type and figure, was so dear to the people, surely believers now ought to behold CHRIST in everything, and enjoy him in everything. Let us, therefore, Reader, look up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Glorifier of CHRIST JESUS, and beg of him for grace to make these two more especial improvements from this very precious Psalm: *First*, to have more frequent and lively actings of faith upon the person of CHRIST; and, *secondly*, to improve those actings of

faith upon his Person, by keeping up a constant communion and fellowship with him.

Yes, thou great Shepherd of Israel, for I would call thee, thou blessed JESUS, by that name, do thou give me daily, and every moment, to act faith upon thy glorious Person! Thou art he whom the FATHER calleth *his Shepherd*, the Man *his fellow*! And thou art to all thy people the good Shepherd, the chief Shepherd, the great shepherd, whom the GOD of peace brought again from the dead! Oh! do thou show thyself to my soul in all the actings of faith, as feeding thy flock, taking account of them, knowing all their names, going before them, leading, guiding, feeding, healing, restoring, and keeping them, and causing them to lie down in green pastures. Yes, LORD! thou art thyself the food of their souls, and their portion forever.

And while, by thy blessed SPIRIT, thou enablest me to keep up a lively view of thy Person, and to act faith also upon thine offices, help me, LORD, to improve those actings of faith by maintaining constant communion and fellowship with thee. Precious JESUS! while thou art coming forth to bless me, help me to see thy coming, and to be going forth continually to meet thee: LORD, help me to be pressing after greater knowledge of thee, greater improvement of thee, end greater enjoyment of thee. And oh! let thy love, thy grace, thy tenderness, thy compassion, and the infinite preciousness of thy salvation, be my daily, hourly joy, and the food of my soul: and let the hymn of my heart be like this of the church: *Give ear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that dwellest between the cherubim, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

PSALM 81

SUMMARY

The Writer of this Psalm is calling upon Israel to bless the God of Israel: and he proposeth the subject and points to the cause. The Psalm concludes with lamenting the sad departures of Israel in many instances.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let every renewed call, which we behold in the old dispensation, to excite the people to praise, remind us of our higher privileges, and become an additional incentive to the most animated love and praise to our GOD in CHRIST. Were the Old Testament saints perpetually reminded of the distinguishing love of GOD to his people; and was it the voice of trumpets by which the HOLY GHOST caused it to be proclaimed in his church, *Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound?* Think what increased causes we may find, to whom JESUS himself hath manifested his great trumpet of salvation, declaring that when it is blown, *they shall come that are ready to perish.*

And shall we, like Israel, forget the LORD? Shall we say, or, what is to the same effect, shall we do, as they did; that it may be said of us, His people would not hearken to his voice, and JESUS'S Israel would have none of him? Oh, LORD! in mercy avert these awful departures. No! precious JESUS! it is thou who hast brought our souls out of the spiritual Egypt of sin and death! It is thou who hast converted us from the language of nature to a language of grace, which we understood not, neither should have known, but from thy teaching. Thou hast indeed removed from our shoulders the burden of sin, and delivered us from the slavery of Satan; thou hast heard and answered prayer; and thou hast been our GOD and our Saviour. Oh! then still go on, to satisfy our souls with the bread of life, and the water of life, which is thyself, and *keep us by thine almighty power, through faith unto salvation.*

PSALM 82

SUMMARY

The sacred writer is here addressing himself to princes and magistrates, by way of reminding them that when they sit in judgment the eye of JEHOVAH is upon them. But the most interesting part of this Psalm is that which points to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass over all lesser considerations, which the perusal of this Psalm might open to our view in the judgment of earthly powers, to behold him who is the righteous Judge, and to whom the FATHER hath committed all judgment. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet it is, to consider that He who is one day to be my Judge, is every day my Brother! JESUS will indeed at the last day sit upon the judgment-seat, and before him will be gathered all nations: angels, principalities, and powers, will be brought under his unerring judgment. And while such views are enough to check all unrighteous decrees among men, which will there be fully reversed; they are, or ought to be, enough also to carry conviction to the heart, that nothing can escape his all-seeing eye, nor escape his righteous judgment. But, Reader! hath JESUS already brought us under his righteous judgment? Hath he, by his blessed SPIRIT, made us to flee from a covenant of works, to take refuge under his own covenant of grace? Then is there no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT. And if JESUS be my Judge, who hath already been my Surety; if he, who died the just for the unjust, hath wrought out a righteousness to justify the souls of his people, and shed his blood to wash them from all sin; surely, if he hath born their sins, he will not condemn their souls. He once died for them, and rose again to justify them; and when he comes to judge both quick and dead, then will he claim them as his own, and declare their righteousness in him, before a congregated world. The very words which he will then utter are already recorded; and what shall reverse his sentence? *Come, ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Well might the church cry out of old, and well may every believer now join in the declaration: *The LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us!*

PSALM 83

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here again under affliction, and is looking to the mercy-seat for deliverance. He makes complaint against his enemies, and those of the church.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! observe how implacable is the enmity of Satan against CHRIST'S hidden ones: and what persecutions, from a variety of quarters, he will stir up, in order to draw them from GOD. But observe also, how eternally secure they are of GOD'S favor. They are hidden *with* him, and hidden *in* him: and although for a time the LORD may seem to keep silence, while the enemy triumphs; yet, in due time, JESUS will arise to the destruction of all his and their adversaries; and while the LORD hides them, he manifests himself in their defense.

See, my soul, whether thou art in this happy number: The people that are hidden, *dwell alone, and are not reckoned among the nations*. They are so truly secret and unperceived, in all their sweet transactions with GOD in CHRIST, that the world knoweth them not, because it knew him not. And who shall describe their hidden life with CHRIST in GOD? Who shall say how, or when, it began; how it is carried on; how kept alive; by what channel communicated, and preserved to glory? Oh! the unknown mercies, the unnumbered blessings, from the day of their effectual calling, until grace is consummated in everlasting glory! Oh! the blessed visits JESUS makes to his hidden ones the manner he gives to them in secret the ten thousand foretastes of his love! LAMB of GOD! that feedest thy church above, surely no less art thou attentive to thine hidden ones in the wilderness below. Yes, thou precious LORD JESUS, thou art my life, my strength, my joy, my portion, my defense, when the *Ishmaelites*, and the *Esaus*, and *Edoms*, of the present hour, come on like troops of *Tema*, to destroy. Hide me, LORD, in thee and thy righteousness, and give me to see it, and daily to live by faith in present enjoyment of it, until faith is swallowed up in sight; until thou art in everything blessed to my soul, and I am blessed in thee.

Then, like the apostle, I shall truly know that I am dead to everything but thee, and that my life is hid with thee in GOD; that when thou, who art my life, shalt appear, I shall appear also with thee in glory.

PSALM 84

SUMMARY

We have here the earnest longings and devout aspirations of the soul for personal communion with GOD in CHRIST. The blessedness of that man is sublimely set forth who hath a GOD in CHRIST for his portion.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou holy, thou blessed, thou anointed of GOD! Oh! let thy name be ever to my soul as ointment poured forth. For while any GOD and FATHER looks upon the face of his anointed, JESUS is my sun and shield, And looking up to him whom the FATHER beholds, always apprehending and laying hold of him by faith, oh! how will thy person, thou blessed JESUS! thy love, thy grace, thy mercy to me, a poor sinner, be then considered! How shall I delight in thy name, thy sabbaths, thine ordinances, thy word, thine house of prayer! Surely, one day in thy courts, will be better than a thousand elsewhere. And will not JESUS grant me, by his blessed SPIRIT, these soul-satisfying, soul-strengthening enjoyments? Shall the sparrow, the bird of the air, be indulged with a resting place; and shall a child of thine be kept from thee? Art not thou my resting-place, my Noah, whither, like the dove, I may return when I can find no place for the sole of my foot to light upon? LORD JESUS! be thou all in all to my soul! and while gratifying my faith with making every day a sabbath-day here below, oh! for grace to long for the everlasting sabbaths of heaven, where the unceasing love and adoration of GOD and the LAMB will be my perpetual and eternal joy for evermore. Haste, my beloved! and until this day of heaven without a shade break in upon my longing soul, and the shadows of earth for ever flee away, *be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.*

PSALM 85

SUMMARY

This is another of the gospel Psalms, and truly precious it is, when opened to the believing soul by GOD the HOLY GHOST. It appears, in its first view, as if it referred to some temporal deliverance of the church; but if the Reader look diligently into it, he will find some points which have a higher note, and sing of spiritual mercies by JESUS CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, read again and again this blessed Psalm; and so read and meditate concerning the most glorious things spoken of in it, until thy whole affections are led out in holy rapture, praise, and love, to the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the wonders of redemption so beautifully and largely set forth in it. See, my soul, how all the attributes of JEHOVAH meet to accomplish salvation, by the union of what nothing but divine love could have proposed, and nothing but divine power could have accomplished! See how all the sacred Persons assemble to crown JESUS, King of Glory! Here GOD and man meet in one person, CHRIST. Here law and gospel, justice and mercy, are found harmonizing! Here heaven and earth are brought together, rather than poor man shall be lost! Here a covenant of works and a covenant of grace meet in the wonderful person of JESUS! And here we learn an evident proof, that GOD can be just to his own glory, and yet gracious to a poor sinner's transgressions, in justifying the ungodly.

Look up, my soul, look up, and contemplate thy JESUS, thy Redeemer, thy Saviour. Surely thou hast never done this as thou ought, if thou dost not behold in him what this Psalm records, mercy and truth meeting together, righteousness and peace kissing each other. In him, and his righteousness, his blood, and the graces of his HOLY SPIRIT, do thou seek for the FATHER'S honour and glory, and the assurance of thine own everlasting salvation. And oh! let the consciousness of everything centering in CHRIST for grace here, lead thee to the blessed hope and confidence, that everything for glory hereafter must centre in him also. In CHRIST, JEHOVAH meets the

sinner with pardon and mercy in this life; and in CHRIST all the manifestations of JEHOVAH meet to give happiness and glory to the church to all eternity. Hallelujah! Salvation to GOD and the LAMB. Amen.

PSALM 86

SUMMARY

The royal Prophet is at his devotions; and in beholding David, surely we must not overlook him, of whom David was so eminent a type. We find strong faith joined with earnest prayer in the opening of the Psalm, and loud praise at the close of it.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, Reader, yet a little longer, and hear the cries which JESUS, thy Surety, used in the days of his flesh. He begs the FATHER to incline his ear to him, for, though holy, he is poor and needy; though harmless, the proud were risen up against him; and though undefiled and separate from sinners, yet there were those that hated him. And was it so, that he who was rich became poor for our sakes, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich?—Precious LORD! we have seen thee in thy low and debased estate, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and shall not such views of thine unequalled humiliation tend to reconcile our hearts to any, and to every situation, which thy wisdom appoints, and which thy grace will carry all thy people safely through? Oh for grace to imitate thy lovely example! Oh for a spirit of supplication to carry all trials, crosses, afflictions, to the throne; and there to remember we have an Advocate, one whom the FATHER heareth always; there to lodge, and there to leave all our wants; and to cast all our care upon him, who hath so cared, and still doth care, for us. And wert thou, blessed JESUS, in the days of thy flesh thus exercised? Though thou wert a Son, yet didst thou learn obedience by the things which thou didst suffer? And being made perfect, didst thou become the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey thee? Oh LORD! show some token for good, even the light of thy blessed countenance upon us; and let the whole world, both of friends and foes, know that He, who

was once a man of Sorrows, is now our risen and exalted Saviour, and can, and will send down every token of good, as the necessities of his people shall require. Yes, LORD! we are assured that we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but thou wert, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Help us then to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

PSALM 87

SUMMARY

This Psalm hath been very justly considered as a beautiful ode on the Incarnation of CHRIST; and, as such, contains the outlines of that glorious event, and of the happiness and welfare of the church in it.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! what sayest thou to this blessed Psalm, as to thy personal experience of the glorious things contained in it? Most plain and evident it is, that the foundation upon which the temple, as a type of CHRIST, is founded, is CHRIST JESUS. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, JESUS CHRIST.* But, my soul, art thou founded in him? and are all thy fresh springs in Him? See the foundation of everything out of CHRIST! Look into houses, families, churches: if CHRIST be not the rock, on which every individual is built, how shall it be said of any, when JEHOVAH counts, and writes up the people, that *this Man*, even JESUS, was born in that soul? How shall that promise of JESUS be fulfilled: *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my GOD; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my GOD, and the name of the city of my GOD: and I will write upon him my new name!*—And, my soul, see to it, as an evidence of these precious glorious things, that all thy resources, all thy happiness, grace, righteousness, joy, glory, be all in JESUS, and flowing from him alone, in all thy refreshments.

Oh! ye elder brethren, the Jews; ye that are the descendants of Zion, behold Him, concerning whom JEHOVAH hath recorded, a

Person and a Person shall be born in her! May this almighty Redeemer hasten the time of his arising in Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob! And ye, no less, the Gentiles yet to be called in, behold ye! *Philistia and Tyre!* ye, people of *Ethiopia!* see the register of JEHOVAH, *This man was born.* LORD! hasten the hour when *Ethiopia*, and *Seba*, and the multitude of the isles, shall stretch forth their hands unto our GOD. Amen.

PSALM 88

SUMMARY

Whether the penman of this Psalm, under the spirit of prophecy, is describing the Person and sorrows of the ever-blessed JESUS; or whether they be the afflictions of his church and people; yet, from beginning to end, the subject is one continuation of the sorrows of the soul.

REFLECTIONS

SHALL I not ponder over the contents of this plaintive Psalm, and reflect on the sad cause of human misery? Day and night may tears run down, when the soul reviews the melancholy source of this world's afflictions. But, my soul, when in JESUS thou beholdest such sorrow, to what a height of increased lamentation doth the subject arise? That man, who is a child of sin, should be the child of sorrow, is what might well be supposed, and is to be expected in a state like the present. But when we hear his holy soul, who knew no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile, thus crying out under the *water-spouts* of Divine wrath, sore amazed and distracted; what a horrible idea doth this awaken of the baleful malignity of sin and man's fallen estate? To have been present at the destruction of the old world by the flood; to have seen Sodom destroyed by fire, or Korah and his company swallowed up by the earthquake; these would all have given lively ideas of GOD's irreconcilable hatred of sin. But to view sin in all its horrors, no representation can come up to the cries of the SON of GOD. If, my soul, thou wouldest see sin exceedingly sinful, go to Gethsemane, or to Golgotha; there hear the holy JESUS uttering strong cries, and learning obedience by the

things which he suffered. And shall I not, precious LAMB of GOD, shall not my soul be drawn, out in love to thee, in delight in thee, in affection towards thee, and dependence upon thee, when I behold thee, in these unequalled sufferings, and when I am constrained to say, Lo, all this, and more, did JESUS suffer and endure when he knew no sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of GOD in him? Oh LORD, in the contemplation of thee and thy sufferings, enable me to go on and find confidence in all the trifling difficulties and sorrows with which thou wast fit to exercise me here below. Thou art still the GOD of my salvation and thou wilt bear me up, and carry me through, and lighten all my pressure, until thou shalt bring me home to behold thy glory and to dwell with thee forever.

PSALM 89

SUMMARY

This is a glorious Song indeed, in celebration of the blessings of redemption. GOD the FATHER's covenant-mercy in CHRIST is most devoutly acknowledged, and his faithfulness and truth dwelt upon, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, did Ethan; determine to sing of the covenant-mercies of the LORD, and to make this the song of his rejoicing forever: and wilt thou suffer thine harp to hang upon the willows? Wilt thou not take it down, and proclaim the same covenant faithfulness of JEHOVAH to all generations? Hear what the LORD GOD himself hath said concerning it.—Mercy is by JEHOVAH himself built up forever: yea, the sure mercies of David. And is not CHRIST this mercy? Are not all mercies, that are real mercies, founded in him, and flowing wholly from him? Is it not JESUS that gives sweetness, value, enjoyment, and continuance to every mercy? And do not all blessings truly derive their very, property as blessings, from JESUS? Oh! blessed consideration! Mercy is built forever. JEHOVAH hath made a covenant with his chosen; and hence in the word and oath of

JEHOVAH, all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are secured. Hallelujah.

And hast thou, my soul, heard and known this joyful sound? Art thou walking in the light of the divine countenance? Art thou rejoicing in JESUS all the day: and in his righteousness art thou making thy boast? Is this holy One, this almighty One, this chosen One of GOD, thy chosen? And dost thou say of him, this is He whom my soul loveth? LORD, do thou choose our heritage for us!

Holy FATHER! my soul desires to bow down before thy footstool, under a deep sense of sin. In how many ways, and in how many and various paths of transgression, have I forsaken thy laws, and walked not in thy judgments! LORD, I accept the punishment of my iniquity, and bless thee for the precious *nevertheless* in thy covenant-engagements to JESUS, whereby thou hast said, that thou wilt not lie unto David. For his sake, LORD, help me to rest upon the full assurance of all thy covenant promises, that his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before thee. May my soul exultingly rejoice in the LORD, and for the triumphs of CHRIST, cry out in the same language with thy servant, *Blessed be the LORD for evermore*. Amen, and Amen.

PSALM 90

SUMMARY

We cannot be at a loss to form a proper idea of the antiquity of this Psalm; for the title shows that Moses was the penman of it. Perhaps it was written at the time when the LORD determined, for Israel's unbelief, that the carcasses of that generation should die in the wilderness, as related in Numbers 14. It is called a prayer, and in it the Man of GOD strikingly sets forth the frailty of man, and his transitory state, compared to the eternity of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER, have you ever contemplated, in the point of view this blessed Psalm represents it, the dying circumstances of a perishing world? There is nothing which, under grace, can more effectually tend to give a right and proper estimate of human life. In every state,

in everything, the funeral proclamation is momentarily making: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* From a conviction of this unquestionable truth, the inquiry arises what will be the best preparation for it; and, since there can be no exemption, how shall you or I be suitably and properly affected towards it? This Psalm opens with an answer the most satisfactory. The LORD is the only dwelling place in all generations. The Rock of Ages is the only habitation. If GOD, in CHRIST, be the dwelling place of the believer, here the soul resides secure amidst all the dying and the dead circumstances of a convulsed, tottering, crumbling, and departing world. Reader, what say you to this security? Are you living upon a faithful, unchangeable covenant-GOD in CHRIST? Have you taken shelter in JESUS, as a hiding place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land? Oh, what an everlasting security is here! Because I live, saith JESUS, ye shall live also. Fear not, said he, to the dying Patriarch, fear not to go down into Egypt, I will go with thee. And when you and I can say, as the Patriarch did, I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD: then may we add, This GOD is our GOD forever and ever; He will be our guide unto death!

PSALM 91

SUMMARY

Under several very striking similitudes, the Person of CHRIST and his redemption work are pointed out. This Psalm is the more remarkable in that the accursed enemy himself, in his temptations of CHRIST, hesitated not to make quotations from it, as referring to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! how sweet to my soul is it to behold all these gracious promises of GOD the FATHER made over to thee, and for the security of thy person and work, as the great Head of thy church and people? Truly was it said of thee, thou holy LORD, that thou didst set thy love upon thy FATHER. For though thy love to thy church was

such that thou gavest thyself for it, an offering and a sacrifice to GOD, of a sweet smelling savour, yet it was thy love to thy FATHER which prompted thine infinite mind in the great work of redemption. Yes, blessed JESUS! methinks I still hear thee saying, *I delight to do thy will, O my GOD, yea, thy law is within my heart.* And therefore did the FATHER love thee, as the Surety of thy people, in that thou didst lay down thy life that thou mightest take it again. Hence JEHOVAH's sweet promises: Neither the lion, nor the adder, the young lion, nor the dragon, shall be able to contend with thee. No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.

And, oh! LORD, how blessed is it to see in thee, and thy great salvation, the everlasting security of thy people also! Yes, almighty Conqueror! in thy strength and power shall the humblest of thy people at length put their feet on the neck of all their enemies. Devils shall be subject to them through thy name; and the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under their feet shortly. Oh, for grace to go on conquering and to conquer, making mention of JESUS and his righteousness only, until every enemy shall be subdued, and JESUS shall bring home his royal army, victorious, under his almighty banner, to sit down with him on his throne, and to be made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER.

PSALM 92

SUMMARY

Here are some very striking arguments in favor of the blessedness of waiting on the LORD. The state of such as serve GOD is described, and their happiness insisted upon.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, what a gracious provision the HOLY GHOST hath made for thee to sing thy song on the sabbath-day! Never, surely, wilt thou be at a loss for a hymn of praise to carol aloud the blessedness of the sabbath, as long as this Psalm riseth to thy view. Behold! what a glorious subject it openeth, in the celebration of JEHOVAH's faithfulness. Think what fatherly love thy GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS manifested towards the church, and towards

thee, and every individual member of CHRIST'S mystical body, when giving his dear SON as the glorious Head of the Church, the very ordinance, the word, the sabbath, and the rest, in grace here, and glory hereafter! And think what a sabbath JESUS is himself, and what a rest to every weary soul! My soul! wilt thou not flourish under this Palm-tree of thy LORD, and spread abroad under his gracious shade and his fruitful blessings? And think how beneficent is the HOLY GHOST in all his quickening influences and gracious teachings, to lead thee on the sabbaths to the ordinances of JESUS, and there to shed abroad the love of GOD in thine heart, and direct thee into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST. Hail! holy, holy, holy, undivided THREE in ONE, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! May every sabbath which showeth forth thy faithfulness find my soul resting more and more upon the LORD our righteousness, and testifying my earnest waiting for that everlasting sabbath of rest which is above, and which remaineth for the people of GOD!

PSALM 93

SUMMARY

This Psalm, though short, is sweet and full of JESUS; and celebrates the person, glory, and majesty of CHRIST and his kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET thought, in the perusal of this Psalm! The right of JESUS to government as the SON of GOD, one with the FATHER, is a natural right, for he is LORD of all. And sweet to the believer also is the thought that, as King in Zion, as the Mediator of his church and people, he hath a donative right, a purchased right, and a right by conquest and by power. Rejoice then, my soul! Thy GOD, thy King, thy JESUS reigneth. Yes! blessed LORD, do thou reign, and rule, and govern, in thy Zion. Do thou manifest to my soul, that thou hast subdued my stubborn heart, and brought me under thy gracious sceptre. And, LORD, do thou reign, in me, and rule in me and for me, against all the host of foes and floods of the ungodly, whether of sin

or Satan, or my lusts or the world. And oh LORD, give me desires to know thee, and to obey thee, and to live to thee and to thy glory. I would be led a willing captive by my LORD, and know no will but thine. And, LORD, subdue the world to the sceptre of thy grace! Let the earth rejoice that thou art king, and let *every knee bow* before thee, *and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.* Amen.

PSALM 94

SUMMARY

It should seem that, this Psalm was composed at a time when the church was oppressed, and the enemy triumphed; and silence at a throne of grace proved a sharp exercise to the people. The subject is of this kind. Here are complaints and petitions followed up with faith, that the LORD will hear, and in due time answer the cries of his afflicted.

REFLECTIONS

How blessed it is, that the LORD hath reserved in his own hands the judgment and punishment of his enemies! And however we may be led to think that we are doing the cause of CHRIST good, when at any time we feel constrained to take vengeance of his enemies, yet here we learn to leave the whole with the LORD. *Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the LORD.*

But amidst all the exercises with which the faithful are tried, from the oppression and malice of the world, what a blessed relief is it to have a covenant GOD to fly unto, and to lodge all complaints in his almighty hands. Precious JESUS! thy comforts are a rich cordial to the soul, amidst the host of sorrows with which thy people groan in the present state. Thy blood and righteousness, thy grace, and the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT; the fulness, fitness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency that is in thee, become a most powerful balance to bear up the mind under all the pressure of the sins and sorrows of life. I bespeak, LORD, an interest in thee, and communion with thee, and every suited grace from thee, against a dark and trying hour. Do thou, gracious LORD, by thine HOLY SPIRIT,

grant me continual, daily, hourly relief, to bear up against all despondency. And oh! LORD, grant me such faith, and in such lively exercise, that my soul may at all times rejoice in the consolation! Give me to find comfort in thee, and then, sure I am, I shall find assurance in thy great salvation. *Return to thy rest, O my soul* (will then be the language of my heart) *for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

PSALM 95

SUMMARY

This is a gospel Psalm, from beginning to end. The rock of whom it speaks is CHRIST, and the salvation it sings is his. It forms an earnest exhortation of the church, that every heart should join in praises to the GOD of salvation.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul canst thou accept the invitation, and join with holy joy and love the pressing call of the church, and hasten to celebrate the praises of JEHOVAH JESUS, the Rock of thy salvation? Is he indeed thy Rock, thy Saviour, thy HOLY ONE, thy JESUS, thy Chosen? Hath he won thy affections, gained over thine heart to his love; and dost thou know him in all those sweet and covenant relations, in which the HOLY GHOST here represents him to the Church? Oh! precious view of a most blessed and precious Saviour! Help me, LORD, to put forth all my strength, and hasten to bow down the knee of my heart with all my soul and body, before his footstool. Yes! LORD, I would make a joyful noise, the loudest noise of the warmest heart, in praising thee, in loving thee, in living to thee, both in ordinances and without them, day by day, and night by night, to show forth the praises of him, who hath called me out of darkness into his marvellous light. Creation, providence, redemption, grace, glory, shall all come into the notes of my song. And I would not only call upon all that is within me to praise JESUS, but I would call upon everyone around me to make a joyful noise to the GOD of my salvation! And oh! thou dear Redeemer! I beseech thee, LORD, by all the endearing tokens of

thy redeeming love, manifested to such a sinner as I am, grant me renewed grace in the continued exercise of faith, that while praising thee I may live upon thee, and while adoring thee my soul may increase in love towards thee. Then shall I have some faint enjoyment of what the blessed above, at the fountain-head of thy presence, richly partake of; and by learning day by day to praise thee more and more, my soul may be forming, under thy divine hand, for the everlasting enjoyment and praises of my GOD, in the glory that shall be revealed. Amen.

PSALM 96

SUMMARY

Here is a new and repeated call to praise JEHOVAH; and, like the former Psalm, chiefly on account of redemption. It is altogether a gospel Psalm. Blessed the soul that in reading or singing it finds the HOLY GHOST pointing to CHRIST, and enjoys CHRIST in it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we have been attending to this gospel Psalm, this new song of the church, in honour of her Redeemer: but can we truly and heartily join in it? Is it not the same new song, or to the same effect, as John heard the redeemed in heaven sing? Indeed, how should it be otherwise; for it is wholly of salvation? And if the church above sing it, ought not the church below? And if every individual of that church, at the fountain-head of bliss, sing it, ought not every individual of the church, though in a wilderness-state below, to sing the same? Reader! have we learned it? Can we sing it? Do we live in it, and delight in it? Yes! yes! if JESUS be precious, surely we shall at least lisp out the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light; and the song of Moses and the LAMB will be our daily song in this house of our pilgrimage.

Precious Author of all our joy, JESUS, by that endearing name would my soul look up to thee, and sing of thee, and of thy praise, all the day long! As the thirsty earth receives the falling shower; as the darkened land rejoiceth in the opening day; so let my soul wait and long for thee, and welcome thee and thy coming, every day, and

all the day, in songs of the most sublime adoration, love, and praise. And while enjoying thee and thy presence in my own soul, I would declare thy glory among the heathen. I would tell of the wonders of thy love among all people. And though full well I know, blessed JESUS, that all praise must fall infinitely short of thine excellent greatness, yet would I put forth all my strength, and call upon all the heathen to rejoice, at the blessed thought that CHRIST reigneth. And, LORD, while singing thy praises, this should swell my joyful song, that JESUS cometh, and is coming, and will come, to judge the earth, to take to himself his great name, and live, and love, and rule forever. Oh, LORD! may it form a sweet and harmonious note in my song, that JESUS, who cometh as the judge of all the earth, cometh also as the LORD and Saviour of his people. *He is coming to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.* Come then, LORD JESUS! come, and be glorified in my soul, and be glorified in my salvation! For surely I know, and believe, *that every knee shall bow before thee, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.* Amen.

PSALM 97

SUMMARY

The same subject that ran through the former Psalm is here continued: and JESUS, as the CHRIST of GOD, is the sum and substance of it. Very strong and solid reasons are given wherefore the Church should unceasingly rejoice in the contemplation of the Redeemer's reign; and well may she give her loudest response of Amen, to every part of it.

REFLECTIONS

HALLELUJAH! The LORD GOD, even JESUS, omnipotent, reigneth! And while all the earth may find cause to be glad, and the multitude of the isles to rejoice, well may I, a poor inhabitant of these islands of darkness, born in sin, and by nature ignorant of JESUS and his reign, join the triumphant hymn of praise. And though a thousand obstructions of clouds and darkness prevent my perfect

and clear knowledge how JESUS reigns; yet sure I am he doth reign in grace, and his kingdom shall be in everlasting glory.

Oh! let it please thee, thou almighty King of Zion, to go forth in the fire of thy word, in the hammer of thy law, in the melody of thy gospel, in the sword of thy SPIRIT, subduing the people to the sovereignty of thy grace, and bringing all thine enemies under thy footstool. Oh! shine, LORD, by thy word and SPIRIT, into the hearts and consciences of poor sinners; that their hearts may melt like wax before thee, and every knee bow unto thee, and every tongue be called forth in thy praise. And while waiting the precious fruits of that light which is sown for the righteous, give me to see that my path is the path of the justified soul in CHRIST JESUS, which shineth more and more unto a perfect day. Yes! my adorable LORD and Saviour! I will rejoice in thy righteousness. I will give thanks at the remembrance of thy holiness, without which no man can see the LORD. Such an High Priest, such an holy Surety, such an all pure, spotless, and undefiled Saviour, became poor sinners who had in themselves lost all holiness, and stood exposed thereby to the everlasting judgment and displeasure of almighty GOD. Well, therefore, may my soul rejoice in thee, who art the LORD my righteousness, and who art made of GOD to all thy redeemed, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption; that according as is written, *he that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD*. This therefore shall be my hallelujah song on earth, in the contemplation of this holiness, and my holiness in thee, until I come to the full enjoyment of thy presence, thy glory, and holiness, among the redeemed in heaven. *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness: as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

PSALM 98

SUMMARY

This, like the foregoing, is a true gospel Psalm. JESUS is adored for the victories of his redemption; and the Church, both Jew and Gentile, is called upon to sing aloud the triumphs of his grace.

REFLECTIONS

How blessed the thought, how full of glory the meditation! JESUS hath conquered all the enemies of our salvation! Himself, our JESUS, our Brother, our Husband, our glorious Head, is he that hath gotten the victory. And what endears it yet more is, that he hath gotten it in our name, in our stead; for us, and for our salvation: and all he is, and all he hath wrought, and all he hath obtained, is ours. And, my soul, pause, and consider how the communication of those mercies is endeared to thee. JESUS hath not only conquered, but made known: He hath not only remembered his mercy, and accomplished salvation, both toward the house of Israel, and to all the ends of the earth; but he hath, by his blessed SPIRIT, taught the souls of his people to believe in him, and to depend upon him. Well may every redeemed soul sing unto the LORD the *new song* of redemption. Let the sea roar with echoing the same, and all the trees of the wood clap their hands!

But pause once more, my soul, and ask thine heart, Canst thou sing this *new song*? Hath the LORD brought thee out of *the horrible pit*, out of *the mire and clay*, even out of the ruins of nature, and sin, and Satan, and put thy *feet upon the rock*, and a *new song*, even *the song of Moses and the LAMB*, into thy mouth? Oh! for grace to sing this new song with a new heart: to make JESUS, in his person, in his love, offices, salvation, the everlasting melody of the heart, and the rejoicing forever. Oh! for grace, that in the review of all the covenant love of GOD in CHRIST, I may be looking unto, and waiting for, his coming. Haste, my beloved; let the shadows of night flee away; and be thou like a roe, or young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.

PSALM 99

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this Psalm, as in several of the preceding, is still engaged in sounding forth the high praises of the kingdom of GOD in CHRIST. In the latter part, the Psalmist refers to several of the Old Testament Prophets, as examples in the Church, of praising the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

AFTER reminding both the Reader and myself of all the blessed causes which this delightful Psalm contains, to join with the sacred writer in ascribing “glory to him that sited, upon the throne, and to the LAMB that was slain, for ever and ever,” I would desire to recommend his attention, and my own, to what is said concerning those servants of the LORD, Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel. We are told that they called upon the LORD, and were answered. But though GOD forgave them, yet took he vengeance of their inventions. The solemn consideration of this account, suggests several very interesting and weighty reflections.

First, We learn from it, that GOD’s choicest servants have their inventions; and the best of men, after all, are but sinners. *Aaron* offended, and but for the intercession of *Moses*, would have fallen. Here *CHRIST*, surely, in his glorious, all-prevailing intercession, was eminently represented. *Moses* himself neglected to sanctify the LORD in the eyes of the people, when presumptuously joining himself with the LORD, he cried out, *Must WE fetch you water out of the rock?* and *Eli’s* partiality to his children made him too easy to their vices. Alas! who among the fallen sons of Adam, hath escaped the common taint of sin?

Secondly, we learn, that these sins of GOD’s people are displeasing to the LORD, and that he takes vengeance for them. Though their persons and their offerings are accepted in *CHRIST*, yet their corruption shall bring with it chastisement. And when a child of GOD feels the rod of GOD, as a kind correcting father, and cries out under it, *Thou art righteous in all that is come upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly;* this is what is called in Scripture, *accepting the punishment of our iniquity* and this

manifests the holiness of GOD, and prevents the abuse of his covenant-mercy in CHRIST.

Lastly, GOD hearing the prayers of his servants, and answering them, notwithstanding their inventions, of which he takes vengeance, teacheth us the whole cause wherefore it is that saints are accepted, and sinners saved; namely, on the sole account of the covenant-love and faithfulness of GOD our FATHER, in and for the sake of the blood and righteousness of his dear SON, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Oh, Reader, what a blessed consideration it is, that GOD still owns his covenant relationship; and JESUS's blood and righteousness still plead for mercy. The corrections of our GOD and FATHER, are not to satisfy his justice, for that CHRIST hath done; but for the display of his holiness and love. And, amidst all our unworthiness, the merit of JESUS still remains the same. Blessed, forever blessed be GOD, for JESUS CHRIST! LORD, give us grace to serve with fear, and rejoice with trembling. May we ever *exalt the LORD our GOD, and worship him in his holy hill: for the LORD our GOD is holy.*

PSALM 100

SUMMARY

Here is a Psalm, and a glorious one it is, in which the Whole church, nay, the whole earth, is called upon to praise JEHOVAH: for creation, redemptica, providence, and grace; and all the blessings connected with the whole. Few are strangers to this blessed Psalm, who ever heard of GOD in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, pause my soul, and contemplate the numberless beauties, and the vast sweetness contained in this short, but comprehensive Psalm. No wonder it is so often sung in our churches. No wonder, while it is sung, so many souls of true believers should feel such rich enjoyment in it: holding forth, as it doth, the persons both of GOD and of his CHRIST; with the many rich blessings contained in the covenant relations of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. And shall not all lands, which are to see the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST, join in the joyful

noise? Shall not both Jew and Gentile, bond and free, rejoice together? Shall not, in every place, as the LORD hath said, be incense offered unto JEHOVAH'S name, with a pure offering, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same?—Come, all ye people, all ye nations, both high and low, rich and poor, one with another: come, sing forth the praises of JEHOVAH, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier! Come into his presence with thanksgiving; enter his courts with praise. For he is indeed gracious, and will receive the homage of his creatures in JESUS. Come, Reader! Come my soul! Come, come before him. He is justly entitled to our praise. He demands it; he expects it from us. Oh! for grace to worship him in the beauty of holiness, and to sing the jubilee song of salvation, in and by JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

PSALM 101

SUMMARY

This Psalm contains a mingled song of joy and sorrow; both addressed to the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

JESUS! my song shall be of thee; and to GOD my FATHER will I sing. I will sing of thy person, sing of thy love, sing of thy grace, of thy mercy, nay, sing of thy judgments; for I know, LORD, that all thy judgments are right, and that in my deepest exercises, it is because of thy faithfulness that I am troubled. There can be nothing amiss in that which JESUS appoints. Nothing, therefore, shall Put my soul out of tune, while JESUS is my song. And that which is the work of heaven, shall, through thy grace, be my employment on earth. JESUS is, and hath been, and shall be, the one all-sufficient note of joy, and love, and praise, both now and forever.

And, holy FATHER, most gracious almighty GOD, to thee, will I sing of JESUS. It is thou that hast proclaimed JESUS from heaven as thy dear and ever blessed, and beloved SON, in whom thou art well pleased. And humbly, LORD, would I send up the feeble notes of my song of praise, to say how happy my poor soul is with such a Saviour! LORD, I will sing to thee of thy mercy in giving CHRIST; in the birth of CHRIST; in the death of CHRIST; in the resurrection of

CHRIST; in the redemption by the blood and righteousness of CHRIST; in the ascension, exaltation, and triumphs of CHRIST; in the everlasting priesthood of CHRIST; in the gifts of the SPIRIT by CHRIST; and of all the blessings folded up and contained in this one unequalled gift of thy dear SON, CHRIST JESUS. This, LORD, shall be my song, my daily, hourly song, in this house of my pilgrimage, until thou shalt be pleased to take me home, to sing the high praises of JEHOVAH, in heaven, for ever. And oh! thou blessed SPIRIT, wilt thou not tune my heart, and tune my harp, to this melody of soul, that I may sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding also? Wilt thou not cause me to sing of JESUS, to sing of Him, who is the sweet singer in Israel, and the chief musician of all harmony? The first song of praise ever raised for man to sing, was of JESUS, which angels sung? *Glory to GOD in the highest.* And the everlasting song of heaven, to be sung by all the redeemed, is, *To Him who was slain, and hath redeemed us by his blood.*—Begin then, my soul, and never end thy song; but let JESUS live in thine heart, dwell upon thy tongue, drop like the honeycomb in unceasingly blessing GOD in CHRIST; and, until thou join the hallelujahs of heaven, sing of JESUS both in mercy and judgment; and to JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, let thy voice be raised. Amen.

PSALM 102

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here engaged in prayer. We find much that clearly refers to the person of CHRIST. The sorrows expressed, considered with reference to him, are very striking: and the refuge taken in the eternal strength of JEHOVAH, as the strength of the redeemed, forms a most interesting part in this divine Psalm.

REFLECTIONS

READER, I know not what soul exercises or afflictions your heart may be wounded with; but I venture to believe, that the truest relief under all, is to view CHRIST in his unequalled sorrows. Poring over ourselves, or over our own sorrows, and magnifying them, will

never bring comfort. But if I see JESUS with the eye of faith, in the tribulated path; if I mark his footsteps, and he calls to me, and leads me by the way of the footsteps of his flock, where he feeds his kids, beside the shepherds tents; I shall feel comfort. *They had an eye unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.* He, whose bread was ashes, and whose drink was mingled with tears, will turn my water into wine; make my very crosses sweet, and cause my tears to become like the spiced juice of the pomegranate. May the LORD the HOLY GHOST so glorify the LORD JESUS to our view; cause us, in our sorrows, as well as in our joys, to be always looking to Him, living upon Him, walking with Him, and making Him our all in all, in every state!

And, Reader, do not let us overlook the blessedness this psalm contains of a sure victory, and happy issue, to all our exercises. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.* JESUS'S unchangeable love, everlasting righteousness, and all the covenant engagements of JEHOVAH in, and to Him, makes all sure and fixed. Though all things are changing, fluctuating, dying, perishing here below;—though in ourselves, in our friends, in our houses, in the church, in the world; all like a vesture are folding up, and hastening to decay; yet JESUS lives: and, in that, all is secure: for he hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* Hail, holy, great, almighty Saviour! Thou art he whom the FATHER loveth, and hath given all things into thine hands. Eternally secure in thee, we are screened from every danger: thy children shall continue, and thy seed shall be established before thee. And when heart, and strength, and all shall fail, thou art, and wilt be, *the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever.*

PSALM 103

SUMMARY

This Psalm is one continued hymn of praise, and includes a comprehensive view of the goodness of JEHOVAH, in all the great works of creation and redemption, providence and grace.

Reflections

THINK, my soul, while thou art perusing this psalm, if such were the calls of the Old Testament saints to bless JEHOVAH, what demands are now upon New Testament believers, to live in a frame of everlasting praise and thanksgiving for JEHOVAH'S unspeakable mercies in JESUS CHRIST. The highest knowledge those holy men of old had, concerning the mercies of redemption, were but shadows of good things to come, compared with what the souls of the redeemed have now to enjoy in substance in CHRIST JESUS. Abraham, who saw the day of CHRIST, saw it but afar off; and David, though by the eye of faith, he beheld his SON after the flesh, that should arise to sit upon his throne, and reign forever; yet, what could both, or all indeed, of those heroes of antiquity, who died in faith, not having received the promises, know of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in comparison with the humblest of regenerated believers now, who know CHRIST, and are convinced of their union and interest in him, and live in him, and to him, as the LORD our righteousness?

PSALM 104

SUMMARY

This is a divine Psalm, in point of sublimity of thought, as well as devotion. It celebrates, like the former, the glories of GOD: and probably, though not said to be so, was written by the same hand, as the penman of the HOLY GHOST.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! read, and pause over again and again, this lovely hymn, until thine heart, and every devout affection, go forth in praises to JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all the blessings here ascribed to Him, who is indeed very great, and glorious, and clothed with honour and majesty. Behold him going forth in acts of creation, providence, goodness, mercy! See the LORD as raising up this magnificent universe, and storing it with inhabitants, not to make himself more glorious, for that is

impossible; but to make innumerable beings happy: not that he might receive, but that he might impart; and pour out emanations of himself to communicate life and comfort to myriads. Hail! thou glorious, great, and bountiful JEHOVAH.

And, my soul, when thou hast duly pondered this wonderful subject, and bent the knee in praise and humbleness before a GOD of such infinite power and majesty, as he has manifested in the outer works of nature and providence; look up for his leadings, to take thee by the hand, and to bring thee in to his inner courts of grace; and there let thy mind be overwhelmed in contemplating a GOD in CHRIST, displaying redemption to a lost world, in the person, and by the offices of JESUS. Oh! thou *brightness of the FATHER'S glory*, and *the express image of his Person*! In the glories of thy redemption thou hast gone forth for thy people; making thine *Angels spirits*, and thy *ministers a flaming fire*. Thou sendest forth the springs of thy grace into the humble heart, and thou waterest the souls of thy redeemed from above; all, all live upon thee, and in thee, and from thy rich communications. Help me then, LORD, to praise thee, to love thee, to delight in thee, and let my meditation of thee be sweet. Sweet it always must be, most blessed JESUS, for thy very name is as ointment poured forth. And while sinners that despise thee, and will not accept thy salvation, shall be no more; let my unceasing song of love and praise come up before thee from day to day, till I join the redeemed in their hallelujahs before the throne forever. Amen.

PSALM 105

SUMMARY

This lovely Psalm contains some of the outlines of the Church's history: and if we consider, as we have full authority, that the events of the old Church were but types of the new, we shall find much of the gospel in it, and sweet instruction may be derived from it.

REFLECTIONS

Now, Reader! you have gone through that part of the Church's history, from the call of Abraham to the settling of the Church in Canaan, and seen how lovely it sets forth GOD'S covenant love and

mercy-in CHRIST; what say you to your personal interest in these things? The apostle Paul's comment upon this history should always be uppermost in our remembrance, whenever we read this account of the Church. *Now these things*, saith Paul, *were our ensamples*. By these GOD the HOLY GHOST is now teaching the Church. And if a believing soul so reads, and is so taught of GOD, as to see his personal concern in the whole, as a part of CHRIST's mystical body, he will involuntarily join the hymn of praise with which this Psalm begins, and cry out, *O give thanks unto the LORD, and call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people*.

But chiefly, Reader, let you and I view GOD's covenant love in these solemn transactions, and trace it to its source; in the fountain-head of all mercies, GOD in CHRIST in his great salvation. Yes! blessed JESUS, it was thou whom Moses typified, when, at the call of GOD, he came to deliver thy people, thy chosen! Egypt, at this hour, is still the bondage of the soul, under which all thy people groan, until by thy mighty arm thou bringest them out. And oh! what miracles of grace dost thou work to confute thy foes, and to encourage thy redeemed! While turning water into blood, and alarming the enemies of thy people with tokens of thy displeasure to dismay them, thou art converting the rocky heart into a heart of flesh, and making a wilderness dispensation to blossom as a rose, to give drink to thy people, thy chosen. Blessed LORD! thus nourish my soul through every remaining part of my pilgrimage, until thou shalt bring me out of all, into thine heavenly kingdom, to rejoice evermore in thy great salvation, and to sing upon the everlasting hills the triumphs of JESUS, and his Church in him. Praise, praise the LORD. Amen.

PSALM 106

SUMMARY

This is not so properly a new psalm, as a continuation of the former: it takes up the subject where the preceding left off in the church's history. The LORD's goodness, and Israel's unworthiness, form the principal contents.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us prosecute the same delightful subject as the Psalmist; and since he goes on from one psalm so another, adoring the name of the LORD, we will follow the example; and never grow tired of the grateful employment. Surely, we may well say, *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: to show forth his loving kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night.* And oh! what an endless subject is opened for the everlasting praises of JEHOVAH, in the review of his love to his church and people! Was it not the FATHER's love which gave rise to the church, which prompted his infinite mind to form it; giving his only begotten SON to be her Head and Mediator; and giving the church to CHRIST as a bride adorned for her husband? Was it not the love of JESUS which at the call of GOD the FATHER, induced him to go forth for the salvation of his elect people? And was it not the love and favor of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who from everlasting undertook, and hath all along been accomplishing the gracious purpose, and will go on to accomplish it, until grace is summed up in glory, to bring the church acquainted, and in love with, all the covenant purposes of JEHOVAH in the salvation of JESUS? And in such views of divine goodness, must not every heart feel constrained to exclaim, *who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD; who can show forth all his praise?*

But what a contrast to this rich mercy of the GOD of Israel doth the Israel of GOD manifest in their ingratitude and rebellion! Is it possible, while the LORD is so gracious, for man to be so unworthy? Oh! Reader! what is man, after all divine mercies, and all divine grace manifested towards him? Bend the knee with me, I beseech you, before the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. Let us seek grace to profit by Israel's history. We may all well join the expressions used in this psalm, and say, *We also have sinned with our fathers; we have committed iniquity.* Yes! precious JESUS, at the sea, even the red sea of thy blood, how have we provoked the LORD to anger! Yet, LORD! remember thy covenant, and save us for thy name's sake. Thou art a GOD of pardons. Though there be nothing but sin and wretchedness in us; in the LORD our righteousness there is redemption. Accept us in him; and for his sake cause us yet to

triumph in our GOD. *Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.*

PSALM 107

SUMMARY

The same delightful subject is continued through this Psalm as in the two preceding, but in a more general way. All men are called upon, in the review of divine goodness, to praise the LORD; and the redeemed, in a yet more awakened manner. GOD'S mercies are instanced in a great variety of ways, both by sea and land, in sickness and in health, and brought forward as so many motives to praise him.

REFLECTIONS

AND now, Reader, what ought to be the result of all this long and beautiful discourse, but in a direct application of it to ourselves, to bless GOD, and to give him thanks forever? And oh! if you and I can mark down in our own history, the subject of redemption, what loud and increased notes of praise ought to swell our song: *He remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Say, my soul! hath the LORD gathered thee out of the lands! Hath he taken thee home to himself? Did he find thee in a waste and barren land, hungry and thirsty, and every hope dried up within thee? And hath he brought thee by a right way, to a city of habitation? Oh! then, *praise the LORD for his goodness, and declare the wonders which he doeth to the children of men.*

And see that JESUS is increasingly precious to thee for the time to come. All thine interest and security is from GOD'S covenant love in CHRIST. There is no mercy out of CHRIST; all the acceptance of our persons, and the everlasting security of the redeemed, all is in JESUS. See to it, then, that all thy fresh springs are in him.

And oh! that a sense of past mercies might be made the dependence and security of the future! If the LORD remembered thee in thy low estate, when thinking nothing of him; surely his grace

will have respect to thee now, when desiring his knowledge and his love. For if while thine heart was harder than stone, JESUS passed by, and bid thee live; he will not cast thee off now he hath softened thine heart by his grace. Precious LORD JESUS! in thee I find all things, both for present peace and future happiness; and therefore to thee I come, on thee I depend, and from thee I look for all things. *The LORD is my strength and my song; and he is become my salvation, Amen.*

PSALM 108

SUMMARY

This is a Psalm of praise. The sacred writer declares himself fixed and prepared, by the HOLY GHOST to sing it. Happy the believing soul that finds itself in the same mood.

REFLECTIONS

If the Reader will look back to Psalm 57. he will find the concluding verses of that Psalm to be the same as the opening verses of this. And if he will turn to the 60th Psalm, and read the last eight verses, he will perceive that they are similar to the last eight verses of this. There will be the less occasion, therefore, to comment upon it now, as the Reader, by having recourse to the exposition given under the two above cited Psalms, will render any further observations unnecessary; and I shall here only make one general observation: that as the hearts of the Old Testament saints were so fixed, and always in time, to rise early, to celebrate the divine glory, though they only saw the day of CHRIST afar off; surely the souls of New Testament believers ought much more to be in constant waiting, both by day and by night, to sing of Him, and to Him, who hath long since come and finished redemption. Oh! LAMB of GOD! cause our hearts to be fixed! and may we sing with the spirit, and with the understanding also, the high praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light! Thy Person, blessed JESUS, thy love, thy grace, and favor, in all thy great undertakings, in thy incarnation, obedience, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, power, glory; in all these our songs should constantly exalt thee. And

as in all these, like Gilead, and Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Judah, the Old Testament saints enjoyed the whole by faith, long before they entered upon the possession; so now by faith may we enjoy thee, thou blessed JESUS, in all thou hast, and in all thou art, as the glorious head and mediator of thy people; then shall we be sure that thou wilt bring us home, to the strong city of the new Jerusalem of our GOD, where we shall see thee clearly, and enjoy the everlasting felicities of redemption in thy kingdom forever. Amen.

PSALM 109

SUMMARY

The greater part of this Psalm is written in a way of prayer; and some portions of it in a way of prophecy: It forms a very important subject, in which the Church is highly concerned.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the contents of this very, very solemn Psalm. Behold in the traitor Judas, the head and representative of all the despisers of JESUS, the awful but sure consequences of rejecting the LORD of life and glory: and think what must be the end of all such workers of iniquity. If such was the close of that apostate's life, as the scripture records; if such the indignation which fell upon the Jewish nation and their beloved Jerusalem; if such to this hour the wretched state of their posterity; what indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will fall on those who crucify the SON of GOD afresh, and put him to an open shame! Oh! ye despisers of the GODHEAD of JESUS! Oh! ye who deny the LORD that bought the church with his blood! think, before it be too late, what horrors and alarms will overwhelm the soul when the SON of GOD shall come in all his glory, and the glory of his FATHER, to take vengeance on them who would not that he should reign over them.

Look up, my soul, look up by faith, and in the contemplation of the glory that shall be revealed, behold thy JESUS on his throne of grace, dispensing blessings to all his people. See him as a LAMB in the midst of the throne; all power is his, in heaven and in earth.

Look to him for every covenant blessing, for in him it hath pleased the FATHER that all fulness should dwell. Love him who hath so loved thee: live to him who hath both lived and died for thee: and let all thy fresh springs be in him, in whom is the fountain of life, and in whose light alone thou mayest see light. Hail! ever blessed, ever lovely, and all loving JESUS! Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

PSALM 110

SUMMARY

In this glorious Psalm, and in the Spirit of prophecy, the sacred writer celebrates the person, kingdom, priesthood, prophetic office, and character of the LORD JESUS. The whole of this portion of scripture refers to CHRIST, and to his people in him.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou glorious, gracious King in Zion! exalted as thou art at the right hand of thy FATHER and our FATHER, thy GOD and our GOD; it is thy lawful right to subdue everything to thyself; to govern, rule, bless, pardon, protect, reward, and make happy thy people. To thee it no less belongs to conquer and subdue thine enemies. Sit then, blessed JESUS, at the right hand of JEHOVAH, until all the nations submit to the sceptre of thy grace, and thy people are made willing, in the day of thy power! Hail! no less, thou sovereign Priest upon thy throne! Taken from among men, thou art ordained for men in things pertaining to GOD, that thou mayest offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. And blessed forever be thy name, thou canst have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for it is our happiness, and our joy, that we have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; for thou wast in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And our souls rejoice in the validity of thine office. Yes, blessed JESUS! thou wast called to it of GOD, as was Aaron. And our FATHER hath confirmed thy authority and commission with an oath. JEHOVAH sware and will not repent. Hail then! thou great Melchisedeck! Thy divine nature is the golden altar; thy merits, and righteousness, and blood, the sure

ground of acceptance; and thou thyself, the great High-Priest, offering in thine own name, to make the sacrifice sure of being accepted! Never shalt my soul despair of pardon and acceptance in his name, while JESUS liveth and weareth the vesture dipped in blood.

And hail, thou divine Prophet! to explain to thy people the laws of GOD, Oh! for grace to receive thee, to accept thee, to delight in thee, and to attend to all thy blessed instructions! For, sure I am, the soul that will not hear thee, nor regard thy great salvation, will be cut off from among the people.

Oh! thou glorious ADONAI! *from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth.* Make me, LORD, willing in the day of thy power! Make me all that thou wouldest have me to be. And while I view thee, and know thee to be EMMANUEL, JESUS, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; be thou made of GOD to my soul, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he that glorieth, may glory in the LORD.*

PSALM 111

SUMMARY

This Psalm is remarkable as being the first of the seven which were known in the Jewish church under the title of the grand Hallelujah; probably so called because it begins with Hallelujah. It forms a devout hymn of praise; and the writer, while stirring up himself to praise GOD, calls upon others to join in the same delightful service.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, how JESUS, going before thee in all the paths of duty, as well as fulfilling all righteousness, calls up thy love, thy praise, thy thankfulness, in his lovely example. And did JESUS, in his zeal for his FATHER'S glory, thus delight to do his will, and to praise the FATHER for redemption; and shall not all thy affections be exerted to the same? Wilt thou not sing *Hallelujah*, and *praise the LORD in the assembly of the upright?*

Oh! holy FATHER! holy indeed and reverend is thy name. Thy covenant faithfulness, and love, and truth, to a thousand generations, may well call forth the song of every redeemed heart; for it is thou that hast sent redemption unto thy people, and sent it in the person of thy dear and ever-blessed SON; thereby making redemption infinitely more precious, and endearing it to our hearts by a thousand ties of affection, love, and duty.

Oh! LORD! give to me that holy fear, and put it in my heart, that I may never depart from thee; and cause me to take pleasure in the contemplation of all thy works. May it be my morning delight, my noon day rejoicing, and my evening song, to search out thy gracious dealings towards the children of men. And chiefly; LORD! let my thoughts be all engaged in contemplating the person, work, offices, character, and relation of JESUS. Here, blessed JESUS! may my whole soul centre as the bee upon the sweetest flower; for my meditation of thee shall be sweet.

PSALM 112

SUMMARY

This is another of the Hallelujah psalms, wherein is described the blessedness of the perfect man, in himself and seed; with all the effects resulting from his righteousness.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS JESUS! while my soul unceasingly beholds thee, in thy divine nature, as *one with the FATHER, over all, GOD blessed for ever*; give me grace, in the perusal of sweet scriptures, like this psalm, to behold thee with an equal delight, as *the man*, the very man, CHRIST JESUS. For hadst thou not condescended to leave the bosom of the FATHER, and taken upon thee the nature of man, never could my poor nature have been taken into the family of GOD in CHRIST, and been made a child of GOD by adoption and by grace. It was thy wonderful undertaking that first led to this hope. Thou, becoming a very man, in order to become the sinner's Surety, and in the holiness of thy nature fulfilling all righteousness, and satisfying both thy FATHER'S law and justice in our place and room: this, and

this, alone, created hope and confidence in the souls of thy people. Lost as they all were in themselves, and totally incapable of doing one act of perfect obedience towards GOD, yet when in the same nature thou camest to fulfil all righteousness, and became sin for us, when thou knewest no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee; here faith, taught by the HOLY GHOST, was encouraged to look up, and to see how GOD can be just and yet the justifier of poor ungodly sinners, who believe in JESUS. Yes, blessed LORD, in thee we behold a suitable righteousness, a complete, a covenant, an everlasting righteousness! And what endears it to every true believer's heart, is, that this righteousness is our own in thee; for thou art our Husband, our Head, our Surety, our JESUS. GOD our FATHER hath declared himself well pleased in thee; and thy people are beheld and accepted in thee. It is thou thyself, blessed JESUS, hast said it: the word is gone out of thy mouth, neither wilt thou have it to return: thou hast said that thou art one with thy people, and they one with thee; and that the world may know that the FATHER hath loved them, as the FATHER hath loved thee! And shall not my soul everlastingly rejoice in knowing thee, and loving thee, as the man CHRIST JESUS? Shall not I unceasingly behold thee, in thy one person, GOD and Man united? And shall not I sing this sweet psalm, beginning with Hallelujah, because JESUS, the GOD-man, hath feared the LORD, and greatly delighted in his commandments; because his seed shall be mighty in his might, and righteous in his righteousness; and because JESUS will cause them to inherit substance, and fill all their treasures? Oh blessed, forever blessed! be the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for JESUS CHRIST.

PSALM 113

SUMMARY

The general subject of this psalm is praise. The sacred writer calls upon all to praise the LORD, from sun-rise to sun-set. Every individual of intelligent creation is supposed to be interested in this service.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let you and I seek for grace to catch the heavenly flame, and while the HOLY GHOST is thus calling upon the church to bless the LORD, that from the rising of the sun to its going down, his name shalt be great among the Gentiles, oh may we not be silent, morn or even; but with the dawn of day, as well as when the shades of night close in upon the earth, may we bless the LORD, and call upon all that is within us to praise his holy name.

And, oh! what unnumbered motives and arguments arise in every direction, within, without, and all around, to be earnest and alive in this blessed service! Think, Reader, of the condescension of GOD the FATHER, in sending his SON to be the Saviour of the world! Think of the grace of GOD the SPIRIT, in making the bodies of the saints his temple. And think of that grace and love in GOD the SON, who so loved us as to give himself for us! Reader, a whole eternity will not be long enough for praising, blessing, and adoring JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for these things. Oh! reader, let each of us say, *What hath GOD wrought, in remembering us in our low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever!* Help us, LORD, to praise thee, to love thee, to live to thee; that every day we may increase, with all the household of faith, in praising the GOD of our salvation, upon earth, until we come to the everlasting enjoyment of the LORD, and the view of him in glory, to praise FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, to all eternity. Amen.

PSALM 114

SUMMARY

This psalm is descriptive of the going forth of Israel from Egypt; but as this was a transaction typical of the church being led forth by the great Captain of their salvation from the Egypt of sin and death, the whole ought to be read with reference to CHRIST in his victories for his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let you and I ponder over the solemn, though delightful reflections, suggested by this psalm. Behold in it the state of the church, and of every individual of that church, as they are, in a state of unregenerated nature, before the LORD brings them out of the Egypt of sin and corruption. *We were by nature* (saith the Apostle) *children of wrath, even as others*. Behold the distinguishing grace of GOD in CHRIST, which makes all the difference between a people of strange language, and those who can sing the *Song of Moses and the LAMB*. Behold the power and sovereignty of almighty grace! Who shall detain the LORD's Israel, when he brings them forth! What chains of sin or Satan shall bind such as the LORD makes free? Neither mountains of sin, nor seas of unbelief, shall be able to stand against JESUS and his army. Who art thou, O great mountain, may the believer say, before our glorious Zerubbabel? Thou shalt become a plain. He it is who shall bring forth the head-stone thereof, with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. And, oh! thou blessed, all-conquering LORD! thou who subduest the enemy *before* thy people, thou also wilt subdue the enmity *in* thy people. Yes, almighty JESUS! thou art exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. And, therefore, thou wilt turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Thou wilt regenerate our nature, and make all things new, by thy sovereign all-creating power. Every eye shall be filled with the tear of love and repentance; every knee shall bow before thee; every tongue proclaim thy praise. The universal song of all thy ransomed children shall be, *Salvation to GOD and the LAMB!*

PSALM 115

SUMMARY

This is a psalm of praise, wherein the glory of GOD, as opposed to idols, and the idolatry and self-confidence of the human heart, is strikingly set forth.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! let it be my happiness to be everlastingly viewing thee, that so pride may be forever hidden from my eyes; and that I may never come into the dreadful temptation to rob JESUS of his glory, and my own soul of comfort, in fancying that I have had the least hand in contributing to my own salvation. Let this be my every day motto: *Not by might, nor by power; but by the SPIRIT of the LORD.* And, LORD, help me to bless thee in the recollection of the dumb idols, in the course of which I was heretofore led; but through redeeming grace and love thou hast brought me out, and taught me to serve and love thee, the ever living and true GOD. Precious JESUS! how dear oughtest thou to be to me, who art in thy person, and in thy righteousness, the all in all of thy people! It is thou who art the object of faith and love; the author, the giver, the preserver, the restorer, the sum and substance of all that is excellent: blessed, glorious LORD, help me while living to praise thee, and when dying to praise thee, and in the act of death to praise thee; that the first and last of all sounds on my trembling lips may be JESUS! And let the Sweet savour of thy name refresh my soul forever! Amen.

PSALM 116

SUMMARY

This Psalm contains some very gracious breathings of a devout soul; whether, by the spirit of prophecy, the sacred writer penned them as the suited language of CHRIST in the days of his flesh; or whether, as the pious ejaculations of one of the LORD's people, following the example of CHRIST, I do not presume to determine; but certainly here is a blessed assemblage of devout expressions, highly becoming the faithful to adopt and use, with their hearts raised upwards to JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! canst thou say, I love the LORD? Yes! if thou hast seen his loveliness, his beauty, his love to thee, and regard for thee, and that thou hast an interest in him. Pause over the interesting thought!

Hast thou seen GOD in CHRIST, hearing thy prayers, granting thy request, and giving thee strength and confidence in his salvation? Hast thou seen his suitableness as a Savior, so as not only to discover transcendent excellencies in JESUS, but all those excellencies and perfections as engaged for thee, and in thy salvation? And say, my soul, hast thou seen CHRIST so as for him to become thy rest? And hast thou returned to him from all the distractions and disquietudes of this waste and howling wilderness? If these are thine experiences, and thou art convinced that the LORD JESUS hath delivered thee from death, thine eyes from tears, and thy feet from falling; then wilt thou indeed receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

Precious JESUS! thou almighty Author and Finisher of all our happiness! be thou to me all I need, all I wish, all I want! Thou art indeed the rest, the only rest, for weary sin-sick souls. Thy blood is the only fountain to cleanse. Thy righteousness the only robe to clothe. Thy person the only source of happiness, for grace here, and glory to all eternity. Return then, return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully, with thee!

PSALM 117

SUMMARY

In this short but sweet Psalm, the nations of the earth are called upon to praise GOD for his mercy; and the people of GOD are more immediately urged to be active in this service.

REFLECTIONS

READER! contemplate the blessed contents of this psalm, and let the saving interest we as Gentiles bear in it, bring it home to our hearts with a tenfold joy and satisfaction. In order to see its blessedness as it concerns us, let it be only considered that by nature we were without CHRIST, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without GOD in the world. We knew nothing of the scriptures of truth; were strangers to the offers of grace, strangers to the very

name of the LORD JESUS, and ignorant even of our want of his blood and righteousness. Oh! how happy to be brought nigh by the blood of JESUS; and to hear and know the joyful sound, and to walk in the light of GOD's countenance. And wilt thou not praise GOD for his mercy? Shall we not follow up the gracious call of this Psalm, and bend the knee in thankful remembrance for GOD's unspeakable gift? Blessed, forever blessed, be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

PSALM 118

SUMMARY

As CHRIST himself quotes a part of this blessed Psalm in reference to himself, we can be under no mistake to be on the lookout for CHRIST through every part of it. The great scope of it is, to manifest what confidence there is to trust in JEHOVAH at all times, and upon all occasions.

REFLECTIONS

SURELY this Psalm opens a most blessed view of JESUS; and it is hardly possible to go over the perusal of it, if the soul be at all awakened to the renewed enjoyment of her LORD, without being led by it to follow the footsteps of Him whom we love, through all his eventful ministry, until we see this rejected stone the head of the corner. Blessed SPIRIT! I would say, do thou, merciful LORD, in thy one gracious work of glorifying JESUS, lead out my heart, while reading this blessed scripture of thine, to trace Him, whom my soul loveth, through every part of it. And in the very opening of it, do I not see my LORD and Saviour assuming my nature for the purpose of salvation, and calling upon the FATHER, as this Psalm records, in his distress; until the FATHER heard and answered, and brought him forth into a large place? Do not see the FATHER on his side, when strong bulls of Basilan beset him around, and when the assembly of the wicked enclosed him? And though all nations compassed him about, and were like bees, so, thick upon him; yet in the name of JEHOVAH, how did our LORD overcome them! And shall I not with such believing views of the LORD JESUS, feel my whole soul going out after him, in love, and praise, and obedience, and affection;

welcoming the coming Saviour, and standing astonished at such stupendous deeds as are connected with salvation, which are marvellous in our eyes?

Precious JESUS! thou foundation-stone, which JEHOVAH thy FATHER hath laid in Zion! on thee, LORD, may my soul rest her whole stress, for strength and help, for union and prosperity. Let those who know thee not, like the foolish Jewish builders, go on to reject thee. Alas! on whomsoever ultimately thou shalt fall, thou wilt grind them to powder. But oh! grant me, LORD, to rest wholly on thee, and as a lively stone, to be built up daily upon thee. Be thou to me, the rock of ages! Be thou to me, that blessed mountain, cut out without hands, that is to fill the earth! Fill thou, my soul, my whole heart, and all its affections! And be thou that one stone, upon which are seven eyes, that I may be everlastingly feasting myself with contemplating thy beauties, thy glories, thine excellencies, thy suitableness, and all-sufficiency, until I come to behold thy face in glory; that when I awake in thy likeness, I may be satisfied with thee.

PSALM 119

SUMMARY

This Psalm is so very peculiar and distinguished from every other, that it would form a long chapter of contents to give the summary of it. Before the Reader enters upon it, I beg him to remark some of its most striking particulars. As, *first*, its great length, being more than double in point of quantity, the longest of all the Psalms besides. *Next*, the Reader should remark the division of it into twenty-two portions, corresponding to the Hebrew Alphabet, each portion consisting of eight verses, and beginning with the Hebrew letters, regular and in order as they stand in the grammar. The *third* particularity to be remarked, and which deserves much to be noticed, for the better apprehension of the Psalm throughout, is, that there are ten words, which every verse but one (namely the 122nd) hath, one or other of them in it: namely, the words WAY, LAW, TESTIMONIES, COMMANDMENTS PRECEPTS, STATUTES,

JUDGMENTS, WORD, RIGHTEOUSNESS, TRUTH. *Fourthly*, and above all; one verse in it (namely, the 139th) demands the first and greatest attention, because it contains the words of CHRIST, My zeal hath consumed me; the well known words of JESUS. See John 2:17. Psalm 69:9. And it should seem as if the HOLY GHOST had graciously designed, by the introduction of these memorable words in the midst of this Psalm, to lead the church to perceive the LORD CHRIST in and through every part of it. With these several particularities in view, and especially this last, let us enter upon the perusal, and may He who hath the Key of David open its blessed contents to our diligent researches after Him, that we may have expounded to us, by that infallible Teacher, the things herein contained concerning himself.

PSALM 120

SUMMARY

Here are the breathings of a devout soul under distress; and the soul finding confidence at the mercy-seat, reproves some ungodly person that assaulted him.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the solemn consideration which this Psalm suggests, of the wretched life, and more wretched death of the opposers of CHRIST and his gospel. In the traitor Judas we behold a lively representation of all. They are by the agency of the evil spirit, who is said to work in the children of disobedience, enlisted into his service, wear his livery, and delight themselves in opposing the children of the kingdom. And what is the sure end of those men? *The wages of sin is death.* O my soul, come not thou into their secret! unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.

But let me turn from the sad contemplation of such men to look at JESUS, and in his soul exercises with the ungodly find consolation to carry my mind through all the trifling oppositions I meet with in the tents of Kedar, and the neighborhood of Mesech. Yes! thou adorable LORD, in thee and thy bright example I have an everlasting resource to bear me up, and bear me out, and carry me through every

difficulty. Let the world frown, and the ungodly oppose; yet a little while and such will be clean gone; I shall look after his place and he will be cut off. LORD JESUS, be thou my home, my dwelling-place, my habitation, my joy, my portion, my all; *so shall no plague come nigh my dwelling, neither the foot of the ungodly cast me down.*

PSALM 121

SUMMARY

This is a very beautiful Psalm, if read first with reference to JESUS, and then as suited to his people in him. Its general contents are, the full confidence there is in GOD'S CHRIST, at all times, for his people. Some have recommended it to the traveler; and some have thought it suitable for the soldier and mariner. But every traveler to Zion way profit: ably use it; and so may every true soldier of JESUS CHRIST while CHRIST is kept in view.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! methinks I would pass by all lesser considerations, to behold JESUS in this one sweet point of view, as thy Surety and thy Saviour, thus becoming the head of his church, and resting upon JEHOVAH's faithfulness for carrying him through the work of redemption. It is blessed, it is profitable, it is happiness itself, to contemplate JESUS in all his wonderful condescension. When the SON of GOD condescended to become man, he became subject to all that man is subject to, sin only excepted. And the holiness and purity of his nature, totally precluded the possibility of sin. But the weakness of our nature, and the infirmities of that nature in hungering, thirsting, weariness, and the like, as connected with a sinless nature—this, my soul, thy Surety, thy JESUS knew. Behold him then, in this state, ready to engage in the service of JEHOVAH his FATHER, for the salvation of his chosen; and, as this Psalm represents, looking for help, and resting for that help on the faithfulness of JEHOVAH. And when thou least looked to thy JESUS in this character long enough to feel thy whole affections going out after him in every tender regard; then, contemplate thy covenant

GOD and FATHER answering thy Redeemer's request, in all those blessed assurances here given, of support and power. And Oh, my soul, rest for all thy own needful supplies, for every grace here, and glory hereafter, upon both these grand pillars, and ground of thy faith, the FATHER'S covenant engagements, and the SON's merits and death. Receive JESUS as JESUS, the FATHER'S gift to poor sinners, in all the glories of his own person, the sufficiency and efficacy of his satisfaction, and JEHOVAH's salvation to the ends of the earth. And while the HOLY GHOST sets his seal to these blessed truths as they are in JESUS, commit all thy concerns into his Almighty hand, that in thy going out and in thy coming in, in time and to all eternity, JESUS may be thy hope, and thy portion forever.

PSALM 122

SUMMARY

We have here the expressions of joy which the Israelites made use of, when inviting one another to go up to the house of GOD. The Psalm ends with a prayer for the peace and prosperity of the church and people.

REFLECTIONS

READER, it will be no unprofitable improvement of this subject, if from a view of the love and zeal of the faithful Israelite towards his beloved Jerusalem, you and I examine whether we feel an equal warmth of affection to JESUS and his ordinances. Depend upon it, that among the present awful decays of vital godliness, the general disregard to the welfare of Zion becomes no small cause of those decays. If we were asked, as the church of old was, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* what would be our answer? If we love Zion, or in other words, love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity and in truth, shall we not rejoice to promote his glory through the earth? Shall we not invite everyone to come and take part in JESUS? Zion's children are newborn children; so saith the scripture: *When the LORD writeth up the people, it shall be said, This and that man was born in her.* Sweet thought! the children of Zion, the children of the great king, even JESUS, are new-born; they have

turned their backs upon all other cities; their faces are Zion-ward; they speak the language, wear the garments, follow the employment of Zion's children. Their names are written among her citizens, and enrolled in the charter. Precious, precious JESUS! hast thou made me free of Zion? then am I free indeed. Oh! give me to see that thou hast written upon my soul thy new name; that I am washed in thy blood, clothed in thy robe of salvation; and have proved and do daily prove to whom I belong, in following thy courts, and dwelling in thy house, and sitting under the light of thy divine countenance. Then will, that blessedness be my portion, and I shall *go from strength to strength, until everyone* (both sons and daughters) *in Zion shall appear before GOD.*

PSALM 123

SUMMARY

This Psalm seems to send forth the cries of the soul under exercises. But amidst them all, we may perceive very strong expressions of firm confidence in GOD.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! for faith to be looking unto JESUS as those look to the world, who live upon its smiles. My soul! hadst thou but half the concern to please thy heavenly Master, as faithful servants of the world do their earthly lords; what blessings, even from the fountain-head of happiness, wouldest thou be living upon, and in the daily enjoyment of! How will a frown from a kind master wound a loving servant; and how will a smile encourage and gladden his heart. And is there a master so kind, so loving, so gracious, so abundant in goodness, as JESUS? And yet how little dost thou live to his glory; how little are thine eyes directed to his praise, or waiting for his favor!

Blessed JESUS! let this sweet Psalm be blessed to my perusal. Henceforth, LORD, let me learn to imitate the solicitude and affection of earthly servants, who are more earnest to oblige a fellow creature, than I have been to seek thy favor, which is better than life itself. Oh! thou that dwellest in the heavens, cause my soul to be lifted up

unto thee. Draw me, LORD, that I may run after thee. And let the exercises of everything I meet with here below, be sanctified to endear JESUS to my heart; that while the masters and mistresses of earthly servants have their respect and homage from those that serve them, my soul may cry out, *O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds.*

PSALM 124

SUMMARY

It should seem from several expressions in this Psalm, that it was written upon some occasion of deliverance from trouble; for which the sacred writer blesseth GOD; ascribing all the glory to him.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED Deliverer of thy people! thou art our salvation, and the salvation of GOD our FATHER to the ends of the earth. And what thy FATHER appointed, thou hast accomplished: thy love, and thy mercy, have been the glorious procuring cause of all thy Church's deliverance, and of all their joy. Let it please thee then, most gracious Saviour, to be our help and confidence forever. Let the church, which thou hast purchased with thy blood, be still dear to thee. Let the souls of thy people, whom thou hast justified with thy righteousness, be still thy Jewels. And while we cry out with holy joy, *Blessed be the LORD, who remembered us in our low estate;* may we always be discovering new causes to close the holy song: *for his mercy endureth for ever.* Our soul is escaped from the beast of prey, and the fowler's net; and therefore JESUS shall be our glory, and we will still say, *Thanks be to GOD, who always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST.*

PSALM 125

SUMMARY

This Psalm is a very proper supplement to the former, for it celebrates the divine goodness in defending his people, and securing them from their enemies.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! contemplate in this Psalm the security of the LORD's people, and beg of thy gracious GOD to give thee, an everlasting, steady, and unshaken faith in him. Thou hast teen sweetly taught, that there is nothing to be depended upon but JESUS: and having, through grace, made a covenant GOD in CHRIST thy portion; see to it, that He, the rock of ages, is thy rock, thy confidence, thy strong hold, and thine abiding place, for-ever. So that strengthened in his strength, and made powerful in his might, thou wilt be more than conqueror through Him that loveth thee. Learn Paul's maxim, and under the HOLY GHOST's sweet influence, from day to day bring it forth into continual exercise: *lean do nothing of myself, but I can do all things through CHRIST, who strengtheneth me. Rejoice in the LORD, and in the power of his might.*

PSALM 126

SUMMARY

it is more than likely that this Psalm hath a reference to some great event in the Church's history: and hence it hath been generally supposed to refer to the return of the people from Babylon. But this is mere conjecture. Certain it is, that it salts the Church's deliverance upon every occasion, and the deliverance of every believer. And every poor sinner, redeemed by CHRIST, may well take up the same language.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the perusal of this Psalm, I would beg of you, as I desire to examine myself, to look and see whether we really bear a part in the triumphs here recorded. The effects of this deliverance are very strikingly defined; the joy of the soul was such, that from its greatness it seemed but as a dream. Such is the real joy when CHRIST converts, and brings the sinner from the captivity of sin and Satan. Convinced of sin, and converted by the HOLY GHOST to the belief of salvation by JESUS; no sooner is the soul made sensible of the mighty redemption, but light, and life, and joy, and peace, appear in the heart through the power of the HOLY GHOST. Reader! what saith your experience to these grand concerns? Are you still in bondage and prison-frames to the thousand evils of a fallen Babylonish state; to sin, to divers lusts, and pleasures; to the alarms of conscience, the fear of death, and judgment to come? Or hath *one like the Son of man* made you free, and brought you out? Oh! to grace, what mercies do the redeemed owe! And what will they eternally owe when grace is consummated in glory! *Though now, if needs be, they sow in tears, and are in heaviness through manifold temptations, yet are they looking forward to the certainty of reaping in joy. These light afflictions, which are but of a moment, are working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

PSALM 127

SUMMARY

This Psalm contains a pious and devout acknowledgment, that all blessings are from the LORD. Neither the builder, nor the soldier, nor the master of a family, can be successful in their several callings, but from the divine mercy.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! art thou building for eternity? See that JESUS be the foundation-stone. Art thou warring a good warfare? See that thou prove thyself a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST, by taking to thee the

whole armour of GOD. Hast thou a family of children rising up about thee? Oh! dedicate them to the LORD, and see that they are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD. In every department, and in every case, look to the LORD JESUS for all, and make him the Alpha and Omega of all. Oh! the blessedness of children begotten of GOD: adopted into his family; the image of JESUS impressed upon them, and the SPIRIT of JESUS in their hearts. JESUS will then give his beloved sleep; dearly they are beloved by JESUS, for they are the gift of his FATHER, and the purchase of his blood; and he will guide them, protect them, provide for them: when they wander, he will reclaim them; when they grow cold, his love will again warm them. They shall be always under his almighty eye; and his almighty arm will always be stretched forth for their guidance and defense. My soul! art thou the faithful builder on JESUS; the diligent watchman for JESUS, and of the family of faith in JESUS?

PSALM 128

SUMMARY

Here is a happy state described, full of blessings. Blessings in the man himself: blessings in the wife of his bosom; blessings in his offspring; and all out of Zion, from the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not hastily pass by the blessed view of JESUS as the Bridegroom and Husband of his Church; for sonic of the sweetest Views of happiness, even eternal happiness, are to be found in it. It is indeed a mysterious union; but it is a most blessed one; an indissoluble, eternal union. And as it is founded in the everlasting purposes and councils of JEHOVAH, it may well demand our greatest affection and *regard!* By virtue of this oneness with CHRIST, his people are interested in every thing that concerns him as the Mediator. He hath paid our dreadful debt; he hath disannulled our former marriage with sin and the law; he hath entitled us to all dowry, and in his blessedness made all his people blessed. Oh! thou almighty Bridegroom! how gracious Nast thou been to our poor

nature! Take, LORD, the whole hearts and affections of thy people in return, and let this be the highest desire of all thy redeemed to say with the Church, *My beloved is mine, and I am his: my Maker is mine Husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name; and my Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel, the GOD of the whole earth shall he be called?*

PSALM 129

SUMMARY

The Church under affliction, speaks with some pain of the frequency of it from persecutions: but towards the close of the Psalm she takes comfort, from the consideration that the LORD will recompense her enemies.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul! look back and see what part thou hast borne in the afflictions of the Church. Depend upon it, among the truest evidences of the renewed life, a sincere love to Zion forms a principal part. If I truly love JESUS, I must love every member of the mystical body of JESUS; and as one of old said it, and all find it, the remembrance of Zion, taking part in her sorrows, and participating in her joys, proves a connexion with the King and LORD of Zion: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right-hand forget her cunning. if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* And oh! thou glorious Head of thy Church and people! shall I not find the blessedness of meditating on thine unequalled sorrows; when, for the redemption of our souls, *the ploughers ploughed upon thy back, and made long their furrows! Didst thou give thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair?* And shall my soul look on, and feel no interest, no concern! Gracious LORD! let it be among the first of my thoughts to follow thee both to the cross, and to thy throne: to the doleful Gethsemane, and to the joy on which thou hast entered and taken everlasting possession. And let my soul feel all that sweet consolation in the consciousness, that I not only partake of what is thine, but that thou partakest of what is mine. Thou hast

fellowship in all my exercises, trials, wants, difficulties: my sufferings are thine, for the lowest member of thy mystical body cannot be afflicted but the Head feels; and thou hast said *he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of thine eye*. Hence, dearest LORD, let my soul rejoice in tribulation, when I know that that tribulation JESUS appoints, JESUS supports, JESUS takes part in, and JESUS will bless. Hallelujah. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. He takes part in all that concerns me, and, my soul, do thou take part in all that concerns him. If JESUS feels for my sorrows, he gives me to participate in his blessedness. What though I now sow in tears, I shall finally reap in joy: like the true spiritual mower, I shall bring home the full sheaves of corn to JESUS's granary, and my bosom will be filled with his love. Amen.

PSALM 130

SUMMARY

This most precious psalm contains the deep breathings of the soul under a sense of sin; the holy triumphs of the soul in the view of the propitiary, the redemption by JESUS: and the earnest recommendation of a soul that, having found mercy himself, holds forth encouragement to others.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! hast thou been brought by the HOLY GHOST into such views of thy fallen, ruined, and undone state, as to behold thyself in the depths of sin? And hast thou from thence sent forth the cry of thy soul for pardon, mercy, and peace, through the blood of the cross? And hath thine eye been opened by the same almighty SPIRIT, to behold JESUS the mercy promised, the propitiation, which GOD hath set forth for the salvation of sinners? Dust thou know JESUS indeed as the FATHER's gift, and that *there is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby thou mightest be saved*? Look up, my soul, and with an eye of faith, even from the deep of sin, cry to the deep of mercy! See! behold! JESUS is with the FATHER, the advocate, the propitiation, the full ransom for

sin! Behold him still wearing *the vesture dipped in blood*, as if to say, look at these marks, and Know that my blood and righteousness are of eternal efficacy! And under such blessed assurances do thou tell thy GOD and FATHER, what thy GOD and FATHER hath first told thee, that there is mercy, there is JESUS, his dear and ever blessed SON with him, so that thy redemption is secured. And do thou, my soul, proclaim abroad the glorious tidings, that other poor sinners may also come and find JESUS *the mercy promised*. Go forth and say, as one of old did, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners*. And blessed LORD! cause me to wait for thee, to long for thee, and to be always found watching for thy gracious visits, more than they that wait for the morning, or the thirsty earth for the falling showers! Come, LORD, and refresh my longing soul, and be thou to me all I need, and all I can desire; *wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that all my glorying may be in thee, O LORD!*

PSALM 131

SUMMARY

This short but sweet Psalm speaks the humblings of the soul, induced by grace, and taking confidence in the LORD's mercy.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! whenever we think of humbleness, to whom shall we look for the brightest illustration of it, but to thee. Here, LORD, as in all things excellent, thou hast also the pre-eminency! Impart to my soul large portions of this grace, I beseech thee, O LORD; and let the same mind be in me which was also in thee. And the larger portions thou givest to me of this grace, they will work in me more exalted views of thy glory. Let me often think both of thy humiliation, in first taking our nature: and then of thy humiliation in looking upon me, visiting me, and forming thyself in my heart, the hope of glory. Oh! for grace thus to look to JESUS until every faculty of my soul be humbled to the dust before thee, and every power of my heart goes forth in praises to thee, the GOD of my salvation.

PSALM 132

SUMMARY

Under the representation of the Ark, the Prophet points to the person and work of CHRIST; and in this rich gospel psalm comforts the church with blessed views of her Redeemer.

REFLECTIONS

STAND still, my soul! and behold JESUS as the ark, the habitation, the Sanctuary, the refuge, the, resting-place for poor sinners, which the LORD JEHOVAH hath founded, and not man. Look at JESUS, even at thy JESUS, in every one of those characters. What a sure *dwelling-place* is JESUS for all his redeemed! May we not cry out, in the view of Him; nay, are we not constrained so to do; LORD, *thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations!* And is He not *the hiding-place* also to his redeemed, when they are hidden in the secret and mysterious union with his person, and interested in his righteousness? My soul, wilt thou not say, under this view, Surely *my life is hid with CHRIST in GOD, that when CHRIST, who is my life shall appear, then shall I appear with him in glory!* And is not JESUS the *resting place* for every poor weary sinner, tired with the burden of his sins, and of all his own fruitless endeavours to take that burden off, until JESUS, the mighty burden bearer, is beheld *bearing our sins in his own body on the tree?* Yes! LORD, here also I would say, Thou art the rest wherewith JEHOVAH causeth the weary to rest, and thou art the refreshing! Arise, LORD, into thy rest, would my soul humbly pray, thou and the Ark, the JESUS, of thy great strength. Clothe thy priests with the robe of JESUS's righteousness, and let every redeemed heart of thy saints shout with joy. Thou wilt bless, yea, thou wilt abundantly bless with all spiritual provision, their souls upon earth, as thou art feeding them now in glory, in the midst of the throne, with eternal food. Thine enemies, LORD, shall be eternally ashamed; but JESUS shall reign, and reign for ever. Amen.

PSALM 133

SUMMARY

Our old Bibles make a very brief account in summing up the contents of this Psalm, but they say a vast deal in few words; they call it The benefit of the communion of saints! And indeed the church being one in CHRIST, and with CHRIST, nothing can be more evident, than that this is the whole scope of it.

REFLECTIONS

THINK, my soul, how little of this fellowship and communion is found in the present day, in the languishing state of our Churches! Behold the cause! If there be no constant receivings from CHRIST, how shall there be communications among the brethren? If the intercourse with the great Head be remitted, what, shall the members have to impart! Oh! for grace to be looking unto JESUS, the life-giving Head of his Church! Oh! LORD JESUS, that thou wouldest visit thy people, thy ministers, thy churches! *Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest thy flock at noon!* See, LORD! how thy people languish. Give us, LORD, a little reviving in our bondage; come among us with thy great power; stir us up to take hold of thy strength: so shall we have grace flourishing in our own hearts, and communications will go forth among the brethren; so shall we be prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of JESUS and his Church by grace here, for glory hereafter.

PSALM 134

SUMMARY

A short but interesting Psalm, in which believers are calling upon one another to the service and praises of JEHOVAH.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSING work, is not only necessary, but grateful work among the faithful. *Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous, for it*

becometh well the just to be thankful. How, LORD, shall I ever testify, even through a whole eternity, the obligations I owe thee? What everlasting praise will the redeemed in heaven have to offer to the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the blessings to which they are begotten. Oh! ye ministers of the sanctuary, of whom it is said, *Ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD, men shall call you the Ministers of our GOD!* what lifting up of hands, what holy acclamations of praise, may ye be supposed to bring, that preach among the people *the unsearchable riches of CHRIST.* And ye no less who *are* ministered unto; were ye to hold your peace, in whose hearts *CHRIST is formed the hope of glory,* might not the stones of the earth be expected to cry out? Oh! for grace that everyone, high and low, young men and maidens, old men and children, might praise the name of the LORD, *for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth!* And may He, that dwelleth in Zion, even Zion's King and Husband, bless each, and every one that praiseth him! And the LORD of heaven and earth, who hath both the upper and nether spring blessings, bless his redeemed here with grace, and hereafter with glory!

PSALM 135

SUMMARY

This is what is called an Hallelujah Psalm; so called, because what we translate, Praise ye the LORD, might have been preserved, Hallelujah! It consists of praises from beginning to end.

REFLECTIONS

How suitable is it for a peculiar people to be distinguished by peculiar tokens of deportment! Israel so distinguished, might well show forth the praises of the LORD, who had so distinguished them. Never was a nation so favored: never a people so blessed. My soul! what hast thou to speak concerning distinguishing mercies? It is blessed to acknowledge the LORD's goodness in giving us *fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness.* But these are blessings in common with thousands who know not the LORD, nor

regard the gospel of JESUS. The great question is, what knowest thou of *redeeming love*? What thinkest thou of GOD'S CHRIST, and of redemption by his blood? Oh! the grace of being called with a holy calling, of being taken into CHRIST'S household, and made a child of GOD, and an heir of grace! Reader! may the LORD graciously lead us both to mark the tokens of distinguishing mercy; and to see and feel, and truly enjoy that happy state, where JESUS makes himself known, *and manifests himself otherwise than he doth to the world!*

PSALM 136

SUMMARY

This Psalm is so much to the same purport with the former, that it should seem to be but a repetition of it, with the chorus of praise added to every verse. The subject is the same, and the words for the greater part are the same: so that it is a beautiful duplicate of what went before, with the addenda of Hallelujah.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in going over this Psalm, which is a beautiful repetition of the former, I hope that both your heart and mine have been led out to see, that on every side causes are perpetually arising, to call up the voice of thanksgiving, and to lead the soul to GOD in CHRIST with hymns and anthems every hour. Say, Reader! can you adopt the chorus as your own? Doth the LORD'S mercy endure forever? Did JESUS remember you in your low estate? Hath JESUS manifested himself in a way of grace? and do you know him as your Alpha and Omega, your hope and portion forever? It is truly blessed thus to see our mercies, that the soul may be kept alive to the remembrance of them, so as to call up love and adoration to the great Author of our mercies forever. May a gracious GOD in CHRIST, who hath afforded so many and such unceasing causes to praise him, give us also the grace of his HOLY SPIRIT to acknowledge his goodness in bestowing such unmerited tokens of love, that all hearts may join the universal song, and say with the church, *Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever.* Amen.

PSALM 137

SUMMARY

There can be but little question concerning the date of this Psalm: speaking, as it doth at the opening of it, of Babylon, it seems very plainly to refer to the time of the Church's captivity there. In reading or singing this Psalm, it would be profitable to have the mind suitably affected, to take part with the Church's trouble.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! canst thou behold the sorrows and miseries of Israel in their captivity, and not call to mind that more horrible vassalage and slavery in which sin and Satan bound thee for many a year? Did Israel weep by the waters of Babylon, and hang their harps upon the willows, under a sense of the bondage into which their rebellion and ingratitude had brought them; and canst thou forget *the wormwood and the gall*, when, in a state of unawakened nature, thou wast fast bound in the misery and iron of a captivity, from which none but the arm of JEHOVAH could have delivered thee? Apply this view of the Church's history to thine own state and circumstances, in what is past, in what is now, and in which thou mayest be blessed in the review of it hereafter. Think what thou once wast, when like the Church in Babylon, the strong man armed kept the house, and thou wast the servant and bondsman of sin. See by whose grace and mercy it is that thou art brought out. Remember who it is that hath said, *I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction*. And call to mind to whose grace and finished salvation it must alone be ascribed, that the hopes of being brought home to the heavenly Jerusalem now arise, in looking forward to all the blessings of redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Hail, thou holy, thou gracious, thou almighty Saviour! Blessed JESUS! when the *seventy years* of the desolation of thy church and people are accomplished; when the LORD, who hath in his own glorious person *finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for and brought in an everlasting righteousness*, shall finally and fully turn the captivity of his redeemed; then, LORD, thou wilt call all thy people home, and plant them in thy holy mountain, even in heaven itself, which thou hast

taken possession of in their name: and then shall all the Edomites, and the haters of the LORD, be driven from thy presence, while thy people shall rejoice before thee in everlasting hallelujahs, and endless happiness.

PSALM 138

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here at his devotions, with his hymn of praise. He not only blesseth GOD himself, but he utters a prophecy (no doubt, in allusion to the days of the gospel) that all the great ones of the earth shall bless him; and he closeth the psalm with declaring his assurance that the LORD, who had begun grace in his heart, would perfect it in glory.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn a lesson this day from David; and looking up to GOD the SPIRIT to enable thee to carry what thou hast learned into continual practice, determine from henceforth to praise thy GOD and Saviour in the presence of all men. Make it thy uniform practice to know nothing among men, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified. Let all the world know whose thou art, and to whom thou dost belong. Be not ashamed to have it said, JESUS hath bought thee with his blood; but glorify him *in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are his*. And oh thou blessed Saviour, give me the same confidence as thy servant David had. Wherefore should Old Testament saints, who saw thy day but afar off, have lived more by faith upon thee, than New Testament believers, who have seen thy redemption-work completed? Let it make me blush, if their faith exceeds mine. And! thou holy FATHER! hath it pleased thee to magnify thy Word above all thy name! cause me then, by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, to glorify thee in JESUS above all. Oh! for grace to have such views of JESUS as the FATHER hath set forth in his holy word; and so to live upon JESUS, and trust in JESUS, that with the apostle I may daily sing the song of holy confidence and joy; crying out, *Now thanks be unto GOD, who always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST.*

PSALM 139

SUMMARY

This Psalm was written by David; but it is evident that he was directed by the HOLY SPIRIT to say in it much concerning CHRIST. In the former part, he dwells upon the divine perfections in the foreknowledge, and fore-appointment concerning CHRIST. In the latter part, CHRIST expresseth his agreement with the FATHER in the perfect holiness and purity of the thoughts and intentions of his heart.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it may, and it will be highly profitable to your heart and mine, under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, to keep in view the consciousness of the divine presence, wherever we are, or however engaged. If this great article of the Christian faith were but properly kept alive in the mind, through grace, it would tend to check many an improper thought, which now, through the want of recollection, and the corruption within, breaks forth. But, Reader! if this Psalm leads your heart, as it doth mine, to the contemplation of JESUS, what blessings doth it open to our view in this prospect of the manhood of CHRIST. Think of his astonishing debasement! of his unequalled humility! Was JESUS indeed thus fearfully and wonderfully made? Was he thus formed in the lower parts of the earth; and were all his members written before the earth, or the habitable part of the dust of the world was formed? Were the counsels of his FATHER dear to him, and precious, in that these counsels appointed the redemption of his people by him, and all in him. LAMB of GOD! was this for *me*, even for *me*? Oh! what grace, what love which passeth knowledge, was in all this; and how precious ought the thoughts of thee, blessed JESUS, to be to me! and oh! how great the sum of them! LORD! give me grace henceforth to live to thee, to rejoice in thee, and unceasingly to view thee as the LORD my righteousness. I would humbly adopt thine own words: See, LORD, that there be nothing of allowed wickedness in me, *and lead me in the way everlasting!*

PSALM 140

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is here under affliction, looking to the LORD for help and deliverance, and taking comfort in the hope that the LORD hears, and will answer.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! I pray thee, never suffer me to think of afflictions or sorrow for them, either in myself or the saints of GOD, without keeping in remembrance thine unequalled sorrows, wherewith the LORD afflicted thee in the day of thy redemption-work. Was ever sorrow like to thine, thou blessed JESUS? And, LORD, while I think of thy sorrows, let me think also of thy patience. Thou wast led *as a Lamb to the slaughter: and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so didst thou open not thy mouth.* And, blessed JESUS! let my soul feel all that sweet complacency and resignation in every exercise, be the exercise what it may, in the recollection that thou art looking on, thou knowest all, thou appointest all, and thou wilt finally bless all. Though mine enemies live, and are mighty, yet if thou wilt be my helper, under the shadow of thy wings I shall rejoice. Yes, LORD! thou wilt carry me through, and bring me out, and bring me home, and I shall be more than conqueror, through thy grace helping me.

PSALM 141

SUMMARY

The subject of this Psalm is very similar to the last. The soul of David is in distress from the persecution of foes. No doubt it was prophetically delivered, in reference to the Son of David. David's LORD; and the royal prophet certainly has an eye to CHRIST, in what he here saith of acceptance with GOD; for it can only be in him.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! under the incense of thy merits, and with a steady unwearied eye looking to thee and thy one all-sufficient sacrifice, would my soul desire, morning by morning, and evening by evening, to come before thy mercy-seat; and in language like this sweet Psalm, would I pray that my poor prayer, and my uplifted hands, should set forth my only hope, my only dependence on thee. Oh! for grace, blessed LORD, to be always *habitually* prepared for this employment, in being forever clothed with thy righteousness, and having all the ascension-gifts of thy SPIRIT implanted in my heart! Then would the *actual* exercises of grace *upon* thee, and *to* thee, be manifested in the going forth of my soul in faith and supplication, in love and praise. Then should I cry out with the church: *Because of the savour of thy good ointment, thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.* And while my soul is looking unto thee, hanging upon thee, and longing for thee with an earnestness that nothing but enjoyment can satisfy, I shall praise thee with joyful lips. JESUS will then bring me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me will be love. Then the noise without, and even the smiting of those that would reproach me within, will only tend to make JESUS more precious. Mine eyes shalt be looking unto the LORD, who will keep me from every snare, and at length bring me home to his heavenly kingdom!

PSALM 142

SUMMARY

The title of this Psalm best explains its contents. In the cave David pours out his soul before GOD. Here also, as Maschil means instruction, we shall find words leading us to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, my soul, over this sweet Psalm, and take from it, for thy constant meditation, the many precious instructions it holds forth unto thee. Look again and again at JESUS, as thou ponderest over the

several verses, and behold thy LORD in the trying situations here described. And when thou hast gathered, under the SPIRIT's teaching, the several sweets this beautiful flower of scripture affords, feed upon the honey for thine own food, under exercises in the tribulated path. What though thou art reduced in circumstances, and thy spirit be overwhelmed within thee; though thou, like thy Saviour, cast find none on thy right hand, that will know thee; and on the left, evils, arising from sin, Satan, and the world, would bear thee down; say, is not CHRIST upon the throne? And doth he not see thee, know thee; nay, hath he not appointed thy very state to be what it is, on purpose to make thee know thy need and his love? O, blessed LORD! though all refuge fail me, and no man careth for my soul, thou carest for it, for thou hast bought it with thy blood, and thou wilt preserve it with thy glance; thou wilt be my portion, my GOD, my Saviour, my JESUS. Thou wilt bring me out of all the prison-houses of sin here, and death hereafter, and I shall praise thy name. Yes, my LORD! the end is sure. *I shall behold thy face in righteousness; still look to JESUS, and I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

PSALM 143

SUMMARY

The Psalmist is still at his devotions, pouring out his soul under afflictions, and seeking strength against his enemies.

REFLECTIONS

READER, do pause to mark the blessedness of that state, which can look up and plead for justification before GOD, upon the sole authority of GOD's covenant, and the person and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. As JESUS himself pleaded both these, so hath he taught his people to do the same. As poor, polluted, guilty, sinners, we could have nothing to plead, but only cry for pure mercy. But, while we keep GOD's CHRIST in view, and behold him as JEHOVAH's salvation to the ends of the earth; we may, and we ought, indeed, to lodge all our appeals both upon CHRIST's merit, and the covenant faithfulness of GOD our FATHER. And, Reader, do mark it

down, as a sure and certain thing, that when GOD the HOLY GHOST leads out the soul to the full view of those united sources of our acceptance before GOD, nothing can afford a more solid and substantial resting-place, for maintaining fellowship and communion with GOD, by grace in this life, and everlasting glory in the life to come. Precious LORD, help me so to plead, so to come to the throne, and so to act faith upon GOD'S record concerning his dear SON, that I may always come *boldly unto the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

PSALM 144

SUMMARY

This Psalm hath much in it concerning CHRIST. If we read it wholly with reference to him and his church, we shall find it to be a very delightful hymn, suited to the times of the gospel.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! dost thou long to war a good warfare? Look up then to the Captain of thy salvation, and behold how JEHOVAH armed him for the battle; and do thou go forth in his strength, making mention of his righteousness, even his only. He came forth at the call of his FATHER, full of zeal, when *his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet, of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.* And while thou art thus looking up to JESUS, he is looking upon thee, and will teach thy hands to war, and thy fingers to fight. He will be to thee all thou canst need, therefore follow him and behold the salvation of GOD. And oh! my soul, cease not to contemplate his love. And whilst thou goest on in the wilderness road, *fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life;* contemplate, as thou goest, the infinite love and grace, and condescension of JESUS; and while thou cried out as the Psalmist, LORD! *what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him;* contemplate

the Man in those words, whose name is the BRANCH, whose name is indeed WONDERFUL. Yes! precious JESUS! all thoughts, all subjects, all contemplations, must be lost and swallowed up in thee, as all the rivers of the earth are in the ocean. Thou art a sea of wonders, a world of wonders, in thy person, offices, characters, relations. *I will sing indeed a new song*, and thou shalt be the whole sum and substance of it: for in thee, and by thee, and from thee, all blessings flow. Our sons and our daughters shall grow up in thy grace, and all our upper and nether springs shall be marked with JESUS. Hail! thou glorious LORD of all! *Mine own friend, and my FATHER's friend will I forget not: the fathers to the children shall make known thy praise.*

PSALM 145

SUMMARY

Agreeably to the title, this Psalm is full of praise. GOD's glory, greatness, majesty, grace, goodness, in short, all the divine perfections, are here set forth, in a most lovely and interesting manner; and if we consider the chief Musician, the first singer in our nature, thus leading the heavenly song, when he had finished redemption-work, and the LORD give us grace to follow him through it, that we may sing it with the spirit and the understanding also; it will become a blessed hymn of praise indeed.

REFLECTIONS

READER! have you been looking up to GOD in CHRIST while passing over the several portions of this hymn of praise? Was this indeed our David's Psalm of praise? And is it ours also? Oh! for grace to follow him, in the regeneration, and to look up to him as, GOD the FATHER's salvation to the ends of the earth! Yes! blessed JESUS! I would bless thee, I would adore thee, I would love thee! In thy obedience and death, I behold all the greatness, goodness, and glory of JEHOVAH manifested to poor sinners. Thou hath spoken of it, blessed LORD, in the days of thy flesh. I would be among the men that shall speak of thy mighty acts, now thou art in glory. I would tell every poor sinner, day by day, how gracious the LORD is! I would tell them that the LORD JESUS upholdeth them that fall; and

raiseth up those that are bowed down. I would strive to encourage every poor broken-hearted sinner to make experiment of this mercy, by assuring them that the LORD is nigh unto all that call upon him; yea, unto all that call upon him in truth. I would again and again repeat the blessed subject of encouragement, and assure them that JESUS will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will hear their cry, and save them. Precious LORD! fill my soul with thyself; and let it be the one earnest desire of my heart, living and dying, and to all eternity, that my mouth shall speak the praises of the LORD, and bless thee now; and bless thee forever!

PSALM 146

SUMMARY

The subject, begun in the former Psalm, is here continued. Praise may and will be opened by the church in time, but it will never cease through all eternity.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou glorious King of Zion, JESUS, before whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that thou art, universal LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER! I would begin every hymn, and close every prayer with Hallelujah. Surely, LORD, every redeemed soul upon earth, as well as those in heaven, thus taught by thee may join the song, for *thou art worthy to receive all glory and honour; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.* I behold, LORD, in princes and everything around, the dying perishing circumstances of all the earth. The children of men must die; mountains shall depart; hills be removed; but JESUS liveth. He that is I AM, amidst all revolutions is I AM still. Precious thought! what a foundation is here for thee, my soul! It is He that hath opened thy blind eyes. It is He that hath loosed thee, out of prison. He that hath been thy help, now is, and ever will be thy Redeemer, thy GOD, and the lifter up of thine head. Here rest then, and shout Hallelujah! This GOD is thy GOD forever and ever: He will be thy guide unto death.

PSALM 147

SUMMARY

The subject, though enlarged in this Psalm, is in substance the same as the two former. It consists of the praises of the Church upon earth looking unto her LORD, in imitation of the church adoring JEHOVAH in heaven.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul; look round, and behold, in all the objects around and about thee, above and below; how innumerable and unceasing are the demands which call for the praises of JEHOVAH. See how, in infinite wisdom, he hath made them all! Behold how the LORD provideth for them. Contemplate the worlds in the upper region, and consider what this blessed Psalm records, that all those suns and stars, which are so many systems of worlds, JEHOVAH counteth by number, and calleth by their names! When thou hast duly pondered over this vast subject, turn thy thoughts to the LORD's Jerusalem, his Zion, which is graven on the palms of his hands, and whose walls are continually before him: consider how JESUS hath founded Zion, built her on himself, washed her in his blood, clothed her in his righteousness, made her a perfection of beauty; secured her, fed her, nourished her, and will bless her forever. Then turn thy thoughts to thyself, a poor, trifling, insignificant member of Zion; and think, amidst all thy littleness, worthlessness, ingratitude, undeservings; JESUS still thinks on thee, loves thee, pities thee, blesses thee, and will bless thee. Hath he not done it, and is he not doing it? Hath he not healed thy broken heart, and bound up all thy wounds? Oh! for grace to bless him, to love him, to live to him, to adore him and in the humbling, yet transporting thought of grace so distinguishing, while thousands know him not, and are not acquainted with his statues, oh to praise him with unceasing praises, and to begin and end life, as this Psalm doth, *Praise the LORD!*

PSALM 148

SUMMARY

Here is a farther continuation of the same hymn of praise. The Psalmist, in a beautiful gradation, calls upon all creation to join the song.

REFLECTIONS

STAND still, my soul, stand still, and ponder well the weighty claims there are upon thee in this blessed Psalm. All creation, indeed, may well praise GOD, for GOD hath created, formed, and arranged them all in the beautiful and regular order in which they stand. But what can be the song of creation, compared to that of redemption, which *thou* art called upon to sing? GOD hath sent his SON to redeem thee, to save, thee, and to bring thee into everlasting fellowship, and the enjoyment of his presence and favor, in and through the blood and righteousness of his dear SON! JESUS hath died for thee, arisen for thee, answered for thee, justified thee, clothed thee, fed thee, blessed thee, and loved thee, and will love and bless thee forever. And GOD the SPIRIT hath opened to thee his precious communications of grace; quickened thee, given thee a new life in CHRIST, united thee to the ever blessed JESUS; and is, and will be forever, taking of the things of JESUS, to bless thee in JESUS, and to make thee a suited vessel for his glory in time, and to all eternity! Are these then the blessings of JEHOVAH, with which thou art distinguished? Art thou indeed among, and of the number of that people, which this Psalm records; a *people near unto Him; or dwelling alone*, as they are elsewhere called? Oh! think then, how thou shouldest live to his glory, to his praise, in his fear, in his love, who hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light! I charge it upon thee, my soul, this day, that thou live only to his praise; and that every act of thine be to his glory. Precious LORD JESUS! help me to praise thee, and to live a life of hallelujahs upon earth, until I come to shout them aloud in thy presence forever!

PSALM 149

SUMMARY

If possible, the composition of this hymn riseth to higher notes than the former. The sacred writer, in the close of the foregoing Psalm, called upon the Zion of the LORD to praise him; but here the call is more earnest.

REFLECTIONS

READER, do you feel your heart warmed to join the host of the redeemed, here called upon to sing aloud redemption? Do you know it, and can you sing it? The Psalmist calls it, *a new song*. And so it is indeed; and it can only be sung by *a new heart*. If the LORD hath taught it you, there will be indeed rejoicing in him, that hath not only made you, but *new made* you: not only created and given you a being, but hath newly created you in CHRIST JESUS, and given you both a being and a *well-being* in the LORD, and in his great salvation. When John saw the LAMB on Mount Zion, encircled with his royal redeemed army, and heard them sing this same new song; he tells us, that *no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth*. Pause, Reader! and while we read this blessed Psalm, and hear the saints of GOD called upon to such sacred melody, I pray you see to it, that you and I, if we have not learned it, may ask *the Chief Musician*, even JESUS, to teach it us. JESUS, I would say, help us to praise thee, and to sing to thy glory? Shall the redeemed around thy throne sing to thy glory, shall they chaunt aloud the sweet song of redemption, and wilt thou not teach me to warble the notes of it below? LORD, help me now to praise thee; and while the saints sing upon their beds, and the high praises of GOD in CHRIST are in their mouths, tune my heart to the same, and let the name of JESUS be upon my heart and on my tongue. Oh! for grace to say, *My heart is fixed, O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp, I myself will awake early: I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people; and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.*

PSALM 150

SUMMARY

The HOLY GHOST with this short but precious Psalm concludes this book of divine hymns and praises. It contains a general invitation to everything that hath breath to praise JEHOVAH.

REFLECTIONS

I should not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any farther observation upon the subject of praise in general; neither should I offer any comment upon what is here said, if there was not one point which I deem too interesting wholly to pass over though I do not presume to propose anything decidedly upon it; I mean, concerning the *musical instruments*, with which the LORD is said to be praised. Having in the preceding Psalm humbly offered my ideas concerning the *dancing* spoken of in the hymns of Saints I venture to offer a thought upon the *melody* also, with which those hymns and songs of praise are commanded to be accompanied. I never have been able to satisfy my mind that the expressions here used of *psaltery and harp, organs and loud cymbals*, have the smallest reference to, musical instruments. I am well aware that some Commentators have conceived that they find authority for their use, in what is said of the harps used in heaven, Revelation 14:2. But this, in my view, is advancing nothing; they might have as well contended that what is said of the streets of heaven being paved with gold, literally means so. Revelation 21:21. If musical instruments were used in the temple-service, we may humbly observe, that they were suited to a dispensation of types and shadows only; similar to what the apostle saith of other figurative services in the Church, *which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation*, Hebrews 9:9, 10. According to my apprehension, under a gospel dispensation, and in a gospel Church, the only stringed instruments to be used, are the strings of the heart; that the loud swelling organ and the timbrel, mean the full chord of the renewed soul: so that when the HOLY GHOST calls upon the Church to *praise GOD in the holiness of his sanctuary*, the believing soul who obeys this

command, praiseth GOD in CHRIST for the holiness of his nature, and the holiness of the renewed soul in JESUS. When the demand is, *praise him in his mighty acts*, the soul of the redeemed swells in the loud notes of a conscious interest in the mighty acts of JESUS's redemption. Here, Reader! let you and I join the song which the Church in glory are unceasingly singing, and with sacred timbrel and dance, with the stringed instruments of all the affections of the soul, praise GOD in CHRIST. Yea, let us strive who shall sing the loudest notes of faith, and love, and obedience. Looking up to the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in CHRIST, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, let us bless Him *for* redemption; let us bless GOD the SON *in* redemption; and let us bless GOD the SPIRIT by the sweet enjoyment *of* redemption. Let us bless the holy undivided THREE IN ONE, with ardent lively faith, and holy triumph, and in a daily endeavor to forward the interests of the divine glory upon earth among men, until we come to the everlasting enjoyment of it heaven. Thus may we, with *every thing that hath breath, praise the LORD*. And when that breath *which is in our nostrils* shall cease, the last accent on the trembling lips in Hallelujah, will join the first loud note of Hallelujah in the eternal world. Amen.

And now, Reader! the LORD having mercifully brought me on my way through my poor Comment on this most precious book of the Psalms; I cannot, I dare not indeed, take leave of it, until I have first bowed the knee in thankfulness to the great Author of all good, for all the grace, and mercy, and condescension manifested to me during those labours. And while I set up afresh my Ebenezer at this renewed instance of divine favor, I would fall down with the lowest prostration of soul and body, intreating pardon and forgiveness for the numberless errors with which, I am truly conscious, these poor writings abound. LORD! forgive all that is wrong; for all that is wrong is wholly mine! Let nothing of error here found prove injurious to thy Church and people! And if there be a single line of the HOLY GHOST's teaching to the glorifying of GOD in CHRIST, LORD, own it, and bless it to the Reader's good, for that is wholly thine, and to thy name be all the praise.

Perhaps, many that sit under my poor ministry (if they should condescend to read these feeble offerings on the Psalms) will recollect some of the observations here brought together which they

have heard by word of mouth in my Evening Lectures. I write, as I speak, without much attention to style or manner. For if JESUS be but glorified, the whole, both of preaching or writing, according to my apprehension of what is right, is fully answered. And if GOD the HOLY GHOST, whose blessed office it is to glorify CHRIST, should graciously condescend to bless this little work, when I am no more, and make it an instrument in His almighty hand of spreading the sweet savour of JESUS'S name among the people; and if any of those, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of GOD, should, as they read these lines after my decease, call to mind what they have heard in my personal ministry, and say, "we remember those words as they came warm from his heart, which we now read, while his ashes are mouldering in the cold grave"—the very thought comforts my soul in the moment of writing, and prompts me to hope that the prayer of faith I leave behind me for the LORD'S blessing on my poor labours, will have its answer in mercy, and that GOD *in all things may be glorified in JESUS CHRIST*. Amen.

PROVERBS

General Observations

It is remarkable that in the three sacred books, of which this is one of them, written by *Solomon*, he sends each forth under three different titles. Here he calls himself the son of David, king of Israel. The book of Ecclesiastes, he stiles the words of the Preacher, and therein he takes the name of the King of Jerusalem. And in the Canticles, after speaking in the title page of the excellency of it, he only puts his name of *Solomon*.

Various have been the opinions of holy men of old, concerning the time in which those portions of inspired scripture have been sent forth. Some have thought that the whole were written when he was near death. And others have said that the book of the Songs was written first, and the book of Ecclesiastes last; but this is certainly contrary to the order in which they are placed in the Bible, perhaps about 980 years before CHRIST.

I do not think it necessary to dwell at all upon the character of *Solomon*, because the HOLY GHOST hath very largely given his history in its proper place; and the uses to be made of his history are also very plainly marked out; so that every thing on this ground is superseded.

The period in which this book of GOD was written, it cannot be difficult to ascertain. The age of the church in which *Solomon* lived will serve to shew very nearly the time in which those precious sentences and maxims were committed to writing. What is said of him in one of the books of the Kings, may satisfy that it was at the time when his faculties were most bright and shining, when *he spoke of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; and there came of people to hear him* The book of the Proverbs itself, seems to be a collection of the most approved things' but eminently so as pointing in many parts to the Person and office of CHRIST; so that as we pass though the holy

volume, in the perusal of it, and discover, through the SPIRIT'S teaching, the leading features of JESUS: we are frequently constrained to cry out, A greater than *Solomon* is here.

I shall only detain the Reader, before he enters upon the perusal, to observe that this book of instruction receives great sanction and authority from the LORD JESUS, as to the mode that is here adopted of conveying divine truths. So much was it the custom of the East to teach in this way, that it was the universal maxim, And in conformity to it, our adored LORD at one time, delivered his discourses so much in parables, that we are told, without a parable space he not unto them. I only pray Him, who is the Almighty Teacher in his church, that while we read this and every other of the sacred books of GOD, he may so graciously give to us a right understanding in all things, that while to others it is only in parables, to us may be given, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; and that in that knowledge and enjoyment, we may find the same grace as was imparted to his disciples when he said, Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.

Chapter 1

Summary

The general design of parables is here described. A number of select maxims are given, and the object of the whole volume is set forth in shewing that it is to bring men acquainted with Gad, as the beginning and end of all wisdom.

Reflections

READER! Is it indeed JESUS that thus crieth Without and uttereth his voice in the streets? And shall not you and I go to him, and attend to him, and listen with suitable earnestness of soul, to what this divine Teacher teacheth? Did all the earth seek to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*, were they gathered from every part of it to his court? and shall not we be earnest to receive instruction, when a greater than *Solomon* is here? Oh! thou, whose name is indeed *Wisdoms!* because nothing that is wise can be found, but in thee: do

thou, blessed JESUS, while thou art calling without, incline my heart within to seek for thee as for hidden treasure, and to value thy love more than the choicest gold. and while thousands, and tens of thousands, are ignorant of thee, and know not where wisdom is to be found, and where is the place of understanding; while the depth saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, it is not with me: oh! LORD, give me to see, that in thee are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that in possessing thee, I possess all things. Be thou, LORD, to me, the Wonderful Counsellor, for then shall I understand this book of the Proverbs, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings: then, through thy grace, will my feet be kept from evil, neither shall I run into the congregation of sinners. Yes! blessed LORD, I shall delight to sit at thy footstool, to hear the gracious words which proceed from thy mouth. And I shall more and more discover in thee, that thou art all in all, the LORD, My wisdom. and my righteousness, and that thou art made of GOD, unto me *wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and that all my glorying is in thee, O LORD.*

Chapter 2

Summary

Wisdom continueth her sermon through this chapter, which she had begun in the former. Blessings are promised to the faithful, and destruction shewn to be the sad portion of the wicked.

Reflections

My soul! ponder well the striking contrast which this chapter hath drawn between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth GOD, and him that serveth Him not!

How truly lovely is the soul that crieth after knowledge, that is, that is seeking for JESUS as for hidden treasure. Every thing in him, and about him is ornamental. In private life, in public station, whenever engaged, however occupied, he adorneth the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR in all things. Small, and inconsiderable as his knowledge may be in the present attainments of it, yet it will be with him as the light of the morning, that shineth more and more unto a

perfect day. On the other hand, how wretched is the man who is destitute of grace! Every part of his life is perverse, and every portion of his conduct crooked. The calls of GOD, the warnings of his providence, the alarms of death; all lose their effect upon his unthinking and worthless heart! His joy is in evil, and the frowardness of the Wicked his delight. His life how wretched!—his death how fearful!

Precious JESUS! be thou my wisdom, for then shall I delight myself in the LORD, and triumph in the Holy One of Israel. Fill my soul with true understanding and knowledge, for sure I am, in thee I shall find every possible happiness of light and life, and the fulness of joy in my soul. And while the wisdom of this world gives pride to the worldly wise; and the might of this world gives confidence to the mighty, and the rich man glorieth in his riches; this will be my glory, that I understand and know thee, that thou art the LORD, and that in these things thou delightest, O LORD. Here, LORD, let my soul rest convinced that however poor in myself, in thee I possess all things. Thou art the strength of my heart, and thou my portion for ever.

Chapter 3

Summary

The same subject is continued in this chapter as in the former; but with additional arguments. Here are many earnest exhortations to the exercise of the graces of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the sad effects of a contrary conduct fully set forth.

Reflections

READER! let us attend to the several very interesting subjects which arise out of this chapter, and by reading them in the sweet spirit of the gospel, to which they plainly refer, we shall through grace make no small improvement of them.

In the first place, while *Solomon* recommends such attention to the law as never to forget it; let us examine whether GOD the FATHER's promise is fulfilled in our experience, and he hath put his law in our inward parts and written it in our hearts. Oh! the blessed

work of regeneration, when the heart of stone is taken away, and the heart of flesh given. And when the spirituality of GOD's law is so read and understood in the soul, that CHRIST is discovered to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

In the next place let us see to it, Reader, that we have such confidence, and such well grounded trust in GOD's mercy through CHRIST, as to commit every thing for time and for eternity into his almighty hands; for this will be to honour him with our whole substance, and with the first fruits of all our increase.

And as a third improvement from this chapter, let us see to it, that as we eye the LORD in all his providences, so we never lose sight of his government in all his chastisements. Not to feel the rod, or not to suppose chastening to be grievous, would be unbecoming; and not to enquire into the causes of the LORD's affliction, would be to forget the improvement intended to be made from it; and not to pray for a deliverance from trouble would be unsuitable to our circumstances. But to bless GOD for his attention in sending the affliction—to justify the LORD in the appointment of it—to acknowledge that he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works—and while the LORD is correcting, we are cleaving the closer to him; and to lean upon his promises, when matters are most dark and discouraging; this will be neither to despise his chastening, nor faint under the pressure.

Lastly and above all—while *Solomon* in this chapter recommends so earnestly, to find wisdom and to get understanding; let us see to it that nothing satisfies our souls short of the knowledge and attainment of CHRIST. He is the wisdom indeed, which in the possession of must make the soul truly happy. In the constitution of his person, the suitableness, and all-sufficiency of his salvation; his offices, characters, relations, the manifold wisdom of JEHOVAH is made known. Reader! may the LORD the SPIRIT impress it both upon your heart and mine, to find him who is truly and emphatically wisdom himself and we shall then enter into the full apprehension of those sweet scriptures, *the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.*

Chapter 4

Summary

This chapter hath much the same tendency as the former. It contains an exhortation to the pursuit of wisdom. And towards the close of the Chapter the sad effects of a contrary study is pointed out in strong characters.

Reflections

How delightful is it to see the beautiful similitude the wise man adopts in this book of Proverbs, by way of recommending attention to this great subject of getting Wisdom and understanding. Beholding CHRIST as the pearl of great price, every one engaged in the pursuit of getting him, may be justly compared to the wise merchant-man. The treasure is hidden in the field of the scripture and must be sought for, if obtained, with suited diligence, and earnestness of inquiry. And though it is without money and without price, freely given, and as freely to be enjoyed; yet like the merchant-man, there must be an early search, a daily enquiry, and a constant pursuit. Happy the souls that so search as to obtain and so seek as to find. In possessing him they possess all things, and find treasure that fadeth not away. Reader! have you found CHRIST? Is he the pearl of great price in your esteem? Oh! the blessedness of such a discovery! JESUS will be, as this sweet chapter expresseth it, an ornament of grace to the head, and a crown of glory will he deliver to them that love him. He saith himself, *hold fast that which thou hast; let no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my GOD, and he shall go no more out.*

Chapter 5

Summary

We have in this Chapter, and in a similar strain, to the former chapter, an exhortation to the study of Wisdom: and both the blessed

effects of that study and the sad consequences of the neglect of it, are strikingly set forth.

Reflections

PRECIUOS JESUS! at the very mention of thy name, how do all lesser objects lose their interest; and what an everlasting security is there found in thee, while living upon thy fulness, and deriving all strength for the practice of every social and religious obligation, in the communications of thy grace! Yes, blessed LORD, the cisterns of my poor soul, which thou hast filled, shall make me love to run to the fountain head, beholding from whence they flow, and how they are supplied continually by thee. And while thou art richly imparting all suited grace from thy fulness, to supply my necessities; gladly will I communicate the joyful tidings around, that the reports of JESUS and his glorious redemption, like rivers of waters in the street, may be circulated in every direction. I will tell to all, as far as my poor stammering tongue can utter, the truth that JESUS is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. And I will proclaim far and near, and in every direction, that he is a fountain open and not sealed, where every poor needy sinner like myself, whose heart is made willing in the day of the LORD's power, may freely come to wash and be made white in the blood of the LAMB; and to take of the water of life freely when the soul is thirsting for JESUS, as the hart for the water brooks. Oh! thou fountain of JEHOVAH! cause my soul to drink largely of that river whose streams make glad the city of GOD.

Chapter 6

Summary

Under the similitude of a surety *Solomon* opens this chapter, with shewing the consequence of such engagements. He follows up the chapter with divers cautions, which are founded in much wisdom.

Reflections

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! I feel constrained while reading what is here said of a surety, and the sad state in which such an one involves

himself, to call to mind what thy love must have been, which prompted thine infinite breast to enter into suretyship engagements for thy people, and what a state of unequalled sorrows the gracious act induced. In the contemplation of it, I cannot but pass over every other subject which this chapter might otherwise awaken to profit, to consider the greatness of thy love, and the greatness of the calamities which it brought to thy holy soul. Never surely was there an act so truly blessed, gracious, and beneficent as this. In this one act thou didst put thyself in the law-place, and room of all thy chosen. And by that act thou didst undertake both for our debt and for our duty; both to cancel sin and to fulfil all righteousness. And now, LORD, in such views of thee and thine unparalleled mercy, where shall I look but to thee? To whom shall I come but to JESUS? Hast thou struck out my name from the dreadful bond debt where it stood, and where it must for ever have stood but for thee, hast thou paid it all, cancelled it all; and when I lay for ever insolvent, hast thou redeemed me from all? And shall I, can I reject thine infinite love, and go about to establish mine own righteousness, and forget the wormwood and the gall, the prison and the pit from which thou hast freed me? Oh! infinite love, passing all knowledge. Let me, blessed REDEEMER, since thou hast brought me off, and brought me out, let me live to thy glory and to thy praise; and among all thy ransomed, bless for ever the almighty surety whose hand was stricken for such a stranger, and whose soul travail became so exquisite to redeem me from death. May the life thus saved by grace be spent to thy service, and since by purchase and redemption I am thine, may my soul bless thee, love thee, and delight in thee for ever.

Chapter 7

Summary

In this Chapter under the representation of an harlot, the deception that is practised upon our fallen nature is strikingly set forth, and the departure from GOD in sin and uncleanness is in strong colours painted.

Reflections

MY soul! pause over this chapter. Behold what a strong and affecting representation it holds forth of the carnal, graceless, and ungodly. In every state, and in every stage of life, they are the same. Young persons, from the heat of youth, and corruption of nature, are most exposed to the awful ruin here set forth; but all periods of life are open to the particular and special temptations of it. And is this human nature altogether! Are such portraits of it taken from life? Do all prefer the momentary enjoyment of the body, to the everlasting welfare of the soul! Can nothing but fleshly lusts which war against the soul satisfy them? And is it, my soul, a most certain and unquestionable truth, that they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD. Pause, my soul! and in contemplating such a picture of human life, see whether what Paul saith of the Corinthians doth not correspond, to thy case and circumstances, and such were some of you.

LORD! give me to hear and feel what the close of this sweet chapter utters, and from henceforth to attend to the words of my GOD. And oh! ye young men, see, from what is here set forth, the danger to which you are exposed, and flee youthful lusts which war against the soul. I have written unto you young men, because you are strong, and the word of GOD abideth in you. Oh! think how blessed it must be to remember the Creator in the days of youth. And what a blessedness in having CHRIST for a portion, that the age of life may be accompanied with grace, and the knowledge and enjoyment of JESUS become the portion for ever.

Chapter 8

Summary

We have in this Chapter a most sublime account of some ancient events in eternity, and which, under the character of wisdom, the great speaker is calling upon the church to attend to. From beginning to end the subject is carried on by one and the same person. The chapter closeth with an exhortation.

Reflections

AND now, Reader! having gone over this blessed chapter, pause and enquire at your own heart what are your views concerning the contents of it? Doth it strike your mind that the wisdom here spoken of, and here speaking, is the Wisdom-Mediator the LORD our righteousness, thus unfolding the sweet and secret transactions in that high character of GOD-man, which took place before the world began? Was the SON of GOD thus constituted, thus appointed, and by the union of natures, as the REDEEMER elect, thus possessed by JEHOVAH in the beginning of his ways, and before his works of old? And was it indeed, thou blessed JESUS, was it thou that didst then stand intentionally, as thou didst afterwards stand openly and in reality, in the streets of thy city Jerusalem, and speaking to thy church in all these endearing terms, to invite poor sinners to be happy in thy blood and righteousness. Oh! LORD, cause poor sinners then, by the sweet constraining influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, to listen to thy call, and to regard thy gracious invitation. Cause both the Writer and the Reader of these lines, if consistent with thy holy counsel and will, to enter into an heartfelt apprehension of all these precious truths connected with the knowledge of thyself, and the enjoyment also; that thy love may be so shed abroad in our hearts that we may inherit substance, and that thou thyself mayest be our treasure and fill all of them. Oh! precious LORD! let *a* daily knowledge of thee, and a daily enjoyment of thee be our portion; for then will all these blessings follow, and we shall find indeed that riches and honor are with thee; yea, *durable riches and righteousness*.

Chapter 9

Summary

In this chapter we have set before us the very different proposals of wisdom and folly. And we are shewn no less, how certainly the former leads to happiness, and the latter to misery.

Reflections

READER! do not too hastily dismiss this chapter. Can any thing be more happily chosen to represent the path of grace, and the broad road of destruction, than the very different representations here made. Pause, and contemplate the vast distinction between them. Behold the house, the feast, the fatness, fulness, and eternal duration of those provisions which JESUS hath made for them that love him. Behold the wretched, empty, unsatisfying, deceitful, and stolen pleasures which sin proposeth; and do not forget the close of all; the dead are there, and her guests in the depths of hell.

Oh! for grace to hear wisdom's voice. Oh! blessed JESUS, let thy seven pillars resting upon thyself be the foundation of my house; and thy table the one at which my soul may daily sit by grace here, and in glory eternally hereafter. And do thou, LORD, I pray thee, who hast spread all, furnished all, mingled all, and given freely all, *without money and without price*; give me every suited preparation to enjoy all, that I may never listen to the noise of the clamorous women, but be unceasingly eating of thy bread and drinking of the wine which thou hast mingled. Yea, LORD, may my whole soul be so hungering, and thirsting, and longing for the everlasting enjoyment of thee, that daily by faith here, and ere long in the fruition of thee in glory, I may live to thee, and with thee, and upon thee for ever.

Chapter 10

Summary

We are now in this Chapter, entering upon the Proverbs. From this Chapter to the twenty-fifth, we meet with a great abundance of those divine sayings. The one part is descriptive of the blessed effects of following wisdom's ways; and the other of the contrary consequences.

Reflections

READER! let us both look to Him that gave to *Solomon* wisdom. that while some will run through these Proverbs as men may pass over a field where treasure is hidden, and are unconscious

what is under them; you and I may see and know the things which are freely given to us of GOD. The parables of JESUS were still parables to the unenlightened multitude. But to his disciples *it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.*

In these dark sayings, here are many blessed and bright things. But like the LORD's hidden ones, as they are unknown to the world, so is the bread of life which is handed to them in secret. And Reader! let you and I, as we go over those several passages bring them all to JESUS, He will expound them to us in order, as he did to his disciples, when we are alone. Are not we ourselves, if CHRIST's followers, men wondered at? Is not our spiritual life a mystery; our new birth, our effectual calling, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, with all the blessings, supports, recoveries, helps, refreshments, in short, all the ways of grace here, and the promise of life in JESUS hereafter; is not the whole a mystery, and are we not frequently prompted to cry out as we go along our pilgrimage, and especially when at any time JESUS himself comes to us in a sweet visit of love, *LORD! how is it that thou dost manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?* And shall it be more a subject of wonder, that the word of his grace is to be read with other eyes, and explained with other tongues than men of the world are acquainted with? Precious JESUS! be thou our Instructor, for thou art a matchless Guide! Lead us into all truth: and if led by thee, we are made to discover thy Person, or thy work, thy grace, or thy favour, sweetly veiled under those parables: surely, LORD, we shall feel, as those disciples felt, *Our hearts burn within us, while thou talkest to us by the way, and while thou expoudest to us, in these scriptures, the things concerning thyself.*

Chapter 11

Reflections

I BESEECH thee, gracious Master, to give me a right understanding in all things. Taught by thee, I shall then discover, that thou art here folded up in this chapter. And however, as so many parables, I may first read what is here written, soon, under thy

teaching, I shall learn that of thee they treat, and to thee they are intended to lead me.— And have I, my soul, so learned CHRIST? Was JESUS the parable of the Gospel upon many occasions? And is he not very frequently in the Old Testament scripture? Was JESUS the Lazarus there depicted, poor, and without food, or resting place: bruised, and laying at the gate of the rich Scribes and Pharisees, despised, and at length dead; and while they knew him not, carried amidst the chariots of Angels to his FATHER’S bosom—and do I not behold him here, amidst the parables, the surety for the poor stranger and smarting for it?—him that scattereth, and yet increaseth: the liberal soul that maketh fat—and having watered the thirsty souls of sinners, is now glorified of his FATHER; and all power is given to him, as the glory-man mediator, in heaven and in earth? Hail! blessed, precious JESUS! thou art he whom thy people shall adore, and blessings shall be upon the head of him that was separated from his brethren; whom GOD our FATHER, hath made Universal LORD of our Egypt; and in whose wisdom, provision is laid for selling corn, for the salvation of our souls, when without thee, the famine of the bread of life, would have caused us to have perished for ever.

Chapter 12

Reflections

How blessed is every portion of the divine word, when read with an eye to CHRIST. Wherever CHRIST is seen, and known, and enjoyed; there *the* word becomes life and spirit to the heart. *I found thy words and did eat them*, (saith one of the prophets) *and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart*. And what rendered GOD’S word so sweet was, that CHRIST filled every part of it. These were the green pastures in which GOD caused his servant to lie down, when he fed him *beside the still waters*. When CHRIST is seen in them, and the HOLY GHOST gives the soul to taste CHRIST in them; then as the church said, so all the people find; it is blessed to sit down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to the taste. Reader! do you find it to be so? Have you found CHRIST in this chapter? Depend upon it, the *grace* of GOD, and the word of GOD, which bringeth salvation, brings it from this source: and it then

flows in upon the soul, in rich, full, free, and blessed streams of CHRIST as the salvation of GOD for poor sinners. Oh! for grace so to find, so to enjoy, so to relish, and so to live upon JEHOVAH's precious gift to men. *In this way* of JESUS and his righteousness *is life*, and in the very *path-way thereof*, the private, as well as the public ordinances of grace, *there is no death*.

Chapter 13

Reflections

READER! amidst many sweet and blessed things which this chapter furnisheth for improvement in reflection, I feel my mind particularly led to contemplate yet more the grace of our JESUS, in his wonderful condescension as here expressed, in making himself poor, when possessed of all the riches of heaven and earth. There is somewhat in this view of CHRIST, extremely engaging; and when connected with that view, we consider the cause and design of it, surely it holdeth out one of the most delightful subjects the human mind is capable of contemplating.

JESUS, though LORD of all, made himself servant of all: and went on in a continued series of humiliation, until that he humbled himself unto the accursed death of the cross. So that it was grace in all his actions; grace in his first design, and grace in every purpose. And what an everlasting revenue of love, praise, and glory, must result from such acts of beneficence!

But, Reader! as an improvement from this view of JESUS, think what on opposition to this loveliness of CHRIST, must be the self-righteous; and if CHRIST be so truly amiable in this condescension, how truly unamiable must be the proud in his own self-importance! There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing. To be nothing is bad enough: and yet it is to be worse than nothing, when a man fancieth himself he is something, when in reality he is nothing. To be poor indeed in good works, and without holiness before GOD; and yet talking of our good works and holiness: to be blind to our own sin, and blind to CHRIST and his righteousness; and yet confident of our own worth; and fancying we have no great need of

a SAVIOUR: to be naked of all spiritual-cloathing to appear in before GOD; and yet taking to ourselves a covering, but not of GOD'S SPIRIT. —Reader! I pray you pause: can there be upon the face of the earth a more pitiable character? To have the spots of death upon us, and yet unconscious that we are sick. Oh! that souls in this state would hear, and attend to the blessed words of CHRIST. I counsel thee (saith JESUS) to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Precious JESUS! thou, who givest this counsel, give grace also to follow it!

Chapter 14

Reflections

READER! amidst several very interesting views given in this chapter of GOD and of CHRIST, I know not what your feelings are, but I confess that my mind is led to reflect again and again on what *Solomon* saith of a faithful witness. And, precious as it is to find among the general perfidy of mankind any of this character, yet, how much more blessed is it to contemplate this perfection in the faithful, unchangeable GOD. It was the very character by which JEHOVAH demanded that he should be known to Israel of old. *Know therefore that the LORD thy GOD, he is GOD, the faithful GOD!* And, herein hath JEHOVAH pledged himself to CHRIST, and pledged, if it may be so expressed, even his holiness to him, for the fulfillment of all his covenant promises. *Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David.* Oh! the rich charter of grace! Oh! the security of GOD'S people! Blessed GOD! cause me to live upon it, to rest upon it, and never, no not for a moment, to call in question GOD'S faithfulness: but to know that *righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.* And as a man binds up his girdle around him, and fastens it to himself; so JEHOVAH takes to himself his faithfulness, for his people to lay hold of, and to hang upon. Precious GOD! here will I hang, and nothing, no, not even death itself shall unclasp my dying holdfast; for when both heart and

strength shall fail, *thou shalt be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

Chapter 15

Reflections

READER! pause with me over the review of this chapter, and let us mark together the improvements which an heart, taught by grace, can readily make out of it. To an enlightened eye, which discerns CHRIST in the whole field of scripture, there is not a flower in it but will yield both beauty and sweetness to our taste. And, like the bee, we shall gather by faith food from all. But, if the eye be not enlightened to see *him*, *many a* lovely step, which would lead to *the Plant of renown*, we shall never take; but like the wild beast of the wood, tread the whole under our feet. Oh! for grace, so to read the scriptures, as to discover in them *the mysteries of the kingdom*. All, in every part, treat of JESUS in his Person, offices, relations, characters, ordinances, communion. Let us, my brother, continually pray for this grace, to lead us, and to guide us, that we may *walk in the SPIRIT, and be taught by the SPIRIT*. For, if the HOLY GHOST bring us thoroughly to be acquainted with our LORD, *no* part of the divine word will suffer us, at any time to turn from it, until that we have discovered JESUS in it. And, when, in going over the field of the scriptures, like *the merchant-man*, JESUS himself speaks of *seeking goodly pearls*, we have found Him the one of great price, of whom Moses and the Prophets did write; such a Pearl, indeed, in whom all grace, glory, yea, GOD himself, in all his fulness dwells, being once found; oh! how gladly shall we go and sell all that we have, and part with all that before we valued the possession of, to obtain him, and to acquire every day an increasing knowledge of him, and communion with him, whom truly to know, and as truly to enjoy, is life eternal.

Chapter 16

Reflections

READER! I cannot better direct both your heart and my own, to a suitable subject for the LORD to bless to our joint Reflections, than what this chapter, both at the opening and close, brings before us. If it be the LORD that prepares the heart, and gives the answer of the tongue; where shall we look both for habitual and actual preparations, but from him? Oh! that there may be always such a going forth of our minds upon the person and graces of the LORD JESUS, by the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, that whether we read, or hear, or pray, or praise; faith in him and his great salvation may be always uppermost in our affections. Yes! blessed glorifier of my LORD! I do beseech thee to give to me this constant, habitual, and unceasing preparation, *that the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart may be always acceptable in thy sight, O LORD my strength and my REDEEMER.* Sure I Am, that without thee I can do nothing. There is nothing in me disposed to do what is good. Nay, LORD, there is in me every thing that is indisposed. And therefore, LORD! undertake for me. *Work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure.* And then, LORD, *my voice shalt thou hear betimes in the morning, yea, I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*

Chapter 17

Reflections

I PASS by, for the Reader's own improvement, the consideration of every other passage contained in this chapter, to dwell upon that heavenly character of JESUS suggested in this view of him, *the friend that loveth at all times, and the brother born for adversity.* JESUS was indeed peculiarly born for adversity. For had not our ruined circumstances been what they are, never surely had the SON of GOD any need to have been born in our nature, or have come into such an alliance with us, as a brother. But it was because our situation was desperate, because we were exposed, justly exposed to the wrath of

Almighty GOD, as helpless as we were miserable, and beyond all the possibility, in ourselves, of doing any thing towards our own recovery; it was on these accounts that *JESUS* stood forth as our helper. So that he was indeed *born for adversity*. And if he will engage for us in this high character of a REDEEMER; he must (justice so requiring) put himself in our very place and circumstances; and as such he must become our brother. This therefore he hath done. And Reader! do observe how all along he hath shewn himself to be the brother eminently born for adversity. He stood in our stead, paid our whole debt, crossed the book which was full of our outstanding debts, with marks to intimate the complete payment in the red letters of his own blood; and not only purchased our lost inheritance but purchased our persons, and hath put his poor indigent brethren, of whom he is not ashamed, into such a state of affluence in his fulness, by giving them a right to all he hath, and commanding them to draw upon him for all they need. And what is it now?—but the brother and the friend still. *Having loved his own that are in the world, he loveth them unto the end*. Though to heaven he is returned, to take possession of his kingdom; yet he saith himself, that this is also but for them and in their name. *He will come again and receive them to himself, that where he is there they shall be also*. In the mean time he assures them of his spiritual presence, his watching over them for good, with his whole heart and his whole soul. *Lo! (he saith) I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*. Hail! thou almighty friend at all times, thou brother born for adversity. Never, blessed JESUS, let my soul for a moment lose sight of thee under those endearing characters. Though I have slighted thee, forgotten thee days without number; and requited all thy love with baseness and ingratitude; still compassionate brother! do thou continue thy grace and tenderness, and overcome my unworthiness with thy love. *Thou knowest my frame, thou rememberest that I am but dust*. And do thou cause me by thy sweet SPIRIT amidst all my undeservings to be still hanging upon thee, and cleaving to thee and, like another Peter, under the siftings of Satan, and the deceitfulness of my poor sinful heart, still may I always like him be enabled to appeal to thy knowledge in testimony of my adherence to JESUS, and say as he did; *LORD, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*.

Chapter 18

Reflections

Reader! what a blessed thing it is to sit down under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST; and while this book of GOD appears indeed truly parables, and must continue so unexplained, until that JESUS by his SPIRIT opens it to our understanding, for us to be led therefrom to see, the mysteries of his kingdom: To the *pure* (saith an apostle) *all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.* Mark it down my brother, among the gracious things of GOD, to be brought out of the darkness of a natural state and to be introduced into the kingdom of his dear Son; what an unspeakable mercy is here! By this one act of sovereign grace all the blessings, privileges; titles, inheritance; all are made over and secure in the everlasting covenant. The FATHER engageth to bestow all the blessings of it. JESUS hath secured them by his blood and righteousness. And the HOLY GHOST undertakes to instruct them into all the knowledge suited to their adopted state and character. He will guide them into all truth. *He shall take of mine* (saith JESUS) *and shew unto you.* All mysteries, parables, proverbs, essential for their furtherance in grace, and the knowledge of the LORD, shall be explained unto them. *Unto you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of GOD, but to others in parables.* Hence, saith the LORD GOD; in one of the sweetest and most encouraging portions of scripture, *wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My FATHER thou art the guide of my youth?* Jeremiah 3:4.

Chapter 19

Reflections

I TAKE occasion from what this chapter hath suggested of a *false witness*, to admonish the Reader, while I pray for grace to receive *at* the same time in my own heart, the full admonition; to be always upon our watch-tower for the faithful and true Witness concerning JESUS; even GOD the HOLY GHOST, who is *to bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever CHRIST hath taught us.*

And Reader! it is most blessed and refreshing to a seeking soul to mark the footsteps of his coming. For he comes to us in the Son's name from the FATHER, to propose to us, not in proverbs only, but in the plain words of GOD, the gracious proclamation of pardon, mercy, and peace in the blood of the cross. He not only proposeth to us these mercies, but he disposeth the heart to receive what he brings. He not only shews us the loveliness and suitableness of the SAVIOUR; but he inclineth the soul to see and feel the want of him, and to seek salvation in his blood. And when by his grace he hath powerfully pleaded in our conscience for CHRIST, and against ourselves; in shewing how gracious JESUS is, and how unworthy we are; how very suited he is to us, and how suited we are to him; he puts a cry into our hearts in leading us to the throne of grace, *where we may find mercy and grace to help in every time of need*. Reader! do suffer me to ask you, hath the HOLY GHOST thus witnessed in your heart? Oh! for grace not to grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of the LORD, whereby souls are sealed unto the day of redemption. LORD! grant that my soul may have this faithful Teacher witnessing with my spirit that I am a child of GOD. Keep me, LORD, from every false witness, convinced that this chapter twice hath marked it down, that the end of it is death.

Chapter 20

Reflections

I hope that the Reader is perpetually gathering sweet instructions from this part of the word of GOD; and in nothing more so, than in the discovery of his own incompetency to enter far into the apprehension of divine things. Among the improvements of grace this is eminent, to learn, the further we go, the more of our ignorance. If at any time we do not find the sweet savour in the reading of the scriptures as heretofore, the consciousness of past enjoyments ought to become the excitement to future expectations.

If we have known the name of CHRIST to have been precious the sweet savour of his name ought to leave a fragranc y now; like some rich perfume, which though the thing itself be taken away, the effects remain. And though we see CHRIST not, yet former

experiences should quicken present desires. Man's goings (*Solomon* saith in this chapter) are of the LORD. Am I waiting for some renewed visit from CHRIST? Am I longing for his return, expecting him, on the look out for him? Is not this very frame the state in which JESUS prepares his people for the renewals of his love? Nay, is there not in this very desire and expectation of his coming even a present enjoyment in that desire and expectation? Surely all these worketh that one and the self same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Blessed LORD! grant me a sweet savour of past enjoyments, in the absence of present communion; and when I have no immediate view of thy glory, and the sweet communications of thy love; still let my prayer, awakened by thy grace, be the prayer of the church; draw me and we will run after thee until thou shalt bring me into thy chambers.

Chapter 21

Reflections

Reader! amidst the mingled view this Chapter affords of grace and corruption, in all their opposite effects and consequences, as well as their origin and termination, oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST may be our teacher, to give us a right understanding in all things. If the heart of man be subject to divine direction, and man of himself cannot guide his steps aright; can there be any argument wanting to induce the soul to look unto him, with whom are the issues of life, and who turneth the heart like rivers of waters whithersoever he pleaseth?

Reader! look closely to what this chapter relates of the unawakened and ungodly. They are uncircumcised in heart and ears. How prone to all evil, how averse to all good; they are in drudgery to sin and Satan, and are led captive by him at his will. Oh! that the prey may be taken from the mighty; and the lawful captive delivered.

Look at the souls of the regenerate, and those of whom JESUS hath opened the eyes, and brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death. Their delight is in the law of the LORD, and in that law do they exercise themselves day and night.. They have GOD for

their FATHER, CHRIST for their portion, and the HOLY GHOST for their teacher and guide. LORD, help both Writer and Reader, to be thus blessed, thus led, and thus made happy! May we be conducted on from strength to strength until that we appear before our GOD in Zion.

Chapter 22

Reflections

READER! a name to live while virtually dead before GOD, is one of the most awful states into which our poor nature can possibly fall. But to be named with a good name in CHRIST which the mouth of the LORD shall name, is among the highest felicities our nature is capable of enjoying. *Solomon* seems to have had this in view while sending forth these proverbs. Every thing that can lead to this enjoyment in JESUS, ought to be our daily pursuit and desire. And what can tend to the attainment of it, but an interest in CHRIST JESUS? The grace of GOD which bringeth salvation is the only possible means of procuring it. And under the divine blessing this will ensure *whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, lovely, and of good report*. Reader! let me hope that this grace hath appeared unto *you*: and then it will be found that all these divine principles will have their suited influence upon the heart. He *that walketh with wise men shall be wise, it is the companion of fools that is destroyed*.

Chapter 23

Reflections

WHAT evils spring out of the corruptions of our fallen nature! And until grace hath renewed the heart it is full of uncleanness. Like the poor man under the possession of the enemy whose name was Legion; so troops of lusts, and a legion of foes of darkness lead the heart under continued captivity. Every sin, every vanity of life, as

Barrabbas of old, is preferred to the REDEEMER. The meanest husks of the world, the dross of fancied happiness, in short any thing and every thing of *a* carnal nature, takes the lead in the carnal mind. LORD! I would say for myself and Reader, give to us to know and seek the unfading pleasures which are in CHRIST and his gospel. Here let our desires be directed; and in him and his great salvation let all our wishes centre. Blessed JESUS! thou hast said, and the truth of it is undeniable; he that hath thee hath substance, and *thou wilt fill all his treasures, for riches and honor are with thee; yea, durable riches and righteousness.*

Chapter 24

Reflections

MY soul! while thou art pondering over the very many sweet and precious sayings in this chapter, hast thou not found thine heart warmed within thee, by JESUS speaking to thee by the way, and opening to thee the things here written concerning himself?

Surely JESUS is the Wisdom here spoken of, and he is, my soul, thy wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption! And while thou art seeking from him strength for the day of adversity, thou wilt not faint, as those must do, whose confidence is founded in the wisdom of this world. The rock of ages will be thy support, when those, who lean on the reeds of Egypt, must fail. Yes, my soul, if JESUS be the honey, and the honey-comb of all thy affections, and confidences, and delights; thou wilt find him sweet indeed to thy taste. And let others do what they may, or find delight from whence they can, thou wilt kiss Him, into whose lips is poured grace, because JEHOVAH hath blessed him for ever. JESUS will be the right answer given to every case, every trial, every need. Be thou my LORD, and my portion, blessed JESUS, for all thy sayings are indeed right, and all thou hast said, my soul most cordially approveth. Then will my soul humbly kiss thy feet, and I will wash them with my tears, and wipe them in token of my sorrow for sin, like another Magdalene, with the hairs of my head. I will kiss them as a pledge of love, of duty, of obedience, of homage, of reverence; for I earnestly desire to give myself up to thee, and to be wholly for thee

and not for another. And oh! thou condescending GOD and SAVIOUR! do thou kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine!

Chapter 25

Summary

Here are similar proverbs to what were given before; but as the title of them observes that they were copied by the men of Hezekiah, they are particularly marked from those we have already gone through.

Reflections

READER! many very blessed Reflections will be found folded up in the bosom of this chapter, and which I pray the HOLY GHOST to open and explain to you and to me. And among the many, that of the eating of the honey comb inducing sickness is not the least. If the blessed SPIRIT be the faithful Messenger to our souls herein, I hope and trust that we shall both be refreshed in the view, as from the snow of Lebanon in the time of harvest, or the cold flowing waters that come from another place.

And what sickness like the sickness of the soul, when from having seen CHRIST as necessary, and having had such views of him as induce those longings and desires after him, which nothing short of himself can satisfy: the whole heart is sick, and every faculty faint until CHRIST be enjoyed. Precious LORD! give me this sickness, which is not unto death, but for the glory of GOD, that the SON of GOD may be glorified thereby. Give me so to long for thee; so passionately to desire thee; that like the church I may cry out, Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love. Let my soul seek after thee as for hidden treasure; follow hard after thee in ordinances; set thee as a seal upon my heart, as a seal upon my arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave: may I delight to hear thy name, sweeter than all the melody of music to my ear, or the fragrancy of ointment to the smell. And never; never, give over, until such renewed manifestations of my LORD be made to my

heart, that under the impression of thy soul-reviving presence, I can cry out, It is the voice of my beloved: behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains and skipping upon the hills. And oh! do thou haste, my beloved, and come, for hope deferred maketh the heart sick; and when the desire cometh it is indeed a tree of life. Yes! blessed JESUS, ere long thou wilt come, and we shall part no more. I shall arrive, borne by thee on eagle's wings, to that blessed climate where the inhabitant shall no longer say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Amen.

Chapter 26

Summary

Under various similitudes, the Proverbs are continued to shew the wisdom of the wise, and the sad conduct of foolish men.

Reflections

If the Reader discovers JESUS in the midst of these verses, he will find what the wise man hath elsewhere observed, and with truth is found to be the case, that *his name is as ointment poured forth*. The discovery of his Person, and the apprehension of his character, relations, and offices, by faith, hath a blessed effect to endear the scriptures to our hearts. And indeed without this discovery, what can we be said to learn in a way of salvation. And Reader! whether we discover him or not, depend upon it here JESUS is. CHRIST is in all, and through all, and with all. He fills the whole in the church, the word, the promises, and the hearts of his people. LORD! open mine eyes to see the wonderous things of thy law. Open mine heart to feel the full influences of thy grace. Be thou the sum and substance of all my pursuits and desires: and be thou *formed in my heart the hope of glory*.

Chapter 27

Summary

The sacred writer in this chapter, is still prosecuting the proverbial method of instruction, and adopting various figures for conveying divine truths.

Reflections

WHAT the wise man hath said in the close of this chapter, of the diligence of looking well to the state of the flock, and the care of the herds, may well be construed into the diligence every man ought to have to the care of the soul, and to know the state in which he stands before GOD. *Tell me, (saith the church upon this momentous subject) tell me, O thou, whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, Where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?* We never can be too solicitous on points of this nature. Where JESUS feeds; what he feeds with; and how we are growing up in the nurture and sustenance of the spiritual life. Reader! is JESUS your Shepherd? Doth he, who sits in the midst of the throne, and feeds the church above, feed you in this wilderness state below? Is he the bread of GOD and the bread of life to your soul? *Are the lambs for thy clothing, and the goats the price of the field.* In other words, art thou clothed with the garment of salvation wrought out by the LAMB of GOD? And dost thou eat of the paschal LAMB, whose *flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed?* Oh! for grace to feed upon CHRIST! and to hear him say; *Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you! Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!*

Chapter 28

Summary

The wise man is prosecuting the same subjects in this chapter as in the preceding. By various similitudes he teacheth the blessedness of wisdom's ways, and the awful termination of a contrary conduct.

Reflections

READER! I take occasion from the view of this chapter, and the contents of it, to remind your heart, and my own, how truly blessed it must be to find CHRIST in his hidden word; and what distinguishing tokens of favour it brings with it, when this is the case. And, indeed, may we not suppose, that if some portions of scripture are made more obscure than others, it is with a design to call up the more awakened attention of the LORD's people; that when CHRIST is discovered in them, the joy of having found him, may be more blessed. Is not this like the riddle of Samson, Out of the eater cometh forth meat; and out of the strong cometh forth sweetness?

Precious JESUS! may my soul know thee as the way to the FATHER, the truth, and the life eternal! And may my soul be always found in this way, walking in it, and enjoying all divine comforts in it. Yes, blessed LORD! this is the highway which the Prophet was commanded to tell the church should be thrown open, and which should be called the way of holiness. And while the foolish see it not, and the proud despise it, and the unclean shall not pass over it. The wayfaring men, though fools, in human sciences, and human knowledge, shall not err therein. Blessed GOD! do thou strengthen me more and more in this way, that I may walk up and down in thy Name.

Chapter 29

Summary

Here are many like words to the former, by way of proverbs in this Chapter to the same purport as before, in holding forth the mysteries of the kingdom.

Reflections

READER! there is an abundance of matter for raising many profitable Reflections in the perusal of this chapter; but I beg particularly to call your attention to that solemn verse contained in it, which in itself forms a volume. *Where there is no vision, the people perish.* The most faithful ministers of JESUS have to lament the little success of their labors in the present day: and when they look round and take a leisurely survey, of the languishing state of Zion, much cause have they to weep, *between the porch and the altar*; and to besiege the mercy-seat, night and day, with the cry: *Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach.* But what an awful view doth it afford in the consciousness that in many paces of this our *guilty* land, *There is no vision!* Oh! for the LORD to send forth faithful men, anxious to win souls to CHRIST! And oh! for the LORD JESUS to come himself in every place whithersoever he sends his word by faithful Pastors, after his own heart, that shall feed his people in true understanding and knowledge. Reader! where, and under what *open vision*, do you sit? That gospel, which holds forth JESUS in the glories of his person, and in the compleatness of his salvation—which humbles the sinner, and exalts the SAVIOUR—which, by laying the creature low, makes JESUS precious; and tends to promote holiness in the life and conversation, in shewing all our springs to be in him: these are precious truths to keep the soul alive, and to prevent leanness and perishing. Reader! may it be your portion, and mine, to be thus *strong in the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS.*

Chapter 30

Summary

Here are mingled, with other divine things, a collection of Proverbs, as before: but it should seem to be not of the writings of *Solomon*. Their tendency is, however, the same; and, no doubt, they are of divine inspiration, being a part of the sacred canon of scripture.

Reflections

BLESSED LORD JESUS! I desire to adore thee, for having added to all thy servants the Prophets in their testimonies concerning thee, this charming portion of Agur. Indeed, O LORD, I cannot but accept what is here said by him, as referring to thee. For who is the *Ithiel* of the scripture, but JESUS? And who is the *Ucal* of his people, but He, that is the LORD our righteousness, mighty to save? I may well find interest in the words of Agur; for I can truly say with him, as referring to nature, void of thy divine teaching; *I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.* And hadst thou not, by the teaching of thy blessed SPIRIT, brought me acquainted with thyself, I might have been forever asking, without obtaining an answer: what is the name of JEHOVAH; and what the name of JESUS? But now, LORD, through thy grace preventing me, I do know thee, and desire to love thee, and to live to thee, and rejoice in thee. And because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth. *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.*

Matchless Instructor! let all the divine parables of thy word, be opened and explained to me by thyself. May I see in them, and through them, CHRIST JESUS; and then in Him I shall find all I need. And, however, to the unwakened, they may remain as a vision sealed, yet if thou, LORD, wilt open mine eyes, I shall see the wondrous things of thy law.

Chapter 31

Summary

This chapter, like the former, is styled a prophecy. And whether written, as some think, by *Solomon*, and others not; yet as in form and manner it is exactly like the former, it forms a very proper conclusion to the book of Proverbs.

Reflections

AND now, Reader, having gone over this book of the Proverbs, and having seen that in many parts of them, it is of JESUS they

principally treat; I would desire to close this part of the sacred word, with referring all that hath been offered by way of comment, to the goodness and forbearance of the LORD; beseeching him to pardon the whole, and to let his strength be perfected in human weakness. If JESUS be the wisdom here intended to be set forth (as in many parts of this book, what is said concerning wisdom can be applicable to none but him) it will be our happiest improvement of this delightful scripture, to seek after CHRIST in, and through all. In JESUS we behold the constellation of wisdom, all the properties of it, concentered in his one Person. The divine, and human nature, forming one glorious Mediator, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to a lost world. In all his offices also, all his characters, as well as in the constitution of his person, wisdom shines out in full splendor. *Here mercy and truth meet together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* Blessed JESUS! thou art wisdom itself; even the wisdom of GOD in a mystery! And in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Vouchsafe, dear LORD, both to him that writes, and to him that reads, such suited proportions as may make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in thyself. And let our souls be living under the gracious illuminations of thy holy SPIRIT here below until we come to the everlasting enjoyment of thee in glory for evermore.

ECCLESIASTES

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE have here another of the Books of Solomon, and written, as the one that precedes it, and as the one that follows, under the Spirit of inspiration.

The title of the book, *Ecclesiastes*, implies a Preachment. And, indeed, the whole scope of it, is to this end. And Solomon the Preacher of it (which is the title he hath assumed upon the occasion) carries with it the idea of *gathering together*, confirms the same. I hesitate not to ascribe this little volume to Solomon, because the first verse proves as much. For though he doth not call himself by name; yet as no son of David was king of Jerusalem but Solomon, it follows by undeniable consequence, that it could be no other than he.

The great design which the HOLY GHOST seems to have intended from the use of it in the church, was, to teach the emptiness and vanity of all things here below, to satisfy the desires of immortal souls. And nothing could have been more happily chosen, than in the example of the wisest and greatest of all the kings of the earth, to set forth this leading, and important truth. And, as the conviction of this doctrine must, under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching, be made instrumental to lead the heart to CHRIST, here we discover in this book of GOD, one gracious method more, *to make men wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS*.

In respect to the *time*, in which Solomon committed these golden sayings to paper, writers are rather divided in opinion concerning it. But the most part have concluded, that it was towards the close of his life; inasmuch as the whole seems to be practical and experimental conclusions, which a soul taught by grace, would make from serious reflections on human life. Everything void of JESUS, being, as this Preacher's constant text expresses it, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*.

I shall not think it necessary to detain the Reader any longer with *General Observations*, from immediately entering on the perusal of this book of GOD. But while I look up for grace, and the teachings of the SPIRIT, to guide me through it, I pray the Reader to have his eyes directed to the same Almighty Guide; that either by immediate declaration, or by direct allusion, we may both be led to see, that to CHRIST and his one-finished salvation, the whole refers; in Him the whole is beautifully explained; and He, and He alone, is the Centre to which JEHOVAH all along intended everything should be gathered, in the dispensation of time, when CHRIST should be presented as *the Head of the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Under a great variety of evidences, taken from the circumstances of human life, and everything around, the Preacher fully proves the total inability of all the outward circumstances of nature to constitute happiness.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter; and when thou hast gathered together, into one point of view, the several weighty truths contained in it, sit down and sum up the very solemn lessons which it reads to thee. Vanity of vanities, indeed, are all the pursuits of human life, however diversified they may be: for where CHRIST is not, there can be nothing solid, nothing substantial. And could the world, amidst its numberless avocations and amusements, hear but the voice which speaks loudly and unceasingly in exit, they would hear an echo to Solomon's words in every instance, Though all are in pursuit of happiness; all err in that pursuit. And whether it be the rich, or the great, or the vain, or the noble, the close is the same to all. *The deep saith it is not in me: and the sea saith it is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*

From all the vanities, and follies, and pursuits of life, do thou, my soul, turn to *JESUS*. He saith, and the truth is unquestionable, *I will cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their measures*. Precious, precious *JESUS*! be thou my portion; for in thee I shall enjoy all things. And whether men speak well, or speak ill; whether creatures smile, or frown: whether my frames are bright, or dark; lively, or dull; yet *JESUS*, and his salvation, is a portion to live upon forever. And on thee, LORD, therefore, may my soul fix, and dwell and rejoice in thee, as my only good here, and my everlasting happiness to all eternity hereafter. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Preacher prosecutes still further the doctrine of the emptiness of creatures, to give happiness. Having in the former Chapter stated the subject in general, he here enters into particulars, in proof that all is vanity.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I charge it upon you to take with you the evidences which arise out of this Chapter, in favour of *JESUS* and his salvation. Surely the Preacher intended, by this way of preaching, in showing negatively what human pleasures and human learning are not, to proclaim most loudly what CHRIST and his graces are. For if all short of CHRIST be vanity; and CHRIST himself be the chief, the only, the substantial good; what happier method amid the wise man have adopted, in thus appealing to the experience of mankind, under the different characters of it, that it is *JESUS* only who can cause them that love him *to inherit substance, and to fill their measures*.

My soul! pause thou over the account. Look at the world as it now is, as well as in Solomon's days what it then was. What is the generality, nay, the vast majority of the world, pursuing? How are men everywhere around thee engaged. Be their case what it may; yet are not all, under whatever form their different pursuits are directed, engaged *in making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*? Mark them leisurely. Behold each and every one. And figure to

thyself, what indeed is no figure, but reality. Behold what is continually going forth in awful fulfillment; one here, and another there, by whom that voice is heard, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee!*

Precious *JESUS!* from such views, oh grant my soul to turn to thee! Give me betimes to see, and know, thy value; and day by day to be leaving all these hollow, and deceitful pleasures, for the enjoyment of the Supreme Good. Oh! let me so know thee, as to live upon thee, to live to thee, and to rejoice in thee, as my portion. And do thou, dearest LORD, so manifest thyself to my soul, in all the fulness, sweetness, and suitableness, of thy love and favor, that the love of all creature excellencies may die away in my esteem. Let the language of my soul be, *Whom have I in heaven but thee: and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart, and thou art my portion for ever.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

Under several very interesting representations, the Preacher continues in this Chapter to follow up the same subject, as in the former. The mutability of all things here below, is strikingly set forth; and the unchangeableness of GOD's purposes clearly established.

REFLECTIONS

MY, soul! learn from the solemn observations of the Preacher to enquire, whether in the times and seasons which he saith there are to every purpose under heaven, thou hast found the time of the new birth, and the time of a real death unto sin and a life unto righteousness? Hast thou known the time of the LORD's planting thee in grace, and thy reaping in mercy? Hast thou marked the season, when the HOLY GHOST killed in thee the lusts of the flesh, and taught thee to crucify the affections of it by his power? Are the strong holds of sin broken down, and is the spiritual life of grace in

JESUS built up? Hath the LORD given to thee holy seasons of mourning for sin, and refreshing recoveries, by the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, to make thine heart leap for joy? See, my soul, whether these things are in thy evidences of the new life, and thou hast truly found those changes in the times, and seasons, of a dying world, which is hastening away, and which mark not the life of the ungodly, in their purposes under heaven.

And! blessed *JESUS* teach me when I see the place of judgment among men, and behold the oppression of thy people often there; teach me to look beyond this state of things, and contemplate thy righteous administration. The time is hastening, when thou wilt come *to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people*. At thy tribunal, every cause will be reheard. By thine unerring sentence, true judgment will be administered. And while the unpardoned transgressors may meditate terror for the prospect of this great day, do thou, my soul, hail the LORD's approach with joy. Yes! righteous LORD, thou wilt come to plead the cause of thine injured people, and to deliver them that are oppressed with wrong. Lift up thine head, O my soul, and frequently meditate thy LORD's coming. *JESUS* will assuredly manifest himself in that day to all his people as their brother, while he is their judge; and he who is now their Redeemer, will be their portion and glory forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Preacher is still prosecuting the same subject, of the insufficiency of all things here below to give comfort. And the whole chapter is but one and the same train of reasoning on this important point.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! hast thou learnt to form similar conclusions to the Preacher from the same causes; and in a right estimate of human life, made calculations what the close will be? Hast thou beheld the tinge of vanity which is given to all, and from hence directed thy views to all precious *JESUS*, the complete, the soul-satisfying, the supreme, the only good? Oh! thou the pearl of great price! in thee I find everything that is substantial and satisfying: yea, durable

riches and righteousness. Possessing thee, thy church must possess all things: for thou art all in all to thy people. And what endears thee, oh! thou lovely One, to the heart of all that know thee, and enjoy thee, is, that thou art freely given, freely bestowed by GOD our FATHER, without our deserts, without our conscious want of thee, without our desire, nay, without our first wishes, and even against all our natural dislike to thee. Yes! blessed *JESUS*! never should we have sought thee, hadst thou not sought us: never should we have loved thee, hadst thou not first loved us. But in the endless pursuit of any, and every vanity rather than *JESUS*, would our poor, blind, and deluded nature, have gone on, turning from one creature comfort to another, until death had finished all, and we had lain down in the silent grave, with sorrow and disappointment!

Oh! ye that are now entering life, full of high prospects of health and youth and the many gilded objects before you, inviting you by their syren songs to ruin; oh! that the LORD may give you to seek grace, to avoid being lost amidst the deceitful pursuits of what the world calls pleasure. Look to Solomon. Hear what the Preacher said. And before you have run the mad round of vanity and folly, which can terminate in nothing short of disappointment and vexation of spirit, make now a right calculation. Look unto *JESUS*. Behold how glorious in his person: how blessed in his grace and mercy! how suited to the circumstances of poor, fallen, dying creatures! Think, from what misery he can save—Think to what happiness he can bring—How delightful his fellowship! How sweet his society. And while he becomes all that the soul can need now; how fully will he satisfy the soul to all eternity? Hear, ye young; and the LORD direct your choice. It is *JESUS* that calls at the entering in of the gates: and his promise is like himself, unalterable and sure. He saith, *I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Preacher here enters upon a view of sacred worship in the house of GOD. He shows that all service void of spiritual worship is vanity. This is followed with similar observations, tending to prove that whatever men place their confidence in the world, terminates in disappointment.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! are all things here below empty and unsatisfying: and is there a rest that remaineth for the people of GOD? And wilt thou not, then, after such repeated convictions as these scriptures afford of human vanity and human disappointment, be prompted, like the Patriarchs to seek a *City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD*. Enquire, my soul, in the history of these holy men gone before, from what cause it was that their lives were so peaceful, and honourable; and their deaths so triumphant and glorious. And the reason is assigned, in all that is said of them, *They walked by faith, and not by sight*. They did, as Abraham the great father of the faithful did, *they believed GOD, and it was accounted to them for righteousness*. They went out, when called upon to go forth into a place which they should afterwards receive for an inheritance, not knowing whither they went. GOD had promised, and that was enough. They took GOD at his word. And they were not afraid, but depended upon his faithfulness.

Do thou, my soul, the same. GOD's promise in CHRIST is the same now as it was then: or rather, it is now confirmed beyond the possibility of failure in that all the promised undertaking of CHRIST hath been accomplished. Look forward, look upward then, my soul, and contemplate the glories which shortly shall be revealed. And when, at any time, some renewed instance of vanity, arising from the things here below, shall occur, turn away thine eyes, and behold with faith that upper brighter world. There neither sin, nor Satan; care, nor anxiety; fightings without, nor fears within; can arise to break in upon thy everlasting enjoyments. There dwells JEHOVAH, manifesting himself in CHRIST to all his redeemed. There the LAMB, that is in the midst of the throne, is leading the church to fountains of living waters, and all tears are forever wiped away from off all faces. Say, my soul! art thou indeed to dwell there—to go out no more. Are these

vanities here below no longer to distress; neither these eyes of thine to behold sin? And shall not even the prospect of such felicity, fill thee with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory? Oh! for the holy longing of the church; *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Preacher openeth this Chapter with a strong proof of vanity in one man laying up for another; and the fruit of all his labours enjoyed by a stranger. He shows that the longest life spent in vanity, is spent but in vexation of spirit. And he arrives, at the close of the Chapter, to the same conclusion as before.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not turn hastily away from this chapter. There are many important improvements to be gathered from it under grace. What Solomon saw as a sore evil in his days, you and I may behold the same in our day. The instances are not a few, and in almost every rank of men, where possessions bring no comfort, no sanctification, but are kept by the owners of them to their hurt. The carnal mind indeed, is never to be satisfied in its attainments. Nothing can come up to the expectation: for where the divine blessing is not upon a man's fulness, it matters not what the surrounding circumstances then are, for there can be no enjoyment of any. It is a melancholy fact, but the experience of all ages leave no room to dispute it. What scripture hath said, all find to be true: *man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.*

Reader! shall we not from the conviction of this undoubted truth look up for grace, and the teachings of the HOLY SPIRIT, that we may learn how to convert such evils into good; and since life, in all earthy pursuits is vain; seek in JESUS what cannot disappoint. Oh! for grace, to walk through a world of sin, and sorrow, and vanity, and vexation, with such wise indifference, as those who seek a better

country. Is the SON of GOD indeed calling his people to the present and everlasting enjoyment of himself? Doth he say, come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest? Doth he graciously propose himself for our portion, our happiness, and joy? And shall we be so low minded and earthly in our affections, as to prefer those shadows; to be in love with our chains; to pursue phantoms; and reject everlasting realities! Blessed, gracious, condescending LORD! do thou not only invite, but allure us with thy grace. And since thou hast begotten us to such a lively hope by thy glorious resurrection from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; do thou lead us by the restraining influences of thy HOLY *SPIRIT*, that we may set our affections on things above, not on things of the earth.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

In this chapter the Preacher is proposing several good things, as means, in the divine hand, for a remedy against the vanities of life. He showeth the blessedness of gracious sorrow, and the superiority it hath to carnal mirth. In these, and the like observations, this Chapter abounds.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! ponder well the many blessed truths contained in this Chapter, that thou mayest understand aright the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. Suspect thyself, and thine own heart, whenever the scriptures appear, at the first reading, with an aspect thou canst not immediately unfold. And do not forget to look up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Author of his own most blessed word, who if any man lack wisdom, and will ask of GOD, giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Yes! thou Almighty Teacher! under thy gracious instruction do I pray continually to come. Taught by thee, I shall find it profitable to go to the house of mourning rather than to the house of feasting. Taught of thee, I shall never find confidence in any supposed overmuch, righteousness. And taught of Thee, my soul will not despond in the otherwise overwhelming view of the

multitude of my transgressions. But looking unto *JESUS*, whom thou art forever glorifying to my view in him, and his complete all-justifying righteousness, shall all my poor services be forgotten; and in his all-cleansing blood, shall all my sins be done away; and, like the iniquity of Judah, and of Israel, *when sought for, shall not be found*.

Precious LORD *JESUS*! increasingly precious be thou to my poor soul! Where, or to whom, should I look, but to thee, under the daily infirmities of a fallen nature, which even in justified souls, are breaking out continually. Oh! LORD! keep, I beseech thee, my eyes stedfastly fixed on thee. Cause me to look within the vail, whither as the forerunner of thy people, thou art entered! And let me never forget the infinite and eternal worth and excellency that there is in thy blood, though there be new defilements in my poor heart from day to day! Oh! cause me to remember thy never-failing Priesthood, and to take comfort from the assurance that thou, blessed *JESUS*, hast more to plead for thy redeemed before GOD and the FATHER, than their transgressions have to plead against them. And let me never lose the blessed sound in my ears of the gracious voice of GOD, in confirmation of the merits of thy blood and righteousness, in which he hath said, *Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom*.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Preacher is still following up his favourite discourse of the vanity of human life, through this chapter. Under various images he showeth the disappointments of men, by ways of directing the heart to wisdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while the preacher is demanding, *who is as the wise man?* let us be looking unto *JESUS*, until that our eyes are enlightened in beholding him as wisdom itself, the brightness of his FATHER's glory, and the express image of his person. And so let our

souls look and gaze upon that first fair, first beautiful, first and only HOLY ONE, until that from beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD.

And Reader! while thus looking unto *JESUS*, until brought into some degree of conformity to him in all things; contemplate at the same time the dark, wretched, and deplorable state of those who are ignorant of him. Behold the end of these men. Though sentence against them is not executed speedily; yea, though their days be prolonged to even the dregs of old age; yet, how in the end will the voice of murdered years and days be lifted up against them? Oh! The soul agony of lying down at last in eternal sorrow!

My brother! think of the felicity of souls redeemed by *JESUS*, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST for grace, that you may cast your lot in among them, and with them have one portion. This will be to sit down to a perpetual feast, and never to be cloyed: but the grace of *JESUS*, yea, *JESUS* himself shall abide with him, as the wise man speaks, *All the days of his life, which GOD giveth him under the sun.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

In prosecuting the same subject, the Preacher in this Chapter lays down several very weighty observations for lessening the general and unavoidable vanities of life. Under the similitude of a poor man, that by wisdom saved a city, he sets forth the great blessedness of divine knowledge.

REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst many blessed meditations, which this chapter leads to, let us seek for grace from GOD the *SPIRIT* to derive improvements from the sweet view here opened to our souls concerning the Person, worth, wisdom, love, and salvation of the LORD *JESUS*.

The church of GOD is, indeed, like the *little* city here spoken of; for though beautiful, like Mount Zion, and the joy of the whole earth, yet compared to the world's wide wilderness it is but little, and as this scripture saith, hath few men in it. Oh! how may the

people of GOD in the present hour mourn over the languishing state of Zion! Oh! how doth the enemy now scoff, saying, *Is this Zion whom no man looketh after!* And this is not all: for even Zion, though small, and her citizens few in number, yet a great king is come up against her. JEHOVAH, King of kings, and LORD of lords, hath a controversy with Zion, by reason of her rebellion and sin. And He hath besieged Zion with his law and justice He hath thrown up bulwarks against Zion, so that she is dreadfully beset with the arrows of his broken law, and the curses which must ultimately fall upon every one that sinneth. And, as if this was not sufficiently alarming, the great enemy of souls, as the accuser of the brethren, throws in his fiery darts, and threatens instant destruction.

Reader! in this representation, (for it ceaseth to be a parable being really and literally the case) whither shall we look, or to whom shall we come, for help? Who can deliver the sinners in Zion from the wrath to come? There is one, indeed, mighty to save; but he is a poor man, though a wise one. Shall we look to him? Yes, precious *JESUS!* let every eye be directed to thee. Thou wert rich, indeed, LORD, yet we know, for our sakes thou becamest poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich. And thou art wise, also; for in thee are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Here, LORD, I behold thee in this two-fold character. Poor thou art, indeed, for poverty suited thee when the GODHEAD condescended to become man. And wise thou must be, for in the moment thou didst assume the manhood, thou wert and still art the only wise GOD. Such a Redeemer became suited, and thou wert found altogether formed for the purpose. Hence, blessed *JESUS*, it is thou, and thou alone, who wert equal, by thy wisdom, to deliver the city—And thou hast delivered it, and redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. Hail! holy, glorious, triumphant LORD! *let every knee bow before thee, and every tongue confess that thou art CHRIST, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.*

One humble boon I present before thee, LORD, this day! Oh! grant that both he that writes, and he that reads, may rejoice in the blessing granted forever! Grant, LORD, that we may not be among the ungrateful number of them that forget thee! LORD *JESUS*, forbid it. Shall we ever forget thee? Shall not the remembrance of thee be the first, and last, and everlasting object of remembrance, in our

whole souls? Forget thee! Let every thought be done away in eternal oblivion, before that *JESUS* be forgotten. As long as memory can hold a place in our poor mind, let the name of *JESUS*, never, never be worn out. Let us, gracious LORD, at thy board, and table, continually celebrate, in the memorials of bread and wine, thy blessed memory. And, when at the last, the heart strings of these dying bodies give way, still may the name and blessedness of *JESUS* remain, and the last words of our trembling lips be in concord with the first of our eternal song; to *JESUS*, the LAMB slain, as the Redeemer of his people, his beloved city, be praise, love, and thanksgiving for evermore.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The Preacher is still prosecuting his sermon through this Chapter; but folding up many important sayings within short sentences.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the whole of this Chapter leads to very many important reflections, and if followed up to the source from whence all blessings flow, and in which all terminate; we shall find that the Preacher, from the emptiness of creatures, is here setting forth the fulness of the Creator; and in the unsatisfying nature of everything out of CHRIST, is proclaiming the necessity of CHRIST to give real comfort to the soul. Doth he say that flies of death are in the richest ointments of creature-making! And what is this, but to show that all fragrancy is in *JESUS*? Doth he assert that our comforts, and our wisdom, are like the heart of the fool, at the left side? And what doth this imply, but that in *JESUS* only right-handed blessings are found! Till we find CHRIST, who alone can cause us to inherit substance, it matters not what else, beside we inherit, for all alike are hollow and unsubstantial. Precious LORD *JESUS*! cause our souls thus to inherit thee, for like a golden chain, if thus united to

thee, in thee we shall inherit all things. So saith thine Apostle, and the experience of thy people in all ages confirm it. *All are ours, whether life or death; or things present, or things to come; all are ours, if we are CHRIST'S, for CHRIST'S is GOD'S.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The Preacher, now drawing, nigh to the close of his sermon; is here laying down certain rules for the regulation of the conduct, which under grace, may tend to lessen human vanity, and soften the evils of life.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over the perusal of this very interesting Chapter. And while thou art studious to obey the wise man's precept, and to cast thy bread upon the waters, let thine eye, like the prophet's upon the watch tower, be upon the lookout for the LORD'S direction, and the LORD'S blessing upon thy labors. But, my soul, what are the portions which thou canst give to seven, or to eight! Alas! what hast thou which thou didst not receive? Surely it is all the LORD'S, and of his own must thou give him. Oh! how blessed to be the LORD'S almoner, when the LORD condescends thus to employ his creatures.

And, my soul! while like the husbandman in the morning, thou sowest thy seed, and in the evening withholdest not thine hand; look to it, that the seed sown is pure and uncorrupt, and that he that ministereth seed to the sower, may both minister bread for thine own food, and multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of righteousness. Blessed *JESUS*! thou art the Almighty Sower, that hath both produced, and sown the good seed in every age of thy Church. Oh! do thou thyself dwell in the hearts of thy people. Let no tares spring up to choak the good seed. But do thou water it with the dew of heaven from above, and let the sunshine with all its loveliness and fruitfulness upon it, that it may bring forth a glorious harvest, some an hundred fold, some sixtyfold, some thirty-fold.

My aged fathers! do not forget what the wise man here saith: *If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.* Oh! for grace, when walking upon the confines of the eternal shore, to have done with this world, and all its dying concerns. Oh! for grace to see, like the Patriarch, the evil days of our pilgrimage, and like him to be waiting for dismissal, from all the objects around, that the hoary saint may gather up his feet into the bed, and from long acquaintance with a covenant GOD in CHRIST, as he had, the dying triumph may be, *I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!* And you no less, young men! see that your rejoicing is in *JESUS*. Oh! for grace to give the strength of your days to CHRIST, that in the weakness of years, *JESUS* may be the support; and *when both heart and strength shall fail, JESUS may be the strength of your heart and your portion forever.* Amen.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Preacher finisheth his discourse, and a beautiful close he makes of it, running up all into the love and fear of GOD, as the great object of man's creation, and the ultimate end of man.

REFLECTIONS

READER! may we not, after the perusal of this Chapter, and indeed from the whole of the Preacher's sermon, as contained in this book of the Ecclesiastes, take up both the wise man's direction to the young, and the Psalmist's direction to the old, and in his form or words, cry out and say, *Both young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the LORD; for his name only is excellent, and his glory above the earth and heaven.* This, indeed, is the conclusion of the whole matter, and this is the whole of man!

See; my soul, from the perusal of Solomon's whole discourse, and as the sum and close of Solomon's whole experience, the emptiness and vanity of all besides. *I have seen (with he) all the works that are done under the sun; and behold all is vanity and*

vexation of spirit. And wilt thou not, my soul, learn from so notable a proof, how utterly insufficient all earthly things must be to give comfort? Shall Solomon complain at the head of a kingdom, that emptiness, vanity, and disappointment attended all; and wilt thou expect a different issue from earthly attainments? Say! Canst thou acquire possessions like his or, even if acquired, couldst thou be sure to keep them? or if keeping, would a different close mark thine from Solomon's?

Turn, my soul, turn from all these things to *JESUS*. His grace, his love, his good will, his favor, which is better than life itself, will give the finishing enjoyment to every other blessing, or make up the want of it, if denied thee. It is *JESUS* which must put a sweetness and a relish into all the comforts which are found, in creatures of any kind. And if *JESUS* be not in it, there can be no sweetness in it at all. Come, then, thou dear LORD, come and bless the young man in his youth, and the old man in his grey years. And then, when *the grasshopper shall be a burden*, and even *desire* of all nature's enjoyments shall fail; thou wilt be the strength of the heart, and the portion to satisfy forever. Oh! grant LORD, both to him that writes, and him that reads, that ere *the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bow be broken; the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto GOD that gave it; JESUS* may be the all in all to our souls, the conclusion of the whole matter, and the sum and substance of all our joy. May we have the full interest of *JESUS*, and all that is his, by faith in this life, and in the life to come, then we shall be satisfied with the everlasting enjoyment of him by sight, *when we awake up after his likeness.* Amen.

SONG OF SOLOMON

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

I ENTER upon my Commentary in this part of the sacred writings with more than ordinary diffidence, from a consciousness how very sublime and mysterious this book of GOD is in itself, and with what veneration it ought to be approached. And both at the door, and before that I venture to step over the threshold of perusal, I would not only put off the shoe of preparation but bend the knee of prayer, that the divine light may go before me, and guide me through every apartment of the sacred inclosure. Blessed SPIRIT of all truth, (I would say both for myself and reader) thou *who searchest all things, yea the deep things of GOD; vouchsafe to take of the things of JESUS here written, and show unto us.*

And here, at the first opening, of this precious book of GOD I detain the Reader to remark, both the authority of the author of it, and the proofs it brings with it of its divine authenticity.

As to the first of these in respect to the author of it, there can be no question but that *Solomon*, whose name it bears, wrote it under the immediate inspiration of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And the period of the Church in which it was written, must of course carry with it a correspondence to the era in which Solomon lived, namely, somewhat about a thousand years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. I stay not to enquire whether it was written in the early or later days of Solomon's life, because in a commentary of this kind it would be leading the Reader's mind unnecessarily away from the main object of concern. As it is placed last among the writings of Solomon very probably it was written last. But it may

not be improper in this place to observe, as a guard against, any unfavorable impressions to be formed in the mind of the Reader to the book itself, that the sad infirmities which marked the conduct of Solomon in his old age, have nothing to do by way of lessening the blessedness of those writings. It is no doubt a very painful consideration with every faithful heart, and in itself enough to humble to the dust the pride of our nature in its highest attainments, when we behold a man so eminently blessed in grace and wisdom, so sadly falling under the power of temptation. But when we have made the suitable improvements, which through the SPIRIT'S teaching such an example is designed to induce, let it be considered that the frailty of the man ought not to have the smallest influence in lessening the importance of his ministry. It hath pleased the great head of his Church to make use of poor and sometimes unworthy instruments, for the accomplishing of the sacred purposes of his will. And the holiness of his grace is neither lessened nor polluted, though it flows to us through unholy channels. The fall of Solomon makes no more discord in the melody of this sweet song on the ear, than the fall of Peter lessens the blessed truths given to us in his divine epistles in the heart. Nay, as both carry such decisive marks with them of the *imprimatur* of GOD the HOLY GHOST; while we read and recollect the unworthiness of the servant, doth not the thought minister yet more powerfully to bring home, and endear to us the infinite preciousness of the master.

As to the *second* consideration, of the proof the Song of Solomon brings with it of its divine authenticity; though there are several at hand which might be produced to establish the fact, yet *to the poor man*, (and I beg under whatever form this Commentary may hereafter appear it may never be forgotten that it was undertaken, and hath been uniformly carried on with an eye to the poor man's special service), there is one evidence which this little volume eminently possesseth and which in my humble judgment becomes so decisive and satisfactory as to supersede the necessity of every other; and that is, the inward testimony it carries with it to the heart of the believer, that these are the great truths of GOD. For surely it is impossible to conceive that the LORD should have blessed as he hath done this sacred part of the divine writings in every age of the Church, and made it the sweet savor of grace to thousands, if it had not been the work of his own holy inspiration. Nothing but the most inveterate prejudice could harbour such a thought! When, therefore, the soul of an enlightened believer, in the perusal of this precious book of GOD,

is made to feel its divine power, finds his heart warmed and animated in the contemplation of its divine truths, and is led into a participation of the many gracious impressions which the Church enjoyed in the view of her beloved; such evidences become the fullest proof of its heavenly authority, and show that it is what an Apostle calls, *The engrafted word which is able to save the soul.*

Reader! should it be your happy lot, while going over the Song of Solomon, to trace in your own experience similar effects to what the Church is here said to have experienced—should you discover that what she saith of *JESUS*, you can and do say; that what she acknowledgeth of her unworthiness you feel: her desires are your desires; her longings are the very same breathings as your soul is panting after; and the gracious answers of *JESUS* to her cries, are the very refreshments you covet above all that the world holds dear: will you not, from such inwrought effects upon your heart, in such a correspondence of the Church's experience to your own, accept this evidence as the strongest of all evidences, that the Song of Solomon's is, indeed, the word and work of GOD: and like the man, which the Apostle Paul speaks of upon another occasion, you will feel disposed to do as he did, when *from the secrets of your heart being thus made manifest, you will fall down upon your knees and worship GOD, and confess that GOD is in this word of a truth.*

But while I lay so much stress upon this evidence, and which becomes the more valuable to the humble believer, because it is always near at hand, and easy to be referred to; I do not mean to pass over in silence the other testimonies the Song of Solomon brings with it of its divine authenticity.

The Jews, to whom, as is well known, were committed *the Oracles of GOD*, and as such, must be supposed to have been competent judges upon this subject, have always been forward in acknowledging, that the Song of Solomon formed a part of the sacred canon of scripture: indeed, their testimony is, if possible, more convincing, in consequence of their high veneration for it, than Christians: for in their *Misnah*, they distinguish this book with a more exalted title than any other of the sacred writings, calling it *the holy of holies*. And as a further confirmation it is remarkable, that they prohibited the reading of it to everyone under *thirty years* of age; to intimate thereby also, that a ripeness of years and judgment, was needful for a proper apprehension of the glorious truths which were veiled under the mere letter of the word. I cannot help wishing

that an equal veneration had been observed for this blessed book of Solomon, by some who called themselves Christians. For then, under grace, it would have tended to check the loose imagination of carnal readers, who from being led away by the want of chastity in their own thoughts, have put improper constructions upon what the HOLY GHOST hath said in figure and metaphor, concerning some of the most precious things which belong to salvation.

To the testimony of GOD's ancient people, the Jews, in confirmation of the divine authenticity of Solomon's Song, might be added the very many proofs of a sacred nature, the book itself carries with it in its own bosom. For surely the subject of which it treats; the dignity, and no less simplicity of the stile in which it is written, and the correspondence it bears, in point of doctrine, with the whole of the bible, all tend to stamp its authority; and, indeed, it would be little less than blasphemy, the very title it bears, as *the Song of Songs*, intimating thereby a superiority to the other songs in the word of GOD, (and there are several, it is well known, of divine inspiration) if it could for a moment be supposed to have a doubt whether the work were of GOD or not.

Of the book itself, I shall not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any remarks, by way of recommending it to his perusal in these *general observations*. The beauties of the incomparable Song, the loveliness and sweetness of it, and the many blessed things contained in it through every part, will meet the Reader's eye as he passeth over the several chapters; and it would be only protracting his pleasure, to keep him for a moment from the work itself by any preliminary observations of mine on these things. The principal object which is held forth through the whole, (indeed it is the prominent feature,) is the love of *JESUS* to his church. This will meet the Reader more or less in every verse. And I hope as this love of *JESUS* is sweetly represented as awakening, and calling forth into exercise the love of the Church to *JESUS*, that the Reader, under the SPIRIT'S influence, will enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of both these divine principles, and know in himself, and in his own feelings; the truth of what the Apostle saith, *We love him because he first loved us*. And while the fire is thus kindled from the live coal taken by the HOLY GHOST from the sacred Altar, as the Reader passeth through the sacred part of the holy word, he will be

constrained to cry out with David; *How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey unto my month!*

It may be proper in this place to admonish the Reader of what he hath to meet with in this part of the sacred canon, as well as the plan the inspired writer hath adopted in the execution of it. The love of *JESUS* to his Church is the subject more or less of the whole; and this discourse is set forth in the type of Solomon and his bride, under the similitude of the marriage state. It is too well known to need being much insisted upon, that parable and metaphor were the general mode of conveying instruction among the Eastern nations. In the sacred volume this is so very common, that the most ordinary Reader cannot but have noticed it. From the first moment of the LORD'S forming his Church into a distinct people from the nations around, in gracious condescension he was pleased to assume the endearing character of their Husband. This tender appellation is the great outline observed through the whole of Solomon's Song. And the Reader will do well, while he keeps in view the LORD'S love to his Church, under this title, to recollect also that the HOLY GHOST closeth the scripture in the book of the Revelation, with holding forth the same token of *JESUS'S* affection to his redeemed, in calling the Church the Bride, the LAMB's wife. But in deed, and in truth, in this point of view, the subject ceases to be figure or parable, for it is a blessed reality. The Church of *JESUS* is truly his body; and his people, in every individual, *are members of his flesh, and of his bones.*

I have but one thing more to add to these general observations, before that I take the Reader by the hand to lead him to the perusal of this divine Song; and that is, to beg that he will seek grace from on high, not only to qualify him for the right understanding of it, but also to preserve him from misapprehension and offence, at certain expressions here and there to be met with in the book; which, to a carnal mind, may seem to savor of indelicacy, but to a spiritual taste have no such tendency. If the Reader will himself make application of what is frequently spoken of the *Person*, to what is as frequently intended of the *dress*; great part of the objection will be done away. He may with great safety conclude, that it is the imperfection of language, and which always suffers by translation, which hath given rise, for the most part, to what in our English copies appears exceptionable. And if the translation could have conveyed precisely the images which the original meant, no such ideas would have been created. But while I say this, I beg that I may not be misunderstood.

The translation of the bible, take it altogether in our mother tongue, though here and there we find defects, is in my poor esteem so great, so truly great and invaluable a blessing, that I class it among the first mercies which the LORD hath bestowed upon us as a nation. Never can it be too highly prized—never can we sufficiently bless the LORD for it: neither can the instruments, by which the LORD accomplished it, be too highly honoured.

Reader! may the LORD command *the north wind and the south wind to blow upon this part of his sacred garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*, while you and I go over it. And let us implore our Beloved, *to come into his garden, and eat of his own pleasant fruits*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with giving the title of the book. The Church then takes up the subject with expressing her love to CHRIST, and desiring fresh manifestations of his affection to her. She compares his love to the fragrancy of the richest ointment. She prays to be drawn by him, and professeth her readiness to run after him. She describes her blackness as in herself, and comeliness as in him: complains of the unkindness of her relations; and desires to know where JESUS feeds his flock, longing to be in his and his people's company. In return to these vehement desires of the church, JESUS now takes up the subject, and distinguishing her by the title of the fairest among women, directs her in her enquiry where to find him and his fold. JESUS then enlargeth upon her beauty, and gives her many sweet and precious promises. The church, in return, commends the loveliness of JESUS, and the chapter concludes in mutual congratulations.

REFLECTION

READER! what sayest thou now thou hast gone over the first chapter of this incomparable hymn? Is it to thee what the title terms it, The Song of Songs? And is it of thy Solomon, thy JESUS? If so,

shall we not join in singing it here upon earth, until we come to the everlasting hallelujahs of heaven? Yes! surely I would say for you, and for myself, Let *JESUS* kiss us with the kisses of mouth, for grace is poured into his lips, and he will communicate life, and grace, and pardon, and salvation unto our souls. And oh! that you and I may kiss the SON, for his love is indeed better than wine. Never was it known, that the highest cordial of wine recovered the dead; but thy love, blessed *JESUS*, can, and will recover sinners, that are dead in trespasses and sins: and surely thou, dearest LORD, as the virgins found, so have we known, that thy name surpasseth, in fragrancy and in odour, the richest ointment. Every name of thine is dear to a poor sinner: neither can a poor exercised soul of thine be so sadly circumstanced, but that thou hast a name suited for his case; and thy name, through faith in thy name, is the universal relief for all the maladies of thy people. Draw me then, thou dear Redeemer, with the cords of a man, with the bands of love, and every heart will run after thee. Surely the LORD the King hath drawn me into the chambers of his love, of his grace, his everlasting covenant, Oh! LORD, I will remember thee; I will be glad in thee; I will hail thee under all thine endearing characters, offices, and relations for thou art the LORD our righteousness.

And now let me tell the daughters of Jerusalem, and all that love our LORD *JESUS CHRIST* in sincerity and truth, of the grace, and mercy, and loveliness of my LORD. I am, indeed, in myself a poor, black, fallen son of Adam, but *JESUS* hath made me comely in his comeliness, and adopted me into his family; so that I, that in myself merited hell, am made in him an heir of heaven. Oh! do not look upon me, then, as I once was, but as I now am. Behold me in *CHRIST*, and be not angry with me.

But, LORD, I turn to thee. Tell me where thou feedest thy sheep here in this wilderness. I know, LORD, that thou art the LAMB in the midst of the throne, feeding the church above: but I know also that thou art not less attentive to the humblest and poorest of thy family here below. Feed me, LORD, a poor weather-beaten lamb of thy flock, and bring me home at length to thine everlasting fold.

Reader! mark what *JESUS* hath directed the church in this place: If we are at a loss any time to know where *JESUS* feeds his flock like a shepherd, let us seek out for a faithful, pure, and gospel ministry. Here let us sit under the word, and be very diligent in the use of

means and ordinances. Here let the kids, that is, our little ones also, the children of our houses and families, be brought beside the Great Shepherd's tents in the congregations of the faithful, and the LORD will bless and own his word to his people.

And, Reader! let us, with humble reverence, look up, and implore the fulfillment of this blessed promise of the FATHER, SON; and HOLY GHOST; that, from their joint love, and joint agency, we may have indeed borders of gold, with studs of silver. Hail! holy, undivided; THREE IN ONE, the LORD JEHOVAH! do thou regenerate our souls, and form them anew in CHRIST *JESUS*. Creating work, and renewing work, and refreshing work; all, all is thine. LORD! carry on and complete thy work, unto the day of thy coming.

Be thou then, thou blessed *JESUS*, all and everything our souls can possibly need or require: and while thou sittest at thy table, and art handing to my soul thy bread in secret, my soul will go out in desires after thee, as the fragrant smell of the spikenard; for surely thou art to me more refreshing than myrrh—more healing than camphire. Thou art more fair than the morning, more lovely than the sun rising, even in a morning without clouds. May my soul live to thee, walk with thee, rejoice in thee; and be thou my portion, and mine everlasting rest, in time, and to all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The subject which the first chapter contained is the same as is continueth through this: indeed there is none other through the whole book of the Song, the mutual love of CHRIST, and his church. JESUS commends his spouse, and the spouse commends her Beloved.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD *JESUS*, while reading this chapter of thy love, do thou, I beseech thee, gracious LORD, lead out my heart, and the heart of every Reader of it on whom thy grace hath shined, to behold thy loveliness in all the several parts of it, which so beautifully holds thee forth to thy church. Methinks I hear my beloved say as to the

church of old I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the vallies. To which my soul replies, Yes! thou dear LORD! thou art indeed in thy bloody vesture, and thy spotless humanity, red as the rose, and whiter than the lily. And oh! how infinitely precious in both, beholding thee as I do through these similitudes in thy blood and righteousness, as the sure tokens of thy great redemption. And if thy church, LORD, is as the lily among thorns, is it not from thee that she derives all her beauty while living in the midst of a sinful world, the children of whom by nature in their best performances, *are but as a briar, and the most upright as thorn hedge*. But thou, LORD, art the chiefest among ten thousand sons, as the apple-tree transcends the trees of the forest. And oh! for grace, dear LORD, like the dumb, to sit down under thy shadow with increasing rapture and delight, and to eat freely and fully of all the precious fruits of thy great salvation. Do thou, blessed SPIRIT, by thy sweet influences both provide the food and give the appetite, and cause me to enjoy all the good things in the everlasting covenant of GOD my FATHER, purchased by the blood of *JESUS*, and brought home to my soul by thy divine power. And, as for thy banqueting house, my rich bountiful LORD, I know that thou wilt bring me there, and spread thy banner of love over me there. *I do* know it, LORD, that thou wilt do this for me, and a thousand other blessed things of thy love; for never should I have known thee or thy house, much less delighted in it, or desired to have been brought into it, unless thou hadst first shown it to me, and opened for me a new and living way in thy blood. Reader! I break off for a moment from addressing my LORD, to ask you whether such views, and such desires of CHRIST are in *your* heart also?

But, LORD, I turn to thee again, and in the language of the church, would beg of thee to stay me with flaggons, and comfort me with apples, even the enjoyment of all thy rich covenant-promises, manifestations, and the unceasing communion of thyself to my soul; for without thee I am sick and sorrowful. And, LORD, the more thou givest, the more I need; the more of thee I know, the more I desire to know; for in thee alone I find comfort. Embrace my soul, O LORD, and let all my stay and support be in thee!

Ye daughters of Jerusalem! I mean all ye that love my LORD, (for one church is my beloved's and his Jerusalem, which is above, is the mother of us all); I charge you as I charge myself, let nothing be said or done to wound or disturb our LORD. Let us seek together his

grace, his SPIRIT, his manifestations; and by everything that is interesting, as the roes or hinds of the field, let us be very cautious of grieving his HOLY SPIRIT. Hark! do you not hear JESUS speak? Yes! it is his well-known voice; and he cometh to us notwithstanding all our sins, like mountains and hills, which might obstruct, for he is, and he will be JESUS. He looketh in upon us through the windows of ordinances, and, ere long, when this wall of our mortality is taken down, we shall see him as he is, and dwell with him forever!

But I leave the church to listen to my LORD, inviting me to come forth to him in this spring-season of grace. Yea, LORD, I will rise, for the voice of the HOLY GHOST, like the voice of the turtle after the winter, of life, is heard in mine heart. Yea, I would follow thee whithersoever thou goest; and, as like the dove, thou hast sheltered me, and hidden me in the clefts of thy pierced side, and desirest to hear my voice and behold my countenance, thou shalt hear, LORD, my voice betimes in the morning; early will I direct my prayer unto thee, and I will look up: and do thou, LORD, take away the foxes of the desert; yea, even both the greater and the lesser hindrances to my soul, which, in the tender buildings of grace by thy bringing forth in me, my sins and corruptions joined with the temptations of sin, too often nip, and would destroy. Haste, LORD, to me, and to my rescue, for I am thine, and thou art mine. Make all intervening shadows flee away, and be thou to my poor soul *as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The church is here in a season of sharp exercises: seeking, but not immediately finding her LORD. She relates the conflicts she sustained in her pursuit and enquiry after JESUS. Having at length, found him, she rejoices in the discovery. The chapter closeth with an account of the King's glory.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! frequently in silent meditation run over the several blessed and gracious instructions which arise out of this delightful chapter, and enquire what correspondence thou canst find between CHRIST's church and thy experience in the love she manifested here to her LORD. Hast thou known what it is by night on thy bed to seek JESUS? Canst thou not say, *With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within me have I sought thee early.* It is blessed sometimes to be exercised with disappointments in order to endear the mercy, and to increase the value of it. The poor woman of Canaan would not have afforded so illustrious an instance of faith had the LORD JESUS given her an immediate answer to the first cry of her soul: and though JESUS is very frequently found of them that seek him not, and sometimes surprizeth his people with his goodness, yet, there shall be silence at the throne of grace again and again, when a child of GOD is going there with earnest importunity. But, as in the case of the church, when the LORD at length overwhelmed her with his visit of love, whenever the Redeemer comes, he comes with such a fulness of love, grace, and goodness, that the soul then holds him fast by faith, and dreads to let him go, lest darkness again should enter in upon the soul. And, Reader, will you allow me to ask, or will you put the very interesting enquiry yourself to your own heart; Are you coming up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, and perfumed with the sweet incense of JESUS's merits and righteousness? Have you found this life what it really is, and is graciously intended to be, to all the LORD's family, a thorny, dark, and intricate path? Have you met with fiery, flying serpents, and scorpions? A land of drought and barrenness, through which the faithful are sure to meet, with persecution, and where none of them can find rest, or wish to make it their home? If so, is JESUS the merchant selling goodly pearls precious to you? Do you know, do you prize his myrrh and frankincense, the sufferings of his cross, the merits of his blood, and all the blessed graces of his HOLY SPIRIT? This is to be coming up out of the wilderness, leaning as the church did upon her beloved. Oh! precious JESUS, I would say both for myself and Reader, give to us to behold thee in thy chariot, and on thy bed of salvation, which is all thine own, and nothing of our dross mixed with it. Cause us to lie down upon this everlasting

bottom, which is paved with love. And while, LORD, thou art sending forth thy ministering servants, as ministering to them who are the heirs of salvation; oh! do thou come and visit us thyself, and make all thy glory to pass before us. Yes! thou dear LORD! thou art the king in Zion, the sovereign in every heart, of thy church and people. Here, LORD, upon earth would we hail thee our lawful right monarch, both by purchase and by conquest; and in heaven, we hope ere long to join that happy multitude, who are casting their crowns at thy footstool, and saying with a loud voice; *Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have here the LORD JESUS commending the beauties and graces of his Church. He invites her to a more close and Intimate communion with him, and dwells again somewhat more fully upon her loveliness. The church in return, as one overcome with the goodness of his love, very humbly ascribes all she hath to him, as the author and giver of it: and prays that she may be made meet for the presence and enjoyment of her LORD.

REFLECTIONS

AND doth my LORD indeed call me his fair one, his love, his sister, his spouse? Oh! how shall my soul contain itself, in the contemplation of such peerless grace amidst my conscious undeservings. Surely, blessed JESUS, whatever I am that can at all endear a poor sinner to my LORD, all I have, and all I am, and all I hope to have, the whole is in thee and from thee. Well may I take up the language of one of old, and say, *By the grace of GOD I am what I am.* And oh! LORD let it be said also as of him, so of me, that *the grace bestowed upon me was not in vain.*

And doth JESUS call me to go with him from Lebanon, and escape the lion's den, and the mountains of leopards? Yes, LORD JESUS, I would pray for grace to follow thee, whithersoever thou goest. Nothing shall separate my soul from the love of CHRIST. For

thou hast bought me, redeemed me, and with a price no less dear than thine own most precious blood: therefore, LORD, I am thine by every endearment, and by every tie. Oh! LORD, give me grace here also, that as I am not my own, but bought with a price, *I may glorify thee both in my body and in my spirit which are thine.*

But, precious LORD *JESUS*, as without thee I can do nothing; I pray thee be to me, *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and as streams from Lebanon.* Come, HOLY GHOST, and be to me as the quickening source in leading to JESUS, and taking from JESUS, and showing everything to me in JESUS. And do thou, LORD, daily maintain, and support, and carry on, the life thy mercy first gave me in JESUS. Thou, LORD, art the only spiritual efficient agent in CHRIST'S garden the Church, which by breathing thy gracious influences upon my heart, can prepare that poor heart for the visits of my LORD to his servant. I would, therefore, gracious SPIRIT of all truth, intreat thy mercy upon my poor soul, that by thy grace I may invite my LORD and be prepared for my LORD, that he may daily *come into his garden:* and my soul be so quickened to receive him, that *he may eat of his pleasant fruits.* Yea, LORD! do thou knock at the door of my heart, and open it thyself; and let my LORD come in, and *let me sup with him and he with me.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

There is an immediate connection between the first verse of this Chapter; and the last of the preceding: for no sooner hath the church invited her LORD to come into his garden, than he declares himself come. The church professeth herself to be in a sleepy state, but awakened by JESUS, she breaks out into a commendation of her LORD, which runs through the whole chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this beautiful chapter, until we have once more looked up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, and entreated him to show us our interest in what is here said of JESUS, and how far we can adopt a similar language concerning him. And first, let us never

overlook the readiness of *JESUS* to comply with the wishes of his people in coming at their call. No sooner did the church invite her beloved to come into his garden, but we find *CHRIST* is come. And let us remark further, how gracious the *LORD* is in gathering his spices; his myrrh, and milk, and honey. Reader! be assured from hence, that every prayer of his people *JESUS* regards. Every sigh they utter comes up before him. As one of old said, so all may be assured: *He putteth our tears into his bottle all these things are noted in his book.* And as *JESUS* comes in the midst of his churches and people to gather, so doth he give unto them largely to enjoy. His language is, *Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!*

Reader! are you acquainted with that state, of which the church in this part of the Song so greatly complains? Dost thou, by reason of a body of sin and death which thou carriest about with thee, groan, being burthened? Dost thou feel a heaviness not unlike the sorrow of soul which the disciples felt in the garden, and frequently dost thou feel that sad indisposition which disqualifies the soul for the sweet enjoyment of *JESUS*? And when at times under this dreadful deadness of affliction, thou hearest the voice of *JESUS* in ordinances, its providences; by rebukes, by chastisements; oh! what a decisive proof is this, in every heart that feels it, of the impossibility of any natural goodness in a creature, who is the subject of such infirmities? Precious *JESUS*! do thou by me, do thou by the Reader, and by every child of thine, follow up thy gracious calls, by opening the door of our hearts; and do thou come in, *LORD*, and revive thy work with the droppings of thy grace, and the fragrantcy of thy *SPIRIT*'s influences. And in those seasons, do not withdraw, thou dear *LORD*, neither be thou to us as the way-faring man that turneth in to tarry but for a night. Neither let thy servants, the watchmen of thy, city, wound us; but oh! let them point our souls to thee, and lead us to *JESUS* that we may tell our *LORD* we are sick, waiting for the renewed views of his pardoning grace, and mercy, that our souls may *revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.*

Are there any that enquire after my beloved? Do you desire to know, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, who *JESUS* is; what, he is; what he hath wrought; what he is doing, and can, and will do; and wherefore it is that he is my beloved, my only beloved, and why is it that I am so truly anxious for his love? Oh! for grace and power to

tell you of his loveliness. Everything in CHRIST is precious. He is precious in his Person. Every feature of him is lovely. He is precious in his offices, precious in his character, precious in his relations; yea, there is nothing in him but what is precious; for *he is altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand*. And what would be alarming and distressing in others, becomes lovely in him. His cross and reproaches for his sake, how trying and painful soever to flesh and blood, are on his account, not only endurable, but productive of holy joy. And JESUS is this in all that belongs to him, and in all circumstances connected with him, for as he is in himself the first fair, the first beautiful; the first lovely; so he communicates loveliness to all that are united to him; neither is there anything lovely or amiable but what is derived from him. Do you enquire, then, what there is in my beloved, more than in another beloved I answer; All these things and a thousand more. And will you not love him with me, and delight in him also; oh that he that is my beloved, may be your beloved; and that you may at length say with me, *This is my friend, and this is my beloved, O ye daughters of Jerusalem*.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The church appears, in the opening of this Chapter, to have called forth the serious enquiry of others to seek JESUS with her. And she seems delighted to give information concerning him. CHRIST then takes up the discourse, and sets forth the loveliness of his church, and his delight in her.

REFLECTIONS

Here Reader, let us pause; and before we close the chapter, take into one view, some at least of the many blessed things contained in it for our instruction. Are we earnest in our enquiries for *JESUS*? Do we now seek after him from a knowledge of him, and a conviction of our need of him, and our utter ruin without him? Then let us learn from hence, where we are to seek CHRIST, and the earnestness with which we should enquire after him. There is a generation that seek the LORD, and of whom he saith, he will not be sought in vain. And

very blessed it is to have this assurance from the LORD himself; while in a day of much heresy the cry is, *Lo! here is CHRIST, or lo, he is there!* Reader! let us not be discouraged with these things. A real love for CHRIST, and the going forth of real desires after CHRIST; both are of *JESUS'S* own giving: and the grace he gives, he will perfect. And if, as the church speaks, *JESUS* is gone down into his garden, his church; let us in ordinances, and in all the several means of grace there, seek him, where his name is as ointment poured forth, and where his glory and his salvation are the chief and only object regarded; and we shall find that, ere we are aware, our souls will be made like the chariot of Amminadib. And oh for grace, like the church, to arrive at that blessedness of assurance founded in the FATHER's love, the Redeemer's grace, and the SPIRIT's fellowship, that each may say for himself as the church: *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*

Precious *JESUS!* is thy church indeed lovely and beautiful as *Tirzah?* is she comely as *Jerusalem;* and in thy strength terrible as *an army with banners?* Surely then, blessed LORD, the whole is derived from thee! What grace, what endowment, what ornament can our poor polluted nature have but in, and from thee. In thy light, LORD, we shalt see light; and in thy strength we are strong: but without thee we are nothing. Cause thy redeemed to come up *as a flock of sheep from the washing, and let there be not one barren among them.*

I praise thee, my blessed LORD and Saviour, for this account of thy church, that she is but one and undefiled; and the choice one of her that bare her; and oh! for grace to bear about with me this precious mark of unity. One, LORD, with thee, and one, with thy people: one faith, one hope, one baptism; and all thy redeemed shall be found in one spirit, even as *we are called in one hope of our calling.* And although, thou glorious Head of thy body the church, all thy redeemed here below are like the *Shulamite*, always in the conflict as of two armies; yet already in thy strength we have overcome. *Thanks be to GOD who giveth us the victory, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST!* And therefore now we would begin the Song, until in the full assembly of the church above we come to sing with a louder, fuller, sweeter strain: *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and*

priests unto GOD and his FATHER, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Here is the same subject prosecuted through the greater part of this chapter as the former, namely, the beauty of the church as in the eyes of her Husband. Towards the close of it, the church humbly professeth her hope and faith in JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED and all-lovely LORD *JESUS*! is it possible that thy church can be so fair in thine eyes, as that her very feet are beautiful to her LORD? Surely, LORD, it is thou that must have made her so; for when thou camest from heaven to seek and save thy people, thou didst find the whole nature of man sunk and degraded by sin and uncleanness. But now thou hast washed thy church in thy blood and adorned her with thy spotless garment of righteousness, she is indeed *the king's daughter, all glorious within*. And seeing then, that it is in thee, and by thee, and from thee, that all the beauties and loveliness of thy church are derived; methinks I would hold thee in the galleries of thy grace, and plead and wrestle with my GOD and Saviour, with an earnestness not to be resisted by my LORD; but like the FATHER of the seed of Jacob, tell thee, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*.

And doth my LORD regard the supplication of his poor petitioner? Doth *JESUS* indeed say to me, as to the church of old, that he will go up to the palm-tree, and that he will take hold of the boughs thereof? Doth *JESUS* say, that he will give me the best wine, that shall go down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak. Oh! thou, gracious condescending LORD! if thou wilt thus pour out of the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, thy love will be better to me than wine, for by it my poor dead soul, under all her dying circumstances, will revive; and I shall go forth and speak of thy love, thy truth and righteousness. While *JESUS* is with me and blessing me, I shall feel such an enlargement of heart, that my mouth

will spread abroad thy name, and make mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. And surely, LORD, I may hope this, I may look for these sweet visits of thy love, for thou hast taken me into the nearest covenant-connections with thee, for I am thine, and thy desire is towards me. Yes! Precious, precious LORD! thy desire hath been towards thy people from everlasting. And what it was *from* everlasting so must it be *to* everlasting. Thou hast all along desired the salvation of all the FATHER hath given thee. Thou hast waited to be gracious. Thou hast longed for the hour of redemption appointed for every individual soul for whom thou hast died. Thou art now continually desiring to manifest thyself to them. And, LORD, I am fully persuaded that the desire of thy soul will not be fully satisfied, until thou hast brought all, and every one of them unto thyself in glory. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of that day, when thou shalt have brought home thy whole church, that where thou art, there they shall be also.

Come, LORD, then I beseech thee, for thou art my beloved, come with me into the fields of thy holy word, and let us lodge together in the villages of the saints, and get up to the vineyards of thy churches; for *the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah is thy pleasant plant*. All must flourish in thee, O LORD, which are branches in thee; both grapes and pomegranates, young believers and old saints, will put forth their graces, when excited by thy quickening and reviving influence. There, LORD, doth my soul desire to tell thee how exceedingly I love thee, and how ardently I long after thee. O! that the *mandrakes* may be perfumed with the fragrancy of thy incense, and all the fruits of the SPIRIT may be in such lively exercise in my soul, that I may show forth thy praises, and manifest thy glory to all around.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

This beautiful Song is now drawing to a close, and the Church repeats her earnest desires for increasing knowledge of, and communion with her LORD. In the body of this Chapter, it is hard to

distinguish between the expressions of CHRIST and those of his Church, in which are contained the vehement pantings for fellowship. Towards the close, the Church puts up a request for the speedy call of the Gentiles, and finisheth the whole in earnest prayer for her Beloved to hasten his coming, and sum up his whole purposes of redemption in glory.

REFLECTIONS

READER! here let us take to ourselves the sweet instruction the Church teacheth, in the opening of this Chapter, and while she is so passionately looking to her LORD, as her Brother, and desiring to kiss him without being ashamed or despised; let you and I delight to call him our Brother also, and to be convinced, that as a Brother, he feels interested in all that concerns our salvation. And oh! for grace and faith in such full actings upon his glorious Person, that we may constrain him to come with us to the Church our Mother, and there cause him to drink of our spiced wine, even the blessed fruits and effects of his own grace in our hearts. Surely *JESUS* will embrace us, and take us into his arms; neither shall any disturb the hallowed season of enjoyment with him, while he is pleased to impart the manifestations of his love. And, Reader, shall we not be among the happy number, that are coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon our Beloved, hanging upon him, and feasting our souls with beholding his beauty, and living upon his fulness? Yea, surely *JESUS* will raise us up from under the apple tree of this world's good; will bring us out of all the deadness of nature, and the dead frames of the heart, and bring us into his Church, the Church of the living GOD.

Blessed LORD *JESUS*! dost thou really desire that such poor creatures as we are, should set thee as a seal upon our hearts, and upon our arm? And is thy love so ardent, and yet so condescending, that thou declarest it to be strong as death, and as jealous as the grave, and doth it burn towards us, as coals of fire? Oh LORD! for grace, ever to keep this desire of thine in remembrance, and to carry it about with us, whithersoever we go; delighting our souls with the very thought that our poor sealing to the love of *JESUS* is had in remembrance, and valued by our LORD. And do thou, oh thou most gracious and compassionate Redeemer, do thou set thy people as a signet on thy right hand, and wear our names, worthless as they are in themselves, but highly honourable as noticed and owned by thee,

wear them in thine heart, and bear them in, as the High Priest of thy people, before the throne, that as thine, we may be sealed in the presence of our GOD, unto the day of redemption. Oh! for a heart to have thee, and to live to thee, and to praise thee, that nothing could damp or abate thy love to thy people. Neither the agonies in the garden, nor the cross, neither the justice of divine wrath against sin, nor the powers of hell, no, nor the forsaking of thy disciples at thy death, nor the continued slights of all thy disciples through the whole of thy life, even until now, hath abated, or can abate thy love for one moment from thy redeemed; but, as thou hast from the beginning loved thy people, that are in the world, *thou lovest them unto the end*. Oh, that the LORD would add one mercy more to this unmerited mercy, and as no waters nor floods can quench thy love, so the LORD would not suffer any, or all, the torrents of sin and death to quench ours. LORD, we pray thee to keep our poor souls *in the love of GOD, and in the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST*.

Hail! holy LORD! FATHER, SON, and eternal SPIRIT! we bend before thy throne with thanksgivings and praise for all the wonders of redemption by *JESUS CHRIST*! Hasten, almighty GOD, the call of thy people. Let the *little sister* of CHRIST'S Church, even the Gentile Church, be filled with the breasts of consolation, and may our elder Brother, the Jewish Church, be called home by grace. Oh! for that glorious hour, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall be completed, and all Israel shall be saved. When the Deliverer shall arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob!* In the blessed hope of this assurance may thy people live from day to day, and may the cry of faith be continually going up for the accomplishment of it, from all the redeemed of the LORD. And while *JESUS* is calling upon his Church to hear his voice, and saying, *Surely I come quickly*, oh! may every faithful heart make sweet responses to their LORD, and send up the earnest prayer, *Even so! come, LORD JESUS. Amen.*

ISAIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE here enter on a part of the Word of GOD, very different in manner, from all that we have before gone over, through the sacred writings; though directed, in common with all the rest, to one and the same object; namely, *to make the Church of GOD wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS.*

The scripture prophecies form a most important part in the oracles of divine truth. *Prophecy*, we are told, *came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST.* And we may very safely conclude, that as they *spake* so they *wrote*. For he who gave a door of utterance to his servants, gave also the pen of a ready writer; that by both, they might minister in his church, and carry with them the witness of the SPIRIT, whose they were, and to whom they belonged in the service of the sanctuary.

In the Old Testament Dispensation, we find the spirit of prophecy, manifesting the divine will from the earliest period. In that memorable, and never to be forgotten promise, which folds in its bosom the whole of redemption, and which opened immediately on the fall, the first dawn of prophecy appeared. For when it was said, that *the seed of the women should bruise the serpent's head*; and this promise delivered by the LORD himself; every succeeding revelation tended to unfold, illustrate, and confirm this leading truth. And *as the SPIRIT of CHRIST* (which an apostle, in after ages, commissioned by the same almighty SPIRIT, tells us,) *was in the holy men of old*, directing their minds into all truth; so the great scope and tendency of all the prophecies they delivered was uniformly pointing to those two great branches of all revelation, namely, *the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow.* So that through all the Bible; this was the burden of prophecy. Everything delivered in a spirit of prophecy, pointed to JESUS. He, and he alone, was *the horn*

of salvation, raised up by JEHOVAH in the house of his servant David. And of him, and to him, all referred, which GOD spoke by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began.

Concerning the prophet *Isaiah* from whose inspired pen we derive the blessed prophecy now before us; the preface at the opening of the first chapter, give us all the information, that we are interested to know, in respect to him. His name is somewhat remarkable: *Isaiah* which signifies, *the salvation of the LORD*. And it becomes the more so, from the peculiar scope and tendency of his writings, being so much in the strain of the gospel, in reference to salvation. Hence some have not scrupled to call him *the Evangelical Prophet*; and his book of prophecy, *a fifth* gospel. I stay not to inquire as to the exact period of his ministry, having already done this in a general way, at the beginning of my Commentary, under the title of *The Order of the Books of Scripture*. To this therefore I refer; only just, observing, in addition to what is there set down, that it formed an interesting era in the church, being designed to prepare the minds of the people, for the approaching captivity of the church in Babylon, which took place somewhat about 200 years after.

I take occasion once more to beg the Reader, as I have uniformly done, on the entrance upon every book of the sacred Scripture; that he will in spirit, and in heart, join with my poor prayers at a mercy-seat, that both writer and Reader may be under His blessed teaching, who taught the prophet; that while we receive these divine oracles, as the word of GOD, and consider that *the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy*, we may all along keep in view Him, *to whom give all the prophets witness*; and never lose sight of the one grand object and design of all their, and every other servant of the LORD's commission; that *through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet opens his vision with complaints. Both Judah and Jerusalem are reproved for their sins, and affectionately entreated to return to the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

My soul, suffer not a portion of this blessed chapter to be overlooked, nor fancy the prophet's commission in the delivery of it to have ceased with the men of Judah and Jerusalem; Alas! every age and every period of the church, hath carried with it the same marks, more or less, of corruption, and to everyone, the expostulation of a gracious GOD is but too applicable: *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!*

Blessed SPIRIT of truth! Do thou, LORD, in grace, and love, and compassion, exercise thy kind office, with my poor soul, as the glorifier of CHRIST JESUS! By thy word, and by thy grace in my heart, give me to see, and feel, and know, that, like Israel, *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint*. Let me never seek justification by the deeds of the law, or presume to think myself clean in thy sight! Plead, LORD, in my heart the injured cause of my GOD, and of his CHRIST; and by such saving discoveries as thou art making to thy church, by thy blessed word, both of human corruption, and the necessity of divine cleansing; make me to know that in JESUS, and his great salvation alone, it can be accomplished; that my sins, *which are as scarlet, shall be white as snow; and though red as crimson, shall be as the wool*.

And oh! the praises due to a covenant GOD in CHRIST, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the rich discovery! Blessed, forever blessed be JEHOVAH, in having brought sinners acquainted with the cause of our ruin, and the only source of our relief in JESUS. LORD! help me to seize all the gracious improvements thy mercy hath designed, from the rich salvation by JESUS. And since by his precious blood and righteousness, thou hast opened a way for *purely purging away our dross, and taking away all our sin*; bring, LORD, the souls of thy redeemed, through this gracious process of thy mercy, and let thy people be again called *the city of righteousness, the faithful city!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter, strong, though distant views given of the coming of CHRIST. In the prospect, the LORD is set forth as both glorious and solemn to the people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! look at the beauty and loveliness of the gospel church! Behold how, ages before it was established, the prophet set it forth. And see now how exactly the church of JESUS comes up to his description. In its great and almighty Author and Founder, behold how it is, and hath been established. And though in the present day, Zion seemeth, and doth indeed languish: yet CHRIST hath never been, nor ever will be, without a seed serving him, and a church where his name is blessed.

Ought not we to go up to this mountain of the LORD's house? Should not everyone be truly anxious to say with the church of old: *Our feet shall stand in thy gate, O Jerusalem?* Precious LORD JESUS! Do thou incline our souls to seek thee, our hearts to love thee, and our best affections to be fixed upon thee. And will thou not, O LORD, *teach us of thy ways, and cause us to walk in thy paths?* Reader! let us not close this sweet chapter, before we have first learned from it, under divine teaching, rightly to value man's nothingness, and the LORD's excellency. Precious JESUS! I would lie low in the dust before thee: convinced that I am nothing, and that I can merit nothing, mine eyes shall be up unto thee, LORD, for all I need, and for all I can require, for grace in this life, and glory in that which is to come. LORD, I would cease from man: I would cease from self: I would cease from everything in which might be supposed confidence. I pray thee, dear LORD, to give me confidence in thee. Oh for grace to sing that song, and feel its saving power on my heart: *The LORD is my strength and my song, and thou art become my salvation!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The subject appears to be continued through this chapter, which engaged the prophet's attention in the former. The people are reproved their transgressions, and the consequent displeasure of the LORD spoken of.

REFLECTIONS

READER, while these humbling views of Israel's transgressions are before us, let us bring home the affecting subject to our own hearts, and we shall find cause to cry out with the apostle: *Are we better than they? No! in no wise; for the scripture hath concluded all under sin.* We all partake in one common fallen nature, which in no instance, either in Jew or Gentile is free from sin. Reader, it is profitable at the reading of every chapter, and upon every renewed view of the subject, to have this in remembrance. May GOD the HOLY GHOST, give us both to see and to know, and to have grace to make such improving reflections upon all we read concerning sin, that our own hearts may be affected in the consciousness of our own transgressions, while reading of the transgressions of others, and in the general punishment, when the LORD of Hosts doth at any time take away *the stay and the staff*; our bread and our water; not of the necessities of life only, in the bread that perisheth in using, but of the spiritual life, without which, we perish forever: may we *hear the rod; and who hath appointed it!* Blessed LORD! let all thy chastisements be sanctified, and lead our hearts to thee, and not from thee; for thou art the LORD our GOD, amidst all our rebellions and all our backslidings.

And, LORD, in all thy dispensations, such as this chapter sets forth to thine Israel, still manifest thyself to us, as thou didst to them, that thou art the GOD of Israel, and hatest putting away. And though the departure from our GOD is general, in which *the mighty man and the man of war, the child, and the ancient*, are all alike involved in the transgression; and though *the brother of the house of our Father after nature*, cannot heal, neither clothe, nor be our ruler; yet, precious JESUS, thou art a *brother born for adversity*: therefore

be thou, our ruler; and let all our ruin be brought under thy hand, and we shall be saved.

And will the LORD give grace to *the daughters of Zion* of the present hour, that while reading, in the conduct of those of *the ancient house of Israel*, the immodest conduct which became so offensive in the eyes of the LORD, they may have grace to make use of an apparel, suited to the humble followers of the blessed JESUS. LORD! give everyone among those, who name the name of JESUS, to study a modesty of dress suited to the christian profession, and may they be adorned as *the King's daughter; all glorious within*. Oh LORD! do thou clothe our souls with thy robe of righteousness, and we shall be then but little concerned how our sinful bodies are adorned: but *having, food and raiment, be content*. LORD, do thou enable us all *to put off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind: And do thou put on us the new man, which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness*.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This is a most blessed, though short chapter; containing in its bosom some precious views, and precious promises concerning JESUS, and the blessedness of his salvation, amidst the sins, and sorrows; and distresses, which arise out of the fallen state of our nature.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! how can I read the first verse of this chapter, without instantly having my mind directed unto thee, as the husband of thy church and people? Thou hast indeed taken away our reproach, in having called us by thy name, and granted us grace to call him our LORD. But, dearest LORD! I cannot say as the Jewish worshipper, I will eat my own bread, and wear my own apparel. No, thou rich and bountiful bridegroom; I am in poverty and wretchedness too deep to do that. Thou art to me both the bread of

life, and the garment of salvation; and therefore, LORD, both feed me and clothe me, and be to me all I need; for *thou art good and gracious to all that call upon thee*. And surely, LORD, in this day of gospel-grace, thou, blessed BRANCH, wilt be most beautiful and glorious in every eye, both of thy FATHER and thy people; and all that are engrafted in thee, and upon thee, will bring forth fruit, that shall be excellent and comely.

And oh! ye saints of my GOD! hail every one of you who are the written among the living in Jerusalem. Ye shall be called holy, in the holiness of JESUS. And he that hath provided, and opened a fountain for all cleansing, will wash away all filth from the daughters of Zion. Yea, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, will GOD the HOLY GHOST accomplish it, and manifest thereby, that it is *not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD*.

LORD, do as thou hast said: Create upon families, and houses, and churches, and people of thy redeemed, both glory and defense. Yea, blessed JESUS! be thou thyself our glory and our defense, the HOLY ONE of Israel in the midst of us. For then shall we be in grace here, and glory hereafter, *the redeemed of the LORD, who dwell safely!*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Under the beautiful similitude of a vine, and vineyard, the LORD speaketh of his church. By reproof, and by entreaty, the LORD reasoneth with Israel on the sad subject of the church's disobedience, and setteth forth the LORD'S patience and long-suffering.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us mark from the perusal of this chapter, the two great leading points contained in it; the grace, and mercy, and loving-kindness of the LORD; and the fallen, corrupt, and wretched state of man. Both views are here presented to us: and both open to very solemn and improving subjects.

How exactly answering to the love of GOD to his people, is the description the prophet hath given of the church, under the similitude of a vine. Calling, his people out of Egypt, forming them into a church, and planting them in Canaan; casting out the nations before them, and watering them continually with his blessing: these things are strongly shadowed forth under the images of planting, gathering out the stones, making a fence, and causing the clouds, and the rain, and the sun, to shed their influences.—Reader, look at JESUS, *that plant of renown!* Behold in the wonders of redemption, what GOD hath wrought. And then take a view of what hath followed in all generations of the church: when the LORD looked that *his vineyard should bring forth grapes, wherefore brought it forth wild grapes.*

Reader, it will be your wisdom and mine, while contemplating in this chapter the riches of grace, in the LORD'S forbearance and long suffering to his people, to look into our own history, and behold what correspondence we can find there, with what is here said of GOD'S ancient people. Oh for grace to make such improvements from the whole, as to see that all our mercies are in JESUS. It is for him, and his righteousness, his atoning blood and salvation, that the world continues. But for his gracious interposition, the whole earth would have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah. LORD! visit thy church, thy vineyard, thy people. Oh take unto thee, LORD JESUS, thy great name, and as thou hast wrought out salvation *for* us, so work salvation *in* us. Behold the purchase of thy blood, and for thine own sake turn to thy people a pure language, that they may all call upon thee with one consent. *Turn us again, O LORD GOD of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The prophet in this chapter is soaring very high in visions and revelations of the LORD. Here is much of JEHOVAH'S grace, in the glories of the Redeemer's person and kingdom, in this Chapter. The prophet gives the date of it also.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul, close not the book: for the same LORD, the same *ADONAI*, yea thy JESUS is still upon his throne, as he was in the days of the prophet, and thou by grace, through faith, as he by open vision, mayest draw nigh and behold him; for he calls upon thee, and upon all poor, needy, perishing sinners, like thyself, to come hither and behold the glory which he had with his FATHER before all worlds. And do not forget that thy Redeemer's throne is a throne of grace as well as glory, on which JESUS sits to receive his poor, and to give out of his fulness. And, for thy great encouragement, do not forget also, that while thou art benefited by his grace, JESUS will be glorified in giving out to thy necessities; yea, GOD thy FATHER will be glorified in JESUS, whenever a poor sinner is made blessed and happy in JESUS. Come then, my soul, to his throne, and let GOD be glorified in his SON, and JESUS be glorified in thy salvation; in thy finding *grace to help in every time of need*.

And behold, my soul, the glorious *seraphim* above the throne, and round about the throne, and let their appearance comfort and encourage thee! Yea, let thy hymn go forth in the language of heaven: for surely never would the heavenly song have been handed down to earth, if it had not been meant that the redeemed upon earth, from among men, might learn and sing it. Cry aloud my soul, with holy joy, and say, *Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*.

But while thou art singing with a new-strung heart of redemption, the song of heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect; forget not, O my soul, that thou art still a man of unclean lips, and that thou dwellest in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Yes, precious JESUS, I would not only remember this, but through all eternity, never, never lose sight of it. Heaven itself will be more heaven to my soul in the view, that from the brink of hell it was JESUS brought me. Thy love, thy grace, thy pity, thy compassion, blessed LORD, is now the sole cause of my song of grace, and will be my everlasting song of glory to all eternity. Oh for the continual cleansing from off thine altar, LORD JESUS! let the live coal be daily, hourly administered to purge mine iniquity, and to make me clean in thy blood.

And O, my gracious GOD, grant me, grant thy Church, thy people favor, that it may not be said, to the ministry of thy holy word *Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.* Oh LORD! give to him that writes, and to him that reads, the hearing, the seeing, the understanding, the believing heart; that we may both enter into the full enjoyment of this blessed vision, *to the acknowledgment of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and of CHRIST; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* LORD! let it be found in our souls experience, and to our souls joy, that there is in us, as in the teel tree and the oak, that glorious substance, *the holy seed*, even JESUS, in all his merits, blood, and righteousness, for the salvation of our souls! May this be found our portion, in the love and mercy of GOD our FATHER; the grace, blood, and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST; and the fellowship and communion of the HOLY GHOST! Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Part of this chapter is historical, and part prophetical. The distress of Jerusalem gives occasion to introduce a memorable prophecy concerning CHRIST. The chapter closes with threatenings.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass over every lesser consideration, to attend to that blessed and most important prophecy, contained in this chapter, concerning the incarnation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Though Ahaz refused to hear, and would not ask a sign of the LORD, let you and I receive this blessed sign, so graciously given to the church, and on our bended knees, read and adore GOD in CHRIST, for so rich and precious a scripture. And now that we have lived to see the whole fulfilled, yea more than fulfilled, in a thousand additional mercies, which the SON of GOD hath brought with him, and with which he hath beautified and comforted his church; oh! for grace to meditate in the same, night and day; and to read both the prophecy and the accomplishment of it, under the SPIRIT's teaching, until all the blissful consequences included in it be incorporated in our

hearts, and we discover and enjoy our interest in all that belongs to our JESUS and his great salvation!

Oh! thou dear LORD of thy church and people! Didst thou, the glorious Ancient of days, condescend to become the babe of Bethlehem? Didst thou, blessed JESUS, vouchsafe to be born for me, and rather than the poorest of thy family should perish, wouldest become man, and not abhor the virgin's womb? Oh! the preciousness of that name, that glorious gracious name IMMANUEL, which is more fragrant than ointment poured forth! Never may I lose sight of it; never may I go abroad, or remain at home, without bearing it about with me: it tells me, my JESUS is GOD! Surely then he *can* save me; surely he *wilt* save me! The work of redemption was not too great for him. Yea, it gives efficacy to all he did, and all he suffered. For now I see by it, that all he did, and all he suffered, were the acts of GOD, mighty to save. And sure I am, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him. GOD my Saviour will carry on, and complete, all that remains to be done concerning me; how then shall I perish, or come short of his glory? Oh! thou glorious IMMANUEL! blessed JESUS! give me to hail thee forever by this endeared name. And moreover, as my Redeemer is IMMANUEL, GOD *with us*; so is he IMMANUEL, GOD *in our nature*! Oh what so near or so dear as JESUS, who is *bone of my bone, and flesh of my, flesh*? LORD, I pass by all the affinities of life, in comparison of thee: for thou fittest all, and art nearer than all. And oh! how delightful the thought! that while my soul finds such rapture in the consciousness of the relation: JESUS wilt not deny his poor relation, but condescends to own him. Yea, he commands that I should be told, *he is not ashamed to call his people, brethren*? Precious, precious JESUS! And be thou adored, my LORD, for such a sign, in such a prophecy, given to the church, by thy servant, *Thanks be to GOD! for his unspeakable gift.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The prophet is in this chapter opening a subject, concerning the future troubles of Israel and Judah, by reason of their sins, and in a spirit of prophecy pointing out the destruction of both kingdoms, which should be accomplished. But the loving-kindness

and grace of GOD mingles great promises of mercy, in the midst of judgment; and all in allusion to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

How truly blessed and profitable it is to watch the LORD's care over his people! Though in times of general wickedness, the LORD visits a nation and a kingdom; yet will he take care of his chosen in the general overthrow. If men will look unto an arm of flesh, that arm shall be their confusion. But if his people do but sanctify the LORD GOD in their hearts, then he will be for a sanctuary; and when he sends troubles and visitations on the earth, yet like a Father to his children, who seeth a storm approaching, he brings them into the house and shuts the door after him, and thus secures them from the danger; so the LORD saith, *Come my people, enter thou into the chambers of my providence and the covenant of my love, and shut, thy doors about thee, until the indignation be overpast.* Oh! the love of GOD in CHRIST to his people!

Precious JESUS! I must not close my meditation on this Chapter, until that I have first bent the knee of my soul in thanks to thee, thou dear LORD, that here, as in other portions of thy blessed word, I discover, that thou who art to me the Rock of ages, and the rock of my salvation, hast been, in all ages, to the unbeliever, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock offense.* LORD! how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world? How is it that thy humiliating state, thy life of sorrow, and death of shame, should appear to me so lovely, while it becomes so offensive to others? Surely it is grace makes all the difference. I should have fallen on this stone and been broken, as well as thousands have done, hadst thou not kept me from it! Yea, LORD, there was a time when I saw no beauty in thee, to desire thee: and art thou now the altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand! To thee, LORD, be all the praise! I bless thee, my adorable Redeemer, for that sweet scripture thou hast said, and left upon record: *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me!*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

Here is another blessed prophecy, full of the LORD JESUS, and of gospel mercies, folded up in him. The prophet speaks of the joy of GOD'S people, when, in the midst of darkness, the light of CHRIST'S coming shall break in upon them. The chapter closeth with threatened judgments to the despisers of his word.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! behold in Israel's history, the real history of all men by nature; and the one universal cause of the LORD'S controversy with the sons of men. *All have sinned, and come short of GOD'S glory:* And think, my soul, what a mercy it is, that the LORD doth correct. But for this, there would be no hope of a reform. One of the most tremendous scriptures, is that, which the LORD proclaims concerning the incorrigible, when giving them up to fulfil the measure of their iniquities: *So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee.* LORD! I would say for myself, and for every poor sinner like myself, give us not up *to eat the fruit of our own devices.* It is better to suffer now, than to perish forever. But oh! accompany thy corrections with thy grace; and cause thy children *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

Precious JESUS! how blessed is it, under such circumstances, to look at those sweet promises, which are given in this chapter concerning thee, and thy great salvation, by whom alone all deliverances are wrought. Had it not been for thee, thou gracious glorious LORD! though the LORD'S anger had been stretched out to all eternity, not a soul could have found the possibility of returning to him. His justice must have burned to the lowest hell: neither could it have been satisfied forever, Hail! thou almighty Deliverer of thy people! we welcome thy coming in the name of the LORD! Blessed for ever be the joyful sound, that *unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given!* Oh! the unspeakable felicity, that *the government is upon thy shoulder;* and that *all power is thine, in heaven and in earth.* Give then, thou dearest LORD, to thy people, to know thee, by every endearing name and in every glorious character. Be thou to me, to each, to all, our wonderful Counselor, our mighty GOD, our

everlasting FATHER, our Prince of Peace! And since in ourselves, and in all our circumstances, we are nothing, can do nothing, and by reason of sin are worse than nothing; oh, LORD, do thou carry on thy work with power in our souls; and of *the increase of thy government and peace let there be no end*. Let it be ever growing, and still to grow. Give an increase of grace, in every heart of thy redeemed upon earth. And even when thou shalt have brought home thy ransomed from earth to heaven, and the whole work and glory of redemption is then fully manifested to be thine; yet, blessed JESUS, even then, when thou shalt have delivered up the kingdom of thy mediatorial power, and JEHOVAH in his threefold character of person is glorified in the salvation of the Church; then, then, thou adorable Redeemer, thou wilt still, be the glorious Head, and cause, and source; of all the blessedness of thy Church and people; and every new gift of felicity they enjoy, they will enjoy in thee, and from thee, and with thee, and it will be JESUS, and his church, to be glorious and going on in glory, forever and forever, Oh! the wonders and blessedness of salvation in CHRIST!

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here denouncing punishment in the LORD's name, to the proud oppressors of his people. In the midst of which there are several sweet breakings-out of that great salvation by JESUS, from whence alone the people of GOD can find deliverance or comfort.

REFLECTIONS

READER! hath it ever struck you, when at anytime perusing the judgments of GOD upon a guilty land, as set forth in this chapter, how awful the state of those must be, whom the LORD appoints for the correction of his people? Like the Assyrian here spoken of, all of this description are only commissioned to correct, not to destroy. They are by the LORD's bridle in their jaws, but the kindest ministers for good and not evil. And had the children of GOD but

light enough during the dark hour, to see the limits of their chain, how different would be their views of GOD's people, and of the divine love in sending them. Howbeit, they mean not so, neither do their hearts think so, for their wish is to destroy: but JESUS appoints, overlooks, regulates, restrains, and brings about his blessed purposes, in all. How sweet the thought!

My soul! bless thy LORD for this most precious scripture! The remnant of Israel is still on the earth. It is in the midst of many people, as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass! See to it, my soul, that thou hast the gracious marks here set down: *They stay no more upon him that smote them.* They look not for salvation from an arm of flesh. Thy false confidences, and false supports have too often, my soul, like the reeds of Egypt, pierced thee through with many sorrows. Surely thou art looking no more to the works of thine hands, not saying to them, Ye are my god; for in JESUS alone the fatherless findeth mercy! See to it, that thou art now finally, fully, and completely returned, among the remnant of Jacob, unto Jacob's mighty GOD, and staying thyself in truth upon the LORD, the HOLY ONE of Israel. Oh! for grace to call heaven and earth to witness, that He, and He only is JEHOVAH's CHRIST, is thy CHRIST; and the FATHER'S chosen, thy chosen: so shalt thou never be confounded nor ashamed, world without end.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

This Chapter is in part a prophecy concerning CHRIST. It contains an account of his stock, and the features of his person; the wonders of his redemption, in the call of the Gentiles; and the restoration of the Jews.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS JESUS! was the prophet commissioned to bring the Church acquainted with thy nature, according to the flesh? Didst thou indeed come forth as rod out of the stem of Jesse, and as branch out of his roots? Then art thou of my own nature; bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. Oh! thou Plant of renown! its thy person,

work, righteousness, in the whole of thy redemption, thou art the LORD our GOD; thou; even thou, hast wrought our salvation for us, and salvation in us: surely, blessed JESUS, thou art all thy people need, and all they can enjoy, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity! Oh! for a portion of that SPIRIT which rested upon thee, and which thou impartest to thy people, *according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST!* For this will induce all those blessed effects of thy gracious gospel, when the corrupt passions of men shall be brought under the sweet influences of grace and nothing shall then hurt or destroy, in all thine holy mountain!, Blessed LORD! hasten thy glorious purposes concerning thy kingdom! Oh! when shall the hour dawn upon a sinful, dark, and degenerate world, when the LORD will set his hand the second time, to recover the remnant of his people? When wilt the time come, that men shall break their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks? Hasten, blessed LORD, the triumphs of thy kingdom! Cut short thy work, in righteousness, thou that art mighty to save: and let that precious promise be fulfilled; when Israel shall be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land. Oh! LORD of hosts, bless, as thou hast said, saying; *Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of mine hands, and Israel, mine inheritance?*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

A gospel song of the triumphs of CHRIST, and the church's triumphs in him: suited for all ages, for the whole of CHRIST's body, in one collected mass, and for each individual.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! how art thou tuned in heart to sing this sweet song of the Church, and to join thy feeble note in the hymn of salvation, with all the LORD's redeemed ones? Surely none can be more conscious than thou art, that out of CHRIST, JEHOVAH's anger must forever burn against the sin and rebellion of thy nature; and if the LORD's anger be turned away, and he comforteth thee; is not this in

JESUS, and by JESUS, and for the alone sake of JESUS? And canst thou not, my soul, look up, and say with the Church, both above and below, *Behold, GOD is my salvation?* For is not JESUS the almighty deliverer, by his blood and righteousness, from sin and sorrow, to holiness and joy? Is it not his holy hand, and his glorious arm, that hath gotten himself the victory? Did not GOD the FATHER graciously devise it; and GOD the SON purchase it; and GOD the HOLY GHOST make application of it to thy wants and circumstances? And conscious of thy personal interest in it, wilt thou not shout aloud, and, say; *Behold, GOD is my salvation I will trust and not be afraid, for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation!*

And wilt thou not then, my soul, continually be drawing water from, the wells of salvation? JESUS himself is the well, even the well of living water, of which whosoever drinketh, shall live for ever. And he, is an open well, a fountain not sealed to all his redeemed. Here life is found for quickening sinners, and for maintaining the life given to the languishing and dying frames of his saints. LORD! to these wells of salvation, even to thyself, blessed JESUS, would I pray for grace, daily, hourly to come; that by the wells of thy word, and in ordinances, by the influence of thine HOLY SPIRIT, my soul may be like a watered garden from day to day, whose waters fail not: that JESUS may keep alive the grace he hath given, revive it when decayed, refresh it when languishing, and preserve it and perfect it unto life eternal. Oh! for grace thus to come, and to call others to come, and that the fathers unto the children, may declare his truth. Hither, ye poor, thirsty, famishing sinners, hither come to JESUS, the well of salvation, and draw no longer from the pools of your own righteousness! In JESUS alone the thirst of the soul finds satisfaction; *and whosoever drinketh of him shall never thirst, but JESUS will be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.* Amen.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

We have a prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon; and the LORD, for the comfort of the Church, causeth his servant to make

it known, and the powers by whom he would accomplish it, even the Medes and Persians.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we have been now attending to the inspired penman's account of the burden of Babylon. And we who live in gospel days, have lived to see the accomplishment of GOD's denunciation against that devoted kingdom. Here let us ponder well the solemn subject; for it is a very solemn one. Think not, Reader, that the subject is remote, and the history one in which you and I have no concern. Indeed, indeed we have the highest concern. For as Babylon became the den of dragons, which was once the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldees excellency; so our corrupt and fallen nature, is become the habitation of every unclean and corrupt affection, which was once beautiful and lovely. And unless this nature be changed by sovereign grace, and the heart, which is now like a cage of unclean birds and beasts of prey, be made once more the habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT; how shall we ever, see the face of GOD in glory, or be recovered to our original happiness?

Precious JESUS! now doth every view of our nature, and the miseries of it, tend to endear thee to the heart, and to bring home the vast, the infinite importance of thy salvation? Oh! thou purifier of our lost nature! Oh! thou almighty JESUS! thou canst cleanse, and thou wilt cleanse by thy blood, the souls and bodies of thy people! Yes! blessed JESUS, in thee, and by thee, they shall be restored, yea, more than restored, to their original purity and holiness. Thou wilt drive out the strong man armed, and subdue all our sins, under thee. Yea, *the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.* Hail, thou glorious restorer of all our waste places! Hail, thou blessed EMMANUEL, who hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood. Ere long thou wilt take home thy Church to thine eternal kingdom, and present it to thyself, *a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it shall be holy and without blemish.* Amen.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

This chapter is explanatory of the former. The LORD showeth the causes of Babylon's ruin, to avenge the cause of his people, and to punish their enemies.

REFLECTIONS

How truly blessed it is to observe, and know, that the LORD watcheth over all the concerns of his people! Though Babylon triumph for awhile, and though the LORD suffer his people to go into captivity; yet they are still his people, and the LORD will not permit them to be oppressed for ever.

But what an awful scripture is this, for all the enemies of CHRIST and his people to read: *Hell from beneath is moved for all such, to meet them at their coming!* And what an aggravated load of woe is it, to think that they have been uniformly fighting against GOD and his people; so that their misery is abundantly aggravated, like the rich man's in the parable, when lifting up their eyes in torments, and not only seeing heaven afar off, but they whom in this life they most hated made most completely happy!

My soul! see to it, that thou art a citizen of Zion, and not of Babylon! This is the Church, the City, the royal, the holy City, which the LORD hath founded. Oh! for grace to be found a citizen of Zion, when the LORD writeth up the people. Better to be a doorkeeper of the gates of Zion, than a dweller in the tents of ungodliness. LORD, it is thou that hast founded Zion in JESUS; and in JESUS may my soul be found in Zion.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The prophet here enters upon the subject of history: and a woeful account it is. Not a word of comfort through the whole.

REFLECTIONS

READER, in the history of Moab, behold the history of every man by nature, exposed to the just judgment of GOD, the curse of his broken law, and all the terrors, which will one day fall upon the wicked! their hatred to GOD and his CHRIST, is manifested by their hatred to his people; neither can the malignity be taken out or purged by whole burnt sacrifices. From generation to generation, their anger burns with implacable hatred, neither can anything soften it. And as nothing tends to lessen or remove it, so the causes everlastingly must exist, to increase it more and more! Oh! the awful state of the enemies of GOD and his CHRIST!

Reader! can we look back to the days of our dwelling with the Moabs of this world? Can we remember our return, like Ruth and Naomi, from the country of Moab to the land of Bethlehem, even the house of bread, in JESUS, who is himself the bread of life. Oh! the blessedness of such a recovery! Precious LORD JESUS! give us grace to praise thee: let nothing but thy power, in the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, could persuade Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem, or constrain our hearts into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST. Blessed LORD! since thou hast called us by thy grace, and brought our souls to be savingly acquainted with thy love, oh! help us to live to thy glory, and to cease from all the Moabs, who are the enemies of thy cross, and to come out from among them, and to be separated, and touch not the unclean thing; so wilt thou receive us, and be a Father unto us, and we shall be the sons and daughters of the LORD Almighty.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This chapter is a continuation of the burden of Moab. The prophet calls upon Moab, in her distresses, to be looking unto Him, who alone could save her, that should sit upon the throne of David, which is CHRIST; and in the neglect of this predicts her total ruin.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter, in the solemn contents of it, and then gather into one collected view, the history of Moab, in the scripture account of it, from beginning to end; and behold what a miserable life, the life of carnal men of every description and character is, in whatever point of view they are regarded. Moab is but a picture of men and things out of CHRIST, throughout the earth. The situation of Moab was indeed most lovely, in those rich plains of Jordan, by Jericho. But what are grapes and vineyards, or the fertility and riches of a kingdom, where the inhabitants know not the LORD? What is the whole Turkish empire, in all the luxuries the imagination can conceive, while under the curse of GOD in Mahometan darkness? Oh, Reader! think of the vast and immense privileges of the blessed gospel of the ever blessed GOD! It is not *for the precious things brought forth by the sun, neither for the precious things put forth by the moon; but the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush!* when once the soul is truly awakened to a sense of sin, and the apprehension of the wrath to come; when the short and perishing state of things around is properly seen, and as rightly valued; then nothing short of CHRIST can bring comfort and content to the heart. Reader! let us learn wisdom from the history and destruction of Moab, and send to Him, who is the ruler of our sinful land, our tribute, and seek in his sacrifice, pardon and forgiveness. Let us not only send to him, but come to him, the true LAMB of GOD, *which taketh away the sins of the world.* He is upon *the throne of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.* Yea, he is the LAMB in the midst of the throne; and that throne is a throne of grace, as well as glory. He will hear, and answer prayer, for he is still the meek and lowly Saviour, who hath said, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* Oh! for grace to come boldly unto his throne, *that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in all time of need!*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with the burden of Damascus; but there is much concerning Israel in it also. Damascus is threatened with destruction. The LORD's promises concerning Israel, some sweet views if gospel times are here and there introduced.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark the burden of Damascus; and behold, in the history of that people, the final end of all the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST. Of what avail was the splendour of this kingdom, or the power of her armies? Though the haughty Syrian exclaimed, in the vanity of his heart, *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters in Israel?* yet, like the waters of the Dead Sea, everything around them, and in them, and what was brought forth from their watering, produced nothing but death. Without GOD, without CHRIST, no ordinances of grace, no word of salvation, no blood of sprinkling! Alas, when the evil day cometh, and the prosperous days of carnal delights are once over, all is over!

Precious Redeemer! let mine eyes be unto thee, and let my soul have respect unto the HOLY ONE of Israel! Surely nothing can truly sweeten even the sweets of this life, that they shall have no bitterness mingled up with them, except thou art in them; and the very thoughts of an hereafter (until a conscious interest in thee, and in thy salvation, makes that hereafter truly blessed) will be forever full of horrors to the thinking mind. Be thou, therefore, precious JESUS, the all of this life, and of that which is to come. In thee, and from thee, let all my springs flow; for then, and then only, will *my meditation of thee be sweet*.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter, like the former, is full of threatenings to the people to whom it refers, on account of their ill-will to Israel. It is but short, but it contains heavy tidings.

REFLECTIONS

WHEN we consider the extensive nature of sin, and behold the universal reign of it in every nation, over every clime, and among all people; how full of relief is the thought that His empire, by whom sin is destroyed, is said as finally and fully to be *from sea even to sea; and from the river even to the ends of the earth!* And what but GOD's grace can overcome and subdue man's corruptions by nature! what shall stop the hatred of the heart against the love of GOD, but GOD's love in subduing that enmity? If, therefore, we behold *the land shadowing with wings beyond the river;* coming forth with wrath against the LORD's people; and if we behold the LORD going forth with whirlwinds of the south, to blow the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, why should it be thought incredible that the weapons of sin should fall from the hands of the mighty, and the proud heart be brought to bend to the sceptre of divine grace?

Reader, mark what the LORD said unto the prophet, and let our souls seek to our rest as the LORD did unto his. Precious LORD JESUS, thou *art the rest wherewith the LORD will cause the weary to rest, and thou art the refreshing.* Here may we behold souls fly *as clouds, and as doves to their windows!* Here may *the kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.* Yea, blessed JESUS, here may *all kings fall down before thee, and all nations do thee service!* Amen.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

In this chapter, Egypt, the original and sworn foe to Israel, comes in for her judgment. Great misery and distress are threatened

to Egypt. The close of the chapter contains great mercy, which is promised to Egypt in calling the inhabitants to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and, gather up the several interesting contents of it into one view: pray over it, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to make it truly blessed to thy meditation.

In the afflictions or Egypt, behold the sure afflictions which arise out of a fallen sinful state. Burdens, like those the Egyptians felt and groaned under, must and will make every sinner groan, when once the heart is broken for sin, and truly brought acquainted with the miseries of it. But when, from under the galling load of a guilty conscience, the poor sinner cries unto the LORD, because of the oppressors; then the LORD sends them *a Saviour, and a great one*, and he delivers them. Yea, before they called, before they felt their misery, before the evil of sin was known in the earth, GOD the FATHER hath sent JESUS his dear and ever blessed SON; a Saviour, indeed, and a great One, mighty to save, to save his people from their sins.

Reader! what saith your experience to these things? The day is come; the highway is cast up; the gospel door is open, when Egypt and the multitude of the isles are called to join the true Israel of GOD, in the salvation of the LORD JESUS. Oh! for that rich blessing of GOD in CHRIST here recorded, to be every day fulfilled, that JEHOVAH the LORD of Hosts may bless with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST, *Egypt, his people, and Assyria the work of his hands, and Israel his inheritance.* Amen.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the prophet becomes a type, as well as a preacher. The LORD, is pleased to make his servant Isaiah by this means, instruct the church, concerning Egypt and Ethiopia.

REFLECTIONS

READER! art thou struck with the view of the Prophet becoming a type, as well as a preacher and a prophet in the church of the LORD; and no doubt in the three years walk through the streets of the people, made thereby the drunkard's song, and the sport and derision of the profane; and will it not lead thee to contemplate Him in his unequalled humbleness and meekness of deportment, who, though LORD of life and glory, went about the streets of Jerusalem, in the garb of a poor Jew, *despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?* Precious JESUS! how do all thy servants sink to nothing, compared to thee; pre-eminent in humility, as pre-eminent in nature, in office, and in character! Thou wert indeed the sum and substance of every type; and the one great end and purpose of both sacrifice, prophecy, and ordinance. With what unwearied zeal for thy FATHER'S honour, and with unabating love to thy church's salvation, didst thou endure *such a contradiction of sinners against thyself!* And how didst thou, when reviled, *revile not again, but committed thyself to him who judgeth rightly!* LAMB of GOD! keep the eyes of thy redeemed stedfastly fixed on thee; and in every exercise of life, may thy servants hear the sweet voice of consolation, arising out of thy bright example, made perfect through suffering: *Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

Here, are several burdens brought into one chapter in succession to each other: the burden of the Desert of the Sea; of Dumah, and of Arabia: but all in relation to GOD'S covenant people Israel.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! while reading the burdens of others, do not overlook thine own: but if JESUS, that almighty burdenbearer, hath removed

the guilt and dominion of sin from thee; while thou art praising his name for the unspeakable and unmerited deliverance, thou wilt still remember *the wormwood and the gall!*

Oh! how galling was the load of sin, and how full of horrors the apprehension of the awful consequences of it, before JESUS was revealed, as *taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself!* And now, LORD, how blessed is it to see that thou *hast borne our sins in thine own body on the tree, when thou didst die, the just for the unjust, to bring sinners unto GOD!* Hence, blessed JESUS, I would now bring thee all my sins, and all my sorrows; for thou hast said, *Cast thy burden on the LORD, and he shall sustain thee!* I know, LORD, that thou wilt kindly and graciously support me, and bear me up under all; and know, LORD, that through thy grace helping me, I shall be more than conqueror in and through all. JESUS will bear me up, and carry me on, and bring me through all that yet belongs to my pilgrimage here below, until he takes me home to his everlasting kingdom, to bear me in the arms of his love forever.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

The invasion of the land of Judah, is here predicted, and sad events implicated in it: but towards the close, there are many precious promises, typical, as it should seem, of Judah's deliverer, even CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! I pass over every lesser subject, and every lesser object, to fix mine eyes on thee, oh thou excelling excellence of all perfection! *The burden indeed of the valley of vision.* It is the LORD, who for thine own people, thine Israel and Judah after the flesh, hath brought thee forth, as the glorious Eliakim, over thy FATHER'S house, and for the covering of Judah which was by sin uncovered, and for repairing the many many breaches of David, which transgression had opened; thou, and thou only, couldst be competent to perform! All our own attempts, and every aspiring

exertion of man, were found but as the pride of *Shebna*. Nothing could restore what sin had taken away, until thou, the LORD of life and glory, came from heaven, to bring back the waste heritages, and *to restore the desolations of many generations*. Hail! thou glorious almighty JESUS. Blessed be GOD our FATHER, who hath called thee over his house, and committed all government into thine hand, *that all men should honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER*.

Help us, LORD, to hang all the stress of our salvation, both our being, and our well-being, wholly on thee. And do thou, LORD, for thou only hast the key of David, to do it, open thy treasures of wisdom and knowledge to our raptured view, and open our souls to the enjoyment of them. Open thy word, and open our eyes to see it, and our hearts to enjoy it, our ears to hear, and our tongues to proclaim the wonders of redemption. And oh, LORD! shut out all thoughts that would arise, to rob us of our delight in thee, and our whole dependence upon thee. Let every faculty of our souls, by the almightiness of thy power, be resolutely shut against everything but JESUS. Drive, LORD, every buyer and seller out of thy temple, which is our bodies; and let nothing open our souls to receive ought but thee. Say to our hearts, to our affections, Open, ye gates, that the LORD JESUS, the King of glory, may come in, in the daily, hourly influences of his grace, until he finally and fully open the everlasting gates of heaven, to take us home, to the enjoyment of glory in JESUS forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

The Prophet here describes the overthrow of Tyre, and in characters of great misery. Promises are made in the close of the chapter, of a change.

REFLECTIONS

READER, how truly blessed is it to see, in the rise and fall of nations, that the LORD is carrying on his own gracious purposes; that all the events of nations, kingdoms, and empires, are but ministering to that little handful of people, whom GOD *hath formed for himself*,

and to show forth his praise! The mind is lost in amazement, when beholding the love, and care, and the watchings over of the LORD upon his Israel. It was said of them, as a distinguishing feature of character, that *they should dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.* And uniformly through the Bible, we find this to be the case. In GOD the FATHER's purpose they thus have all along moved on. In JESUS love, and grace, and favor, everything is made to minister to them. And in the mercy, teachings, and influences of the HOLY GHOST, all his tendencies are towards them. So that if the overthrow of nations shall promote Israel's welfare, the LORD overthrows them. If the prosperity of nations become necessary to humble Israel, the LORD brings this to pass also. In all things, and by all means, JEHOVAH is forwarding his gracious designs for his Church, and the final happiness of Zion, and of the redeemed of the LORD, is at the bottom of all the dispensations and providences going on throughout the world. Reader, think of this; carry the thought with you wherever you go; bring it into recollection whatever history you read, of the nations that are past, or of the nations now existing; and while the solemn thought is deeply impressed both upon your mind and my own, oh! for grace to inquire and search diligently, whether we are of the true Israel of GOD? If we are not of this world, but JESUS hath chosen us out of the world, what have we to do with its customs, and its pleasures and pursuits? Surely we cannot have a more decided testimony, than when sitting aloof from all its unnecessary concerns. If JESUS be our portion, then our intimacy will not be great with those, who have their portion only in this life. O how sweetly doth JESUS call to his hidden ones, who *dwell* indeed, but do not *belong*, to the men of Tyre, and of Zidon, in the present day: *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

Solemn judgments are here set forth, in a general way. Towards the close of the chapter, the subject brightens in the prospect of the coming of CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER, while reading this Chapter, and beholding the miseries of the world, in consequence of sin, may we not exclaim with the Psalmist, *Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth?* Oh! the incalculable sorrows, by reason of sin, and the distresses in all ages! It deluged the world by water; it destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by fire; it hath produced death in all the circumstances of mankind! But to see the awfulness of sin in its strongest colors, we must look at *Golgotha*, and behold JESUS dying for sin, *the just for the unjust, to bring sinners to GOD.*

Reader, do not forget to whom it is owing, that the earth still stands! Look unto JESUS! and so look, until the eye affect the heart. Oh! it is blessed to have such views of the LAMB of GOD, that shall drive away all other considerations, and make all things blush, like the heavenly bodies in the presence of their LORD, in having the whole heart and affections centered in him. Precious JESUS! be thou my one glorious object, and all leanness of soul will be forgotten, yea, done away.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

This is a most precious chapter, containing promises on the part of GOD, and praises on the part of the Church. It is all over gospel; and as suited to the present hour of the Church, as to the time in which it was delivered.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how shall we close our meditation on the gospel subject contained in this chapter, in better terms than in seeking grace to catch the Prophet's note, and blessing GOD, and exalting his holy name, as he did, for such mercies as are here recorded, and with which the LORD comforted his Church and people, in days remote from the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Think, Reader! how gracious the LORD is, and was, and ever will be, that he will have his people made happy in the expectation of blessings, as well as in the enjoyment of them! So that by faith, our fathers in the Church, gone before us, lived upon CHRIST, and feasted on the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, as the souls of his redeemed now live and feast upon him since redemption- work hath been completed; and all, with one heart and one mouth, glorify the same GOD, and Saviour, for the same precious salvation. Hail! holy, gracious, almighty GOD and FATHER! let the souls of all thy people bless and praise thee, in and through the person and work of our adorable Mediator; that from thine own free and everlasting love it is, that thou hast made a feast of fat things in thy Church, thy holy mountain! Yea, LORD, it is thou who hast given us JESUS, thy dear and ever blessed SON, and with him thou hast given all things.

Hail! thou blessed IMMANUEL! thou art strength to thy poor, a feast to thy hungry, a garment to thy naked; yea, everything, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity! It is thou, blessed JESUS, who in our nature hath conquered sin and all its dreadful consequences, and fully, and finally, and completely taken away their rebuke, and wiped away all tears from off all faces.

Hail! thou blessed and eternal SPIRIT! by whose gracious teachings these precious things are made known to us, and by whose divine influences our hearts are brought both to believe and to rejoice in them! Blessed be thy holy name, for the discovery that *the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it!*

LORD! add one blessing; more to the numberless blessings contained in this chapter, if agreeable to thy holy mind and will; and cause the heart of him that writes, and him that reads, to know their own personal interest in the blessings themselves. Oh! for grace here, that in glory hereafter, we may join that rapturous song: *Lo,*

this is our GOD, we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation! Amen.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

This is another joyful song, and a gospel song, full of the praises of JEHOVAH for redemption, interspersed with reflections on the wonderful deadness of the souls of GOD's people, in the view of their mercies.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! canst thou sing this gospel song of salvation, which the LORD said should be sung in Judah? Surely that sweet note is thine. Thou hast a strong city; for JESUS is both the foundation, and the walls of it; yea, JESUS is the all in all of it; for upon all the glory, he is the defense. JEHOVAH thy GOD and FATHER hath founded his Church upon JESUS, and JESUS is both the husband and king of his Chinch, and hath by his HOLY SPIRIT opened the gates to the nation made righteous in his righteousness to enter in. And surely, LORD, he kept in peace, yea, perfect peace, while kept in thee, and by thee, and living upon thee. Oh! for grace to trust in my LORD GOD forever: for in my LORD GOD JEHOVAH, there is CHRIST the Rock of Ages.

And LORD, I pray thee, that amidst all the circumstances of my passing pilgrimage, by night, or by day, when thy judgments are in the earth, and when by thy sweet ordinances thou art leading thy people to the enjoyment of thyself, in every state, and under every change in me, my soul may desire to rest in thee who art unchangeable; and who *having loved thine own that are in the world, thou lovest them to the end.* Oh! let it be the language of mine heart, that *with my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me have I sought thee early.* And do thou, LORD, bring me into thy chambers. Give me to see that in thy covenant-engagements to my glorious Head I am secure from all danger. All thine attributes, all thy promises, thy word, and thine oath, do secure to me salvation with all its blessings. Surely, LORD, while thus

blessed, and thus redeemed in JESUS, I may well sing the song of salvation in this house of my pilgrimage, neither shall any stop me in my triumphs in CHRIST JESUS. Every day, and all the day, will I chaunt aloud, *The LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

Here is the same delightful subject continued, and carried on, through the whole; namely, the LORD's care of his church, and the destruction of his enemies, and this united subject runs through the whole chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while JEHOVAH is thus singing to his Church, and commanding his people to sing unto her also, a vineyard of red wine: let you and I join the holy song, and beginning in Him, who is the chief musician, and the whole cause of our song, and who alone can string our hearts, and tune them to his praise; let us consider the blessedness of this vineyard of the LORD, and how he hath formed it for himself, and for the showing forth of his glory. Did not GOD the FATHER form this vineyard? And did not JESUS, his dear and ever-blessed SON, purchase it from his FATHER, at infinite cost and pains, even with his blood? And did not GOD the HOLY GHOST gather the stones out of the hearts of his people and form them as trees of his own right hand planting? And do not all the sacred persons of the GODHEAD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, bless this vineyard, and with their sweet and gracious droppings of dew and rain, and all the blessed influences of heaven, visit it, and watch it, and water it every moment? And if so, who but would sing the song of salvation to this vineyard, so favoured, so blessed, and so kept, by sovereign and almighty grace! Oh! LORD! grant that there may be no blasted fruit, no withered branches in thy church and vineyard; but let the gracious cultivation flourish and bring forth fruit to the praise of thy name! And, Oh! precious JESUS! do thou come into thy garden, and

eat of thy pleasant fruit! Oh! suffer not *the wild boar out of the wood to root it up, nor the wild beast of the field to devour it*. But do thou enable all of thine to take hold of thy strength, and in thy righteousness to be eternally secured. Be thou, LORD, the security of thy vineyard, and both the glory and the defense thereof: for then we shall be indeed strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might; and unceasingly sing of the LORD's redemption of his vineyard, the Church, upon earth, and the everlasting glories of JESUS and his Church in heaven Amen.

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

Amidst many threatenings to the people for their rebellions, this chapter contains some most glorious descriptions of the person of CHRIST, and the wonders of salvation in him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a wonderful history doth the Church of GOD hold forth in all ages! Never was there a people so favoured as Israel! Never surely a nation so degenerate. In whatever period we look at the account, the contemplation is the same. *Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? Was it ever known that any people under heaven, when once they had taken up with an idol, because they knew not the true GOD, ever put it down again for another? But, saith the LORD, my people Israel, to whom I have made myself known in blessing them; my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*

Reader! pause over this, and then behold what a wonderful GOD is our GOD! Are we, like Israel, prone to lay down anything, yea, nothing that is, or can, be durable and solid, for a foundation to build upon for eternity? Hear what the LORD saith; *I will lay in Zion, for a foundation stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation!* Blessed GOD and FATHER! precious LORD JESUS! holy eternal SPIRIT! cause our souls here to build, and on this rock to bottom all our hopes of heaven and happiness. Oh! for grace to try thee, thou blessed JESUS, as GOD the FATHER hath tried thee, and found thee

faithful. Never, never; shall I be ashamed or confounded while I trust in thee, and rest upon thee, in life, and death, in time, and to all eternity!

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here reproving Jerusalem, and showing their folly. Towards the close of the Chapter, the LORD gives some sweet promises to the house of Jacob.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn from Jerusalem's transgressions, and from Jerusalem's sorrow, how to form proper conceptions of thy unworthiness, and the LORD's chastisement of thy sins. Surely, as in a mirror, mayest thou behold thy features, and learn from both, the sweet instructions of thy GOD. Well mayest thou take up the language of the Apostle, and say, *what then, are we better than they? No, in no wise: for he hath proved both Jews and Gentiles all under sin.*

Blessed LAMB of GOD! it is thou, and thou only, that art the burden-bearer of thy people's sins, and hast taken them away by thy blood. Oh! for grace to behold thee as the sole cause of JEHOVAH's pardoning love, *having made our peace by the blood of the cross.* And oh! for grace to plead in thee, and by thee, the whole blessings of the covenant promised to Abraham, that no faces of Israel's true seed may gather paleness. It is in thee, blessed JESUS, that all nations shall be blessed. Out of thee, there can be no blessing; but in thee, all blessings to Jacob's seed abound. May my soul live upon thee and thy fulness, and may all the redeemed *sanctify thy name, and sanctify the HOLY ONE of Jacob, and fear the GOD of Israel.*

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

This Chapter, like the former, contains reproofs mingled with promises. The graciousness of GOD to his church is tenderly set forth and there is much of CHRIST in this sweet scripture.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! rebellious as I am, and unworthy of the least of thy mercies, yet, LORD, for thine own great name's sake, let my covering be the covering of thy SPIRIT; and let me never seek strength from the Egypts of this world, in an arm of flesh, or the false confidences of the heart. Oh! precious LORD JESUS! be thou my strength, and salvation, and my sure help in every time of need! And let that sweet promise of thine, everlastingly stay me; *the LORD waiteth to be gracious*; waiteth, not only to give the mercy in the best time, but to prepare his people for the best, and most timely enjoyment of it. Let this be my case, O LORD. Do thou prepare me for the true apprehension of thyself, and of all thy mercies. And when my LORD hath made room in my poor soul for himself, by driving out every other thought, and affection; then may my GOD and Saviour, come and take the entire possession, and reign and rule there, the LORD of life and glory!

Most gracious LORD! how ought my soul to praise thee, for thy graciousness to Zion, in the present hour; that amidst all the languishing state of thy Churches, thou art still merciful in preserving to us our ordinances. Yea, LORD, thou hast not, as our backslidings have deserved, removed our candlestick out of its place. Our sabbaths, we still enjoy. Thy holy word is still in our houses. Our teachers are not shut up in a corner. Oh! for grace to see our mercies and oh! for the LORD's blessing upon them, that they may be rendered blessings indeed to us, and our souls made blessed in the use of them! But is there not, O LORD, cause to fear, that since, in the present day, the light of gospel truth, compared to former times, is *as the light of seven days* in one; if the nation that is called by thy name, loveth *darkness rather than light, because her deeds are evil*, that thine indignation, as this chapter sets forth, *will burn as a devouring flame*? Is there not reason indeed to dread, that *the*

LORD *will put a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err?* And as they persist in despising this CHRIST, and *do not like to retain GOD in their knowledge: the LORD will give them over to a reprobate mind?* Almighty GOD! in reading thy judgments, mingled with mercy, I would rejoice indeed, but *rejoice with trembling*. Oh! give to my *soul songs in the night*. The present hour is an hour that needs such mercies. Do thou, LORD, impart them to thy people, as in the days of old. And now, while thy Church standeth as upon a sea of glass, let the song of Moses and of the LAMB be the song of all thy redeemed: *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints.*

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

This chapter is to the same purport as the former. The prophet setteth forth the folly of all human confidences. Some gracious promises are given towards the close of the chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter, and behold in it a confirmation of all the great and leading truths of GOD! All human strength is like the strength of Egypt; of no dependence in the hour of need: and all confidence therefore in it, will assuredly disappoint. Oh! how forcibly therefore doth this chapter, and indeed the whole scriptures of GOD, proclaim in our ears, *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

Blessed LORD JESUS! let every renewed view of man's nothingness, and of thy all sufficiency, tend yet more and more to endear thee to my heart. Truly, LORD, I see that in vain is salvation looked for from the hills, or from the multitude of mountains. It is thou, and thou alone, O LORD, in thy blood and righteousness, that art the salvation of Israel. Do thou, blessed JESUS, as this chapter graciously sets forth, enable me, at all times, to pass by all other considerations, and get above all fears, and pass over to thee the strong hold of all thy redeemed. In thy Zion, thy Church, thou art,

and ever will be, a wall of fire round about; and the furnace in Jerusalem, both for trying and purifying thy people. LORD! purify my soul among the sons of Levi, and let all my poor offerings be in thee, and by thee, that I may offer to the LORD an offering in thy righteousness.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

The prophet is soaring high in this chapter, and looking far into the blessed things to be brought to pass in gospel times. Under the reign of CHRIST's kingdom, he foretelleth the glorious events of it!

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou King of righteousness! whom JEHOVAH hath set for his own King in Zion! Let my soul trace thee, and feast on thy glories, while I behold thee on thine holy hill! Truly, LORD, by thine own right, as one with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, thou art JEHOVAH, LORD of all! But let me view thee in that softened and endeared light, as CHRIST the Mediator, King of Kings and LORD of lords. For here, LORD, I behold thee as possessing all power, in heaven and on earth. And in the special government of thy spiritual kingdom, let me behold the righteousness, judgment, and peaceableness of it. Almighty Sovereign of thy people, do thou take to thyself thy great power, and reign and rule in the hearts of all thy subjects. Surely, LORD, it belongs to thee, for the kingdom is thine, by gift, and by purchase; by conquest, and by surrender, to order, arrange, appoint, and regulate all the administration of it. And surely it is no less thy sole prerogative, to bring down all thine enemies under thy feet. To thee it belongs to pardon the penitent; to be bountiful to the needy, to comfort the distressed, and to hold forth the sceptre of mercy to the guilty. Yea, LORD, all grace is thine in thy kingdom here; and the glory will be thine, in thy kingdom forever. Oh! LORD JESUS! be thou all, and more than all, that this sweet scripture represents thee; *an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest*. Let thy people, as thou hast said, *dwell in peaceable habitations*: yea, LORD, let them dwell in thee, and then

the work of thy righteousness will be peace, and the effect of thy righteousness will be quietness and assurance for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains a mingled subject of divine judgment and divine mercies, The enemies of GOD and his Church are threatened, and his people comforted.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! I would pass by all other reflections, profitable as they might otherwise be, if I had not thee in view, to look at my LORD JESUS, under some of those most sweet and precious revelations which thy servant the Prophet has given of thee in this chapter. Here I see thee, LORD, the true, the lawful king in Zion! Here I behold thee, the glorious LORD in the midst of thy people! Yes, blessed JESUS, thou wilt be indeed, and thou hast been in all ages, *a place of broad rivers and streams*. For what though thy Church, like Jerusalem of old, hath no navigable seas, nor gallant ships, nor frontiers of her own, to keep her from the common foe; yet if JESUS, in his own person be all these, and more, who shall attack, or dare approach to hurt? What proud galley with oars shall row to the hurt of thine anointed, while JESUS is himself the broad river, and streams of waters? Oh! precious LORD! how eternally secure must they be, who have a GOD in CHRIST for their judge; a GOD in CHRIST for their lawgiver; and a GOD in CHRIST for their king! Take me, dear LORD, under thy protection, and be thou to me, JESUS: for then I shall no longer say, *I am sick*, when thou hast forgiven, and taken away all iniquity, and *cast all my sins into the depths of the sea*.

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have the LORD's judgments declared, which shall finally and fully take place on all out of CHRIST. Explained and illustrated by the gospel standard, it becomes the same, as all the sacred writers of the New Testament declare, concerning the final judgment of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! here is a very solemn chapter, full of awful threatenings: from beginning to end. And, as we read what is here said, may we not, though from the mouth of one, who while professing a knowledge of GOD, in works denied him, take up the same language, and say as he did, *GOD is not a man, that he should lie, neither the Son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*

Almighty LORD! may my soul lie low in the dust before thy divine majesty. And although looking up with humble hopes of acceptance in, and through the person, blood, and righteousness of thy dear SON; yet, LORD, my very flesh trembleth when I think of thy judgments. Thou hast said, and sure it must be accomplished, thou wilt be a *swift witness*. And oh! how exact, how unanswerably true, must be thy testimony! Not one action can be unknown to thee; not a thought escape thy notice. Oh! ye sons of men! think, ere it be too late, how tremendous will be the judgment of all that slight or despise the only possible means of escaping the wrath to come. What everlasting paleness, dread, and horror, will be upon all faces who have rejected CHRIST, the one only ordinance of JEHOVAH for salvation! *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

This chapter is as full of blessed promises to GOD's church, as the former was full of threatenings to GOD's enemies. Under the richest similitudes, is set forth the auspicious era of CHRIST's reign: every verse in it is full gospel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! was there ever a sweeter scripture of description, concerning the blessings of JESUS and his salvation, than what this chapter affords? Behold how the mind of JEHOVAH hath been occupied from everlasting, and in all ages, to comfort his Church in the prospect of the coming Saviour? Think of the infinite love of JEHOVAH, in not only providing redemption, and in such a way; but also in preparing the minds of his redeemed for the full enjoyment of it, when the SON of GOD should come. Under these impressions, look into the gospel, and behold how minutely every feature of the LORD JESUS, corresponded to the prophet's prediction. And then, above all, as it concerns your own everlasting welfare, look narrowly, whether all the blessings here spoken of in JESUS, and by JESUS, be indeed *your* portion. My brother! do, I beseech you, bring home the general mercies of redemption to your own personal and particular state and circumstances. Hath the wilderness of your own fallen state by nature, been made by grace to blossom as a rose? In the dry parched soil of your own corrupt heart, hath the HOLY GHOST been poured out by his regenerating influences, and made the streams of his renewing fruitfulness to abound? Have your blind eyes been opened, and your deaf ears unstopped? Healed by JESUS, is your lameness done away, so that in his name and righteousness you can, and do now leap as an hart; and your tongue, that was once dumb, can, and doth speak of his salvation plainly?

Oh! ye chief of sinners! who are blind, and ignorant of the way of righteousness, behold JESUS is the way, and the highway, in which none that are found walking shall ever err! Oh! ye who have spent your strength for nought, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, hearken diligently to the Prophet's call. He is commanded to say

to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong; behold your GOD shall come and save you! Precious LORD JESUS! do thou come and save, come and bless, come and guide thy redeemed home to thy Zion which is above! Help all thy redeemed to sing now the song of redemption, in this house of our pilgrimage: and ere long to sing it forever before thy throne of glory, *in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* Amen.

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

In this, and the three following chapters, the prophet is relating somewhat of the history of the Church, and not delivering a prophecy. He relates in this chapter, the descent of the king of Assyria upon Judah; and dwells largely upon the arrogant blasphemy of his general, Rabshakeh.

CHAPTER 37

(1) And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. (2) And he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. (3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. (4) It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that is left. (5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. (6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I

will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. (8) So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. (9) And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, (10) Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? (12) Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in Telassar? (13) Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? (14) And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. (15) And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, (16) O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. (17) Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. (18) Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, (19) And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. (20) Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD, *even* thou only. (21) Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: (22) This *is* the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (23) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said,

By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, *and* the forest of his Carmel. (25) I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places. (26) Hast thou not heard long ago, *how* I have done it; *and* of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. (27) Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up. (28) But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. (29) Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. (30) And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat *this* year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. (31) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: (32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. (33) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. (34) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. (35) For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (36) Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. (37) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. (38) And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

CHAPTER 38

(1) In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. (2) Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, (3) And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. (4) Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, (5) Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. (6) And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. (7) And this *shall be* a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; (8) Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. (9) The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: (10) I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. (11) I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. (12) Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me. (13) I reckoned till morning, *that*, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me. (14) Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with looking* upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me. (15) What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done *it*: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. (16) O Lord, by these *things men* live, and in all these *things is* the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. (17) Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. (18) For the grave

cannot praise thee, death can *not* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. (19) The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. (20) The LORD *was ready* to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD. (21) For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay *it* for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. (22) Hezekiah also had said, What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

CHAPTER 39

(1) At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. (2) And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. (3) Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, *even* from Babylon. (4) Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that *is* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. (5) Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: (6) Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. (7) And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (8) Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

CHAPTER 40

SUMMARY

At this Chapter, the Prophet begins a sermon, and a most blessed one it is, which continues to the very close of his prophecy. It is all pure gospel from beginning to end. The HOLY GHOST commands the Prophet to comfort his Church with proclamations of the Redeemer's coming, and the blessed events of his reign.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! hear what thy LORD saith in this blessed chapter, and behold how he hath both commanded his people to be comforted, and provided every means for their comfort. Precious LORD JESUS! in thee and thy great salvation, I do indeed see a most blessed and suitable provision for pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; yea, LORD, in thy full and finished redemption, I do behold how JEHOVAH hath received more than an equivalent, yea double for all the sins of thy people. And shall not my soul rejoice and be comforted in the consolation? Shall not my very heart leap for joy, and my poor tongue, that was dumb by nature, be ready to sing plainly? Yea, LORD, I will sing, and not be afraid, for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song, and thou art become my salvation. I will call upon all within me, and all without me, to join in the joyful service. I will say, with the Prophet, Sing, *O ye heavens, for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.*

But chiefly shall my note of praise be directed to thee, O LORD. While I enjoy the gift, I will bless the Giver; and in the moment when I feel the blessedness of salvation, I will feel yet more the blessedness that JESUS himself is my salvation. Oh! thou gracious Shepherd of thy people! here I behold thee, in all the tenderness of that office; and how truly delightful is it to my soul, that while I read of thee as revealing thyself under such graciousness of characters, I know thee in the full realization of every one of them in my heart, as the great Shepherd of my soul. Never suffer me to lose sight of thy love, O LORD, nor of the power and wisdom which thou possessest,

and by which all the necessities of my soul must be answered. No, LORD, suffer me not to suppose, even for a moment only, that my way is hidden from the LORD, or my judgment, passed over from my GOD. I know, LORD, that thou seest me, and knowest me, with every minute circumstance belonging to me; yea, LORD, it is thou who orderest, and appointest, and regulatest, and will finally bless all. Help me then to wait always upon thee, that, like the eagle, I may renew my strength. For, sure I am, my LORD never faints himself, nor is he weary of helping his poor ones. And, while I am waiting upon JESUS, and looking after him, JESUS, I know, hath been before hand with me, and is looking after me. Precious LORD! comfort me with thyself, and I shall be strong indeed, *and never weary: I shall walk and not faint!*

CHAPTER 41

SUMMARY

The Prophet continues his sermon through this Chapter, which he had begun in the former. The chief points here dwelt upon, are the proofs of GOD'S power and grace, in testimony of his GODHEAD, both in creation and redemption, in opposition to all the idols which the corruption of man's fallen nature hath set up.

REFLECTIONS

HOLY SPIRIT! I beseech thee, by thy gracious influences, enable me to keep silence, and in humble waitings to distinguish thy divine leadings from my own carnal reasonings, when I draw nigh the throne of grace, in and through the LORD JESUS. Then shall I indeed come properly prepared, and renew my spiritual strength. Holy FATHER! I bow with reverence at thy footstool. I have access to the mercy-seat in and through CHRIST, but it was thou that didst call JESUS to be my High Priest, and gave him dominion over the people. Yea, LORD, thou art indeed the first and the last, JEHOVAH from the beginning. Precious LORD JESUS! I see in thee JEHOVAH's counsel, purpose, grace, and will! *To* thee were all the promises made, *in* thee are they all fulfilled, and *from* thee thy people derive all interest and right in them. JESUS hath threshed the mountains, and in him shall all

his people be more than conquerors. Yea, LORD, thou hast subdued sin and Satan *for* us; and it is thou, and thou alone, that wilt subdue those powers *in* us. Oh! LORD! how are the souls of thy redeemed already made joyful in the assurance of victory, and both rejoice in the LORD, and glory in the HOLY ONE of Israel. Blessed, almighty FATHER! blessed forever be thy name, that thou hast opened in the wilderness, to the thirst of poor sinners, fountains and rivers of waters! Thou hast planted *the Plant of Renown!* Thou hast given *the Tree of Life!* Thou hast, as the husbandman, made JESUS as the vine, and his people the branches. It is thou, even thou, that hast called him from the north, and made him blessings to the people. Oh! then, when my soul, which is poor and needy, shall at anytime seek water, and there is none, when all within me and without me is fainting for thirst, Oh! be thou to me, blessed JESUS, as rivers and streams from Lebanon; yea, be in me, a well of water, springing up to everlasting life, so shall I drink and live for ever!

CHAPTER 42

SUMMARY

The Prophet prosecutes the same glorious subject through this Chapter; as in the former. We have a blessed sermon indeed; GOD the FATHER is the preacher; CHRIST, the Mediator, is both text and sermon; and GOD the HOLY GHOST is opening and making application of the blessed contents to the Church in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! help both him that writes, and him that reads, to attend to thy call; and while JEHOVAH is proclaiming concerning his dear SON; and describing him as a most blessed Saviour; O for grace to answer with *hosannas, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD!* Yea, LORD, on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, we would pray for grace to receive the ever blessed JESUS as the FATHER'S first, and best, and most comprehensive of all blessings: and to make use of CHRIST, as the FATHER hath intended, to our salvation; and his glory!

We bless thee, O LORD, for thus holding forth JESUS to the Church. He is, indeed, everything that is lovely in himself, and everything that is gracious for his people. He *is meek, and having salvation*; a full and all sufficient Saviour; an able and well-qualified Saviour; a kind and tender-hearted Saviour. Yea, precious JESUS, thy people know thee, and have proved thee, that thou art all this, and more; for never hast thou, in any one instance, broken *the bruised reed, or quenched the smoking flax*.

But while we praise thee, almighty FATHER, for what thou hast said to us, concerning our glorious Head, and for our encouragement to come to him, we still find cause to bless thee yet more, for what thou hast said to him *for us*, and as our covenant Head; that he is thine *elect, in whom*, as the Church's Surety and Mediator, *thy soul delighteth*. Oh, the blessed assurance, that JEHOVAH is well pleased for his righteousness sake! O the unspeakable felicity, that CHRIST, in our own nature, hath magnified the law, and made it honourable! And O the well-grounded hope, that as CHRIST is given of our GOD and FATHER, as a covenant of the people, and accepted as such; all his people must be found in him, be accepted in him; and be everlastingly secured in him, from all possibility of danger, in life or death, in time and to all eternity! Remember; LORD! we would humbly say, thy word, wherein thou hast caused us to hope. Look upon the face of thine Anointed, and do as thou hast said: *I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever*; are thine own words O LORD; and therefore, as thou hast sworn unto our David, so let his seed be established forever, and do thou *build up his throne unto all generations*! Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

CHAPTER 43

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the former, in which the LORD comforteth the church with assurances of salvation. An allusion is made to Babylon, but still with reference to the rich purposes of grace in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

LISTEN, my soul, to what the LORD speaks, in this most blessed and precious chapter, to JESUS, as the Head of his church, and to his redeemed in him. Read first, the promises, every one of them, as made to the Person of thy great Surety and Saviour; and then, from thy union and interest in him, take them all, in JESUS, and with JESUS, for thy portion. Say, my soul, hath not the LORD created thee, and formed thee; not only in the original creation of nature, but in the new creation by grace? Hath not the LORD called thee, redeemed thee, and declared thee to be his own, both by the purchase of his blood and the conquests of his grace? And is it not true that while the LORD saith, *This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise*; thou art earnestly longing to praise and glorify him for all the tokens of his distinguishing grace? Take then the comfort of in these sweet promises, and let neither fiery flames nor stormy seas, in the most tribulated path yet remaining for thee to go through, distress; for JESUS (he saith it himself) is with thee, and will conduct thee, and carry thee safely through them all. Oh! thou gracious LORD of all my mercies; thou HOLY ONE of Israel, my Saviour!

But, my soul, pause over the blessed view which this chapter opens to thy contemplation, of the price thy JESUS gave for his Church in redemption. He saith, it was *Egypt* for her ransom, and *Ethiopia* and *Seba*. Yes, thou bleeding LAMB of GOD! thou didst indeed make a dear, dear purchase of thy Church, and didst buy her, out of the hands of infinite justice with a sum perfectly incalculable. All the riches and treasures of *Egypt*, and all the pearls and gold of *Ethiopia* and *Seba*, sink to nothing, in comparison of the infinite, and never-to-be-fully compensated in value, blood of CHRIST. Oh! how precious must have been thy Church in thy sight, thou dear Redeemer, when neither JESUS stopped short in giving himself for her, nor GOD the FATHER kept back the SON, the only Son of his bosom, for her redemption? My soul, never lose sight of this; but, in the blessedness of the contemplation, continually say with the apostle, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Be humbled to the dust, my soul, while, in the view of such divine goodness thou callest to mind thine own undeservings. Oh, thou kind, thou tender, thou compassionate LORD JESUS! Have I caused thee to serve with my sins, and wearied thee with mine iniquities? Do I remit my visits to a throne of grace, and seldom go there unless necessities constrain me? Is it so, my honoured LORD, that there is a backwardness in my very nature to the love of thee, and the desire after thy company? LORD! how is it, that I am every day condemning what I every day again trespass in; and find occasion still to mourn over, what still again marks my conduct? Oh, precious JESUS! undertake for me; and deliver me, LORD, in thine own time, which is the best time, from the body of sin and death, into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD. JESUS will make me free, and I shall be free indeed! Amen.

CHAPTER 44

SUMMARY

This Chapter is but a continuation of the same subject as that of the former. The LORD is comforting and encouraging his church; and pronouncing judgment against her enemies.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this blessed Chapter (for it is a very blessed one), until we have first looked up for grace to gather the several improving reflections it affords; and also looked within, into our own hearts, for the discovery of our personal interest in it.

And first, blessed IMMANUEL! my soul would desire to behold thee, as the glorious Head and Representative of thine Israel; unto whom all these precious promises are given, and in whom they become *yea and amen* to thy redeemed in thee. Yea, LORD, thou hast condescended to become all that is here said for thy Church, thy body; and therefore, in thee, and by thee, and from thee, would my soul alone look for all the blessings of the covenant.

And shall I not plead then with thee, my GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, for his righteousness sake, that thou wilt do as thou hast said? Did JEHOVAH promise our glorious Surety, to *pour water*

upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground? And is not my soul athirst for those waters of Bethlehem; and longing for the gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT, more than the hart panteth for the water brooks? Oh! for the sevenfold gifts of the SPIRIT, to be poured out from on high on my soul, until the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water! And oh! for grace to give, and to be continually giving the same full testimony to the truth as it is in JESUS, that I may call myself the LORD'S, and fully and unalterably subscribe with my hand and whole heart, that I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine!

Blessed LORD! would I say, while the heavens are singing salvation, and the lower parts of the earth are sounding praise, let my poor lisping tongue join the charming chorus, that *the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!*

CHAPTER 45

SUMMARY

Much is said in this chapter of Cyrus, king of Persia: but much more of JESUS, King of Zion. It is spoken by way of prophecy in the first relation to Babylon, but in the more direct reference to the redemption by CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

PONDER over this lovely Chapter, my soul, again and again, not dismiss the sweet meditation, until the HOLY GHOST hath written the blessed contents of it in thine inmost affection. Behold the LORD'S love to Israel, in preparing the Church, during so many years, for their temporal deliverer; and calling him by his name, Cyrus, before Cyrus was even born. Then turn thy thoughts to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and contemplate the grace of GOD the FATHER, in the appointment and proclamation of him, the glorious spiritual deliverer of his redeemed, from all eternity. Thou, O blessed JESUS, hast indeed opened the two-leaved gates; yea, the everlasting gates of heaven and salvation, and made thy people joyful, and the loins of thine enemies to be smitten asunder! Thou hast made known thy

sovereignty and power, and manifested that thou art GOD, and that there is none else beside thee, *a just GOD and a Saviour!*

And now, thou blessed LORD! having made peace by the blood of thy cross, to reconcile all things to thyself, dost thou open a new and living way by thy blood, and ever livest to keep it open by thine intercession? Yea, precious JESUS! dost thou so endear a throne of grace to thy people, as to assure us, that the works of thine hands are subject to the prayers of thy saints: that whatsoever shall be for thy glory and their good, they may command, and it shall be done! Oh! for grace to lie lower and lower in the dust before GOD, in proportion as the riches of thy grace are made manifest to the soul, that while the LORD exalts his people, they may humble themselves.

I dare not, LORD! dismiss this precious chapter, without first seeking for grace to convert thy command into a prayer, that while thou biddest me to look unto thee, my soul may feel the grace going forth into lively exercise, so to look to JESUS, as to have mine eyes enlightened, and to rest by faith upon JESUS, until my whole soul be warmed *into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST!* Blessed LORD! I do pray, that mine eyes, mine heart, my whole soul and body and spirit, yea, all the faculties thou hast given me, may bow in love, and grace, and praise, and prayer, before thee. Let all the earth witness for me; yea, all the powers of heaven, that to thee my knee bows; before thee my whole nature joyfully bends. *Surely in the LORD have I righteousness and strength.* In the LORD do all my powers find justification, and glory, in CHRIST here, and in CHRIST to all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 46

SUMMARY

The prophet here draws a fine contrast between the idol-gods, and the LORD GOD of Israel; and thence takes occasion to invite the people to the love of GOD, and confidence in him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I find it good to see the LORD's hand, in every word of the LORD's scripture. While in this chapter we trace the gracious

purposes of GOD to his people, in setting forth the folly and weakness, as well as the wickedness of idolatry, we discover also his grace, and mercy, and love. Oh! how condescending is the LORD, in thus appealing, for the testimonies of his own truth and faithfulness, to the plainest evidences around them.

While this short, but interesting chapter, makes a general appeal to the Church at large, how blessedly doth it more immediately address the ancient believer! Methinks I would have our aged fathers in the Church very frequently peruse this precious portion, by way of forming one of their songs in the house of their pilgrimage: and as they read the gracious promises of a gracious GOD in CHRIST, compare what the LORD saith with their own experiences; until, like *Joshua's* appeal to Israel, they can, and do say, *Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD their GOD hath here spoken concerning them; but all are come to pass as it is this day.*

My venerable father! (if peradventure these lines should fall under The eye of one of GOD's ancient believers) think, I beseech you, what a rich volume of promises is here brought into one view, for you; and how sure, if you know GOD's CHRIST, the whole is *yea and amen* in JESUS. He that first called you from the womb of his grace, hath borne you to the present hour; and amidst all your growing infirmities, JESUS is *your* JESUS still. Friends may forsake you; your dearest and nearest relations you may be a burden to; yea, you may be a burden to yourself; but hear what JESUS saith, *Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you.* The same that JESUS was when he called you, the same is he now *to* you, and *for* you; and the same will he be forever. Oh! the preciousness, amidst all the changes in us, and by us, to live upon an unchangeable GOD in CHRIST! May the LORD give grace and faith in lively exercise to every believer, to give GOD the credit of GOD, and to gather up the feet in the bed of death, as good old Jacob did when dying, that he may cry out, with him, *I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD!*

CHAPTER 47

SUMMARY

The subject of this chapter is the destruction of Babylon. But the, Prophet, looking into gospel times, hath in view a much greater ruin than that of the Chaldean empire; even the universal ruin of Satan's kingdom, which, in scripture language, is called Babylon, The pride, cruelty, and enchantment, here spoken of, are all typical of the great apostate spirit's behaviour towards the Church of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

ONE of the most comprehensive improvements to be made at the close of this chapter, in the view of the very different termination set forth to the people of GOD, and to his enemies, may be summed up in the words of our Prophet: *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him!*

Reader! take a short view of both. Behold, in the representation of Babylon, the delicacy, splendour, pomp, and pleasure in which she rioted for a while: but behold, again, in a moment, in one day, what ruin followed! Such, but in an infinitely greater degree, is the state of all the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST. As JESUS told some in his days, so in every age the same are discoverable: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the work of your father ye will do.* For the wretched wages of carnal honour, how unweariedly do they drudge in his service, wear his livery, speak his language, and promote the interests of his kingdom! And what can the end be but Death? *My soul: come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour; be not thou united!*

Behold the people of GOD! How often harassed and oppressed by their foes! And when, by sin and rebellion, their Babylonish enemies bring them into subjection, how heavily do they sometimes groan, being burthened: who shall speak of their inward conflicts with sin and Satan, and an unbelieving heart? Who shall describe their outward fears? In all their pilgrimage state, what exercises do they experience from the many ups and downs through which they pass! Nevertheless, the LORD is still bringing them on, and bringing them through, and will at length make them more than conquerors, through his grace helping them. Reader! be it your portion and mine,

to see that we are of this household of faith for then we shall go from strength to strength, amidst all the Babylonian conflicts of our warfare, till we come to appear before our GOD, our JESUS, in his Zion!

CHAPTER 48

SUMMARY

As the foregoing Chapter treated particularly of Babylon, so this hath a peculiar respect to the house of Israel. The LORD, in opening to the house of Jacob a view of their sins, plainly and fully shows, that all the blessings bestowed upon Israel were the pure result of grace.

REFLECTIONS

READER! *stand still, and see the salvation of God!* Behold, as this Chapter most blessedly sets forth, *from* whom that salvation comes; *by* whom it is accomplished; *in* whom it is alone found; and *to* whom the whole glory results. The song of heaven, and the hymn of the church upon earth, are both tuned upon the same note: To JESUS the praise is given, for *he was slain, and hath redeemed us to GOD by his blood.*

But oh! amidst this pleasing assurance, how painful is the thought that neither the consciousness of grace freely given, in all that is past: nor the continuance of grace in all that is present: nor all the hopes and expectations of grace for all that is to come; are found sufficient in their persuasive pleadings, to keep alive in the soul, obedience and the dedication of the heart to the LORD. Thou knowest, LORD, that transgressors thy children would be from the womb; but this did not stop thy bowels of love from yearning over us in our lost estate. Precious JESUS! be thou to us still JESUS. LORD, teach us to profit; lead us by the way we should go: and grant that, amidst all our unworthiness, thy grace may never depart from us: but keep us by thine almighty power through faith unto salvation. And while to the wicked there is no peace; give us that peace, in

thee and thy righteousness, *keeping the heart and mind in JESUS CHRIST Amen.*

CHAPTER 49

SUMMARY

This most interesting Chapter contains the outlines of the covenant of redemption, in the solemn transactions between GOD the FATHER and GOD the SON, concerning salvation. This subject is carried on without interruption from beginning to end.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I charge it upon you, as I desire to feel the full impression upon my own mind, that the subject, as well as the contents, of this most precious Chapter, be not dismissed, before all its blessed truths, under the divine teaching, be properly received and enjoyed in both our souls. The solemn transactions here recorded, of what passed, between our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, and our most blessed LORD, concerning the recovery of our poor lost and fallen nature, are, in fact, the bottom and foundation of all grace and mercy, given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. All that we receive in pardon, in the regeneration of our nature, our adoption and high calling in CHRIST JESUS, our assurance of salvation in grace here, and glory to all eternity; all are the result of those covenant engagements, which this most blessed Chapter records, and which took place between the high contracting parties, before the fall of man, yea, before the foundation of the earth was laid. Pause then, and trace the wonderful subject through all its parts. Behold GOD the FATHER, in his love to our poor nature; who so loved us, as to give his only begotten SON, *to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Behold GOD the SON, who so loved us, as to *give himself for us.* Behold GOD the HOLY GHOST, as testifying the same, in bringing the Church acquainted with her mercies, and not only revealing the glad tidings of salvation, but inclining the hearts of the children to the belief of the truth of JESUS, and making them *willing in the day of his power.* Oh! what everlasting praise, love, and adoration, have we now to

offer, and shall have eternally to present, to the holy, undivided, THREE IN ONE, JEHOVAH, for these unspeakable mercies of GOD in CHRIST!

Reader! let us seek grace to receive the blessed truths contained in this Chapter, to live up to the faith, and in the enjoyment of them, during our whole continuance upon earth, until we come to realize the full possession of them in everlasting glory. Precious JESUS! may we behold thee as the whole of the covenant. All the obligations of it have been wrought by thee; all its blessings are *from* thee; and all the concerns of it, and of thy people's happiness, are entrusted to thee. Help me then, O LORD, to look more to thee in every blessing, as the author and procurer of it! There is more of thee in the most common mercies, than thy people are conscious of: thy death hath secured our life, thy cross hath purchased our crown! *To he be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

CHAPTER 50

SUMMARY

Notwithstanding certain parts, here and there, in this Chapter, which may, at the first glance, appear to have an historical allusion to Babylon and the captivity: yet the great and evident point in the whole hath reference to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. His person, offices, and character, are strongly marked.

REFLECTIONS

LAMB of GOD! do I not behold thee, in this representation of the Prophet, *the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*? And though thou didst set thy face as a flint, amidst all the despisings of men, when condescending to the deepest abasement; yet, LORD, thou hadst indeed the tongue of the learned, and now, thou knowest how to speak a word in season to weary souls, as thou didst then, when thine own soul was put to grief, and it pleased the LORD to bruise thee. Oh! speak to me that sweet word, in every season, which may make me rest with full assurance of faith on thy blood and righteousness!

Why, blessed LORD, was it, that thou, who art thyself the *light*, and the *life* of men, didst walk in darkness? Wherefore wast thou deserted of the FATHER, when, in that unequalled season of agony on the cross, it forced dolorous cries from thy soul? Was it, dearest JESUS, that thy people might know, from thy bright example, where to look, and in whom to confide? And wast thou for a time deserted, and in darkness, that thy people might not be deserted forever? Arise, ye poor benighted souls, who now walk in darkness! Look unto JESUS, and let him be your light, and your life, and your salvation! And while others are walking in the glow worm sparks of their own confidence, do ye behold the glory of the LORD risen upon thee, whose light shall no more go down, neither cause thee to lie down in sorrow, for the LORD JESUS shall be to thee an *everlasting light*, and *thy* GOD *thy* glory!

CHAPTER 51

SUMMARY

Here is another blessed Chapter, full of CHRIST, and the blessings of his gospel, the LORD is calling upon his people, under several endearing characters, to attend to him, as the only source of their hope and salvation.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! for grace to seek the LORD, and to follow after righteousness! Blessed the soul, that is thus taught of GOD; he will hearken unto the LORD. Let it be my portion, O LORD, so to do, and to be the follower of them, *who through faith and patience, inherit the promises*. And surely, blessed JESUS, I shall fix my eyes, and heart, and affections, all on thee, and prize thy rich salvation while I keep in remembrance the rock from whence I was hewn, and the hole of the pit from whence I was digged.

Oh! for grace, yet in larger, fuller portions, to know the LORD, and so to know him, as to live upon him by faith, until I arrive to the full and everlasting enjoyment of him by sight! Such are the privileges of thy people: LORD, let such be mine! Then shall I not fear the reproaches of men, nor regard their revilings. Occupied with

higher objects, my soul will unceasingly be engaged in contemplating thee, and the fulness of that righteousness, which is forever, and thy salvation, which is from generation to generation. Awake then, O LORD, and cause me to triumph in thy strength; and oh! that, through thee; my soul may be perpetually awake to follow thee in the regeneration, that when thou comest to make up thy jewels, I may be found among *the redeemed of the LORD, which shall return and come with singing unto Zion, when everlasting joy shall be upon our heads, and we shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away!* Amen.

CHAPTER 52

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS, by his servant the Prophet, is still comforting his Church; calls upon her to live upon, and rest in the full enjoyment of his free salvation; holds forth many sweet promises, and points to the loveliness of his servants, by whom he sends his gospel of peace.

REFLECTIONS

READER! may it be your mercy and mine, that, while reading this blessed scripture, we may both awake, at the call of JESUS, and put on his beautiful garments of salvation, and find strength to our souls in his righteousness! May we have grace to shake ourselves from every defilement, and never let those souls of ours be again sullied with sin, after having been washed, and made white in the blood of the LAMB.

And do thou LORD, who hast redeemed us without money, fulfil all thy precious promises, which this chapter contains. Give us to know thy name, and the glories of it; and may we make use of it, by faith, for every occurrence. Thy name is WONDERFUL; and thou wilt perform wonders for thy people. Thy name is GRACIOUS; and thou wilt be most gracious, in pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin. Thy name is the HEARER OF PRAYER; and thou wilt be found of all them that call upon thee. Yea, LORD! so full and blessed is thy

name, in every situation of thy people, that whatever names our wants may create, thou, LORD, hast a name infinitely beyond the whole, and able to answer all. Oh! then, *cause me to know thy name, that I may put my trust in thee.*

And while I read with what pleasure my GOD himself beholds the feet of his servants, whom he sends to publish, in his holy mountain, tidings of peace; let me welcome the faithful messenger, in the name of the LORD: and, above all, may it be my constant delight to sit at the feet of JESUS, to hear the gracious words that proceed out of his mouth!

Blessed servant of JEHOVAH! let me never cease to look on thee, never cease to love thee, never cease to adore thee! Let the kings and great ones of the earth shut their mouths at thee; be it my portion *to behold thy face in righteousness, so shall I be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

CHAPTER 53

SUMMARY

This may very well be called the Chapter of Chapters, concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST; in which the two great features of his character are drawn to the full: the sufferings of CHRIST; and the glory that should follow. The Prophet, under the HOLY GHOST, most blessedly sets forth the LORD JESUS, under both.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! ponder well this blessed, this glorious, this divine chapter; and do not dismiss it, until the LORD hath both taught thee the many gracious things contained in it, and brought home all that is said of JESUS to thine own experience and joy. And when dismissing it from thy present review, dismiss it but for a short season, and let thy frequent return to it, in solemn meditation, testify how very precious every part and portion of it is in thy esteem.

Behold here, my soul, thy JESUS, under his twofold character, in which the SPIRIT of CHRIST, which was in the Prophets, did signify, when testifying of his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. And as thou passest over the several parts of the chapter, see

whether thou art not constrained to cry out, in the same words as the LORD JESUS himself did, when he made the hearts of his disciples burn within them in the account: *Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

And oh! thou precious JESUS! who art the sum and substance of this chapter, and of the whole Bible, give me to enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of the greatness of what is here related of thee, in the all-sufficiency of thy sacrifice, and of my personal interest in it. Yea, LORD! I see that thou hast, by the dignity of thy person, and the glory of thy work, made full satisfaction, yea, more than satisfaction, for all the injuries which sin hath occasioned among the works of GOD! The glory of GOD's holy law, which sin had darkened, is more than restored by the perfect obedience of the LORD, our righteousness. And the image of GOD, which sin had defaced in man, is more than brought back to perfection in that nature which thou hast taken, in a pure and holy portion of it, and which, by being united to the GODHEAD, gives to all thine actions and sufferings the merit of the GODHEAD. Oh! for grace then to believe, and to stand in that belief, eternally secure, that GOD the FATHER's covenant promise is and must be fulfilled: *Thou shalt see of the travail of thy soul, and be satisfied.* The dew of thy birth shall be as the womb of the morning. Thy people shall all be righteous in thy righteousness; and in thee and thy glory *they shall shine as the stars forever and ever.* Amen.

CHAPTER 54

SUMMARY

The LORD here comforts the Gentile Church, by showing her the fulness of her riches in CHRIST, and calling upon her to rejoice in the consciousness of her relationship to her LORD and Husband, her Maker. Many sweet and precious promises are contained in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! shall we not join this hallelujah, for redemption to the Gentile church, when we, as poor Gentiles, have, or ought to have, so much interest in it? Hath JEHOVAH indeed vouchsafed salvation, and granted repentance unto life, to the Gentiles also; and shall not we glorify GOD, for the unspeakable gift? Do you not know, have you not felt, hath not GOD the HOLY GHOST opened your eyes to see, that we were once afar off, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and being without GOD in the world? And are we now brought nigh by the blood of CHRIST; married to JESUS, and made heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST? And shall we not sing the song of salvation to GOD, and to the LAMB? Oh! for grace to enter into the full personal enjoyment of this sweet scripture, and to take part with the Gentile Church, breaking out on the right hand and on the left, and to feel interested in all that concerns Zion.

And oh! thou blessed, glorious, gracious Husband of thy people! we would hail thee as our maker, redeemer, surety, husband, friend! Thou art indeed *the HOLY ONE of Israel, the GOD of the whole earth!* Thou art indeed, in one and the same moment, our *Ishi*, our JESUS; for thou hast said, *I am married unto you, saith the LORD; and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.* Bring all thy redeemed, LORD, where thou thyself art, to behold thy glory, for thou hast said, *where I am, there shall my servant be.*

And do thou, blessed JESUS, until thou comest to take all thy ransomed home, fulfil all those gracious promises, to our soul's joy. Noah's waters shall no more cover the earth, neither shall the LORD be angry with his redeemed in JESUS. Though mountains melt at thy presence, thy people shall behold thy face with joy. JESUS will teach, JESUS will comfort, JESUS will be the portion of his afflicted. Hearken, ye enemies of the cross, hearken to what our GOD hath said, in these sweet promises, and give over all your fruitless attempts to hurt his anointed. No weapon shall be formed to hurt them; for the smith, the maker of weapons is under the control of our GOD. Both the heritage and the righteousness of GOD's people are in himself; how then can any fail? Be wise now, therefore, O ye enemies of my GOD, for he that is his peoples portion, will be his

people's glory and defense. Let every foe hear, and tremble; whosoever shall gather together against any of CHRIST'S little ones, shall fall for CHRIST'S sake! Hallelujah! Amen.

CHAPTER 55

SUMMARY

We have here a continuance of the same blessed subject as before. As the Prophet had held forth CHRIST'S person, and then his Church; so here these blessed subjects are followed with gracious invitations, promises, and assurances of mercies in him.

REFLECTIONS

AND is this gospel call to every poor thirsty sinner, whose soul is scorched in this dry and thirsty land of sin? Doth JESUS indeed send out his heralds, yea, come himself with the invitation? Do I hear him say, as he said in the last great day of the feast, *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink?* What! is the invitation so general, so great, so extensive, that to *thirst* only for CHRIST, is a sufficient qualification to find CHRIST? He doth not say, If any good man, any righteous man, any deserving man, thirst; but the proclamation from the court of heaven is simply, *if any man thirst!* Oh! for grace to hear and know the joyful sound, and that he who gives the call, may give also the thirst of soul, to come at the gracious invitation. Precious LORD JESUS! let it be the portion, both of him that writes, and him that reads, to receive, on our bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, the unspeakable gift, and come to the waters without money and without price. Like David, may we cry out, "Oh! that one would give me of these waters of our spiritual Bethlehem, even JESUS and his full salvation, to drink!" 2 Samuel 23:15.

Do thou, HOLY SPIRIT! give us, as poor sinners, to see, while reading this blessed scripture, that we are they that have indeed spent our time, and talents, and substance, while pursuing any thing but JESUS, as those who spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour in any righteousness but his, for that which

cannot satisfy. Do thou, LORD, incline our ear, that we may hear, and come to JESUS, who is himself both the whole of the covenant, and the sure mercies of David. He saith himself, who is the *faithful witness* in heaven, that he will cause them that love him to inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. And do thou help us, oh thou SPIRIT of all truth, to have such views of the freeness, fulness, and greatness of GOD's rich mercy in CHRIST, as may remove forever all our contracted notions of sovereign grace, that we may come to Him, who hath abounding pardons for abounding sin, and can, and will, save to the uttermost all who come to GOD by him. And, LORD, let thy word, like the precious influences of heaven, have free course upon our souls, to run and be glorified. Fulfil thine own gracious promises; cause it never to return void, but to be blessed, and accomplish thy merciful purposes. And then shall we go forth here, during a life of grace, like the flourishing plants of the earth; and ere long be among the trees of the LORD's right-hand planting, in the paradise of our GOD in heaven, in and through the glorious salvation of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 56

SUMMARY

The subject of this Chapter is very different from that of the preceding: it consists of threatenings, mingled with promises; cautions to the watchmen of Israel, and an awful account of unfaithful shepherds.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED GOD! how truly refreshing to the soul of a poor dry barren believer, is the recollection of that covenant, which is everlasting and sure, and ordered in all things! What, though I have nothing; though I am nothing; yea, though I am worse than nothing; yet, convinced of an interest in this, I have riches, yea, durable riches, and righteousness, and a name better than sons and daughters. Children are uncertain comforts, and sure cares: but JESUS is a sure and abiding comfort, in which every promise is *yea and Amen*.

Grant, gracious LORD, that I may be among the gathered to CHRIST JESUS, that on that day, when he maketh up his jewels, I may be found among the number whom JESUS will own! And, LORD, keep me, keep thy Church, keep all thy redeemed, from unfaithful watchmen and shepherds. But do thou, in compassion to thy fold, give them pastors after thine own heart, who may feed them with true understanding and knowledge; and direct their souls to thee, that they may go in and out, and find pasture.

CHAPTER 57

SUMMARY

The subject of this Chapter is not unsimilar to the former. The HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Prophet, is reproving the unfaithfulness of the people. The close of the Chapter contains one of the most sublime and consolatory representations of JEHOVAH, in the greatness and graciousness of his character, that can be conceived.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn, from this blessed chapter, to form a right estimate of the departure of the faithful. They enter into rest. They are taken away from the evil to come. And inasmuch as a state of rest surpasseth toil and trouble; a state of holiness, that of temptation; and victory is better than conflict; by so much ought believers to rejoice, when the souls of the faithful enter into their rest in JESUS. *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*

But what an awful state, as here described, is that of the unreclaimed sinner! And what a melancholy close to a life of sin and vanity, must be a departure under vexation of spirit! *Come not thou, my soul, into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.*

From such views of the horrible lives, and more tremendous deaths, of unawakened sinners, do thou, my soul, turn thy thoughts, to contemplate the wonders of grace, recorded in this chapter,

concerning that High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. Oh! for grace to know, to feel, to enjoy, the blessedness here promised! LORD! I would say, do as thou hast said. Make my soul, by thy grace, suited for thyself: and then come and dwell in me, come and revive me; come and comfort me, that the bones broken by sin may rejoice.

Blessed be my GOD, thou hast indeed smitten for sin, and thou hast healed. GOD the HOLY GHOST hath convinced of sin; and it is the same GOD the HOLY GHOST that hath convinced of the righteousness of JESUS. Yea, LORD! it is thou that hast created indeed the fruit of the lips, and formed my heart anew in CHRIST JESUS. And to whom but to my GOD, in the riches of his sovereign grace, shall I ascribe the praise, that while to the unsubdued corruptions of sinners, there can be nothing but distress, and horror, and tempest, like the troubled ocean; I have peace with my GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! Blessed, blessed forever be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 58

SUMMARY

We must consider this Chapter only as a continuation of the same Sermon. It is full of reproof and instruction; and in the deficiency of all creature righteousness, the HOLY GHOST, by his servant the Prophet, indirectly points to CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! listen to the call of GOD, by the Prophet, for he it is that speaks in his word, and by his word; and let a conscious sense of sin lead thee to seek salvation by CHRIST. And see to it, my soul, that while using all the means of grace, and following every sacred ordinance of the LORD'S appointment, with diligence, under the divine blessing, thou place no stress upon the means, to the forgetting of the end. For what are all ordinances, unless the GOD of ordinances be found and enjoyed in them? So that if, like Israel of old, thou shouldest draw nigh to GOD with thy mouth, and honour him with thy lips, while thine heart is far from him; will not this be to prevent the very design of everything that is sacred; and, instead

of bringing thine heart to GOD, to lead thy heart from GOD? No, my soul! beg of GOD for grace, that thy fasts and thy poor services may be first seasoned by the HOLY SPIRIT, and that the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST may be the grand object of pursuit and desire in every one. Oh! for grace to know these things, and to live in the heart-felt affection for them; for then, JESUS's righteousness will go before thee, and *the glory of the LORD will be thy rereward*.

And, my soul! see to it also, that what the Prophet hath so graciously marked of divine promises be in thy experience. *The LORD will guide continually*, it is said. *He will satisfy thy soul in drought. He will make fat thy bones*. Precious, precious LORD JESUS! be thou my portion, and, sure I am, I shall be well guided, well satisfied, and well fed, with the fatness of redemption. Yea, LORD, I shall be as a well watered garden, whose waters fail not. For thou art the Repairer of the breaches of our poor fallen nature, and the Restorer of paths to dwell in.

And, LORD! help me to reverence thy sabbaths, to delight in, to love, and to esteem them, above all seasons; that, with one of old, I may say, and feel the full blessedness of the expressions, while I say it, *One day in thy courts is better than a thousand*. Yea, my ever blessed LORD JESUS, be thou thyself my sabbaths; for being thyself my sabbaths, my rest, my joy, and sole delight, upon earth, thou wilt be my heaven of sabbaths in the life to come. Amen.

CHAPTER 59

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with describing the nature and consequence of sin. The gracious interposition of JESUS, as a Surety and Intercessor, then follows. And the Chapter closeth with some sweet and precious promises, in consequence of the rich covenant of GOD in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn from what thy GOD hath said, how to form conclusions, both of the LORD's hand in helping his people, and of

the LORD's ear in hearing their prayers. If at any time the enemy triumph, and the LORD seem to hide his face, search for the cause, and trace thine iniquities to their source. Alas! what need have I, like *Ezra*, day by day, to take shame and confusion of face, because *mine iniquities are increased, and my trespasses grown up to the heavens*.

Precious LORD JESUS! what everlasting confusion would cover me, did I not behold thee, as this sweet Chapter represents, coming as the Advocate and Propitiation, the Redeemer and Intercessor, of poor perishing sinners! Thine own arm, O LORD, wrought out deliverance for thy people; for none of thy redeemed were competent to stand with thee. Take, LORD, to thyself all the glory, for thou alone hast wrought all the salvation, while all the blessed consequences of it are to thy people.

And do thou, most gracious GOD and FATHER, for thy dear SON's sake, fulfil all thy promises in the soul of thy people. Put, LORD, thy blessed SPIRIT in us, and we shall live: and let the everlasting efficacy of CHRIST's blood and righteousness, produce the everlasting blessings of both, among thy redeemed, from *henceforth and forever!*

CHAPTER 60

SUMMARY

GOD *the HOLY GHOST is here celebrating the glory and praise of CHRIST, and his Church in him; and showing what a vast accession of redeemed souls shall pour into the Redeemer's kingdom in the latter-day glory.*

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! how shall I refrain, while reading this sweet chapter, from having my whole soul led out in longing desire after thee, and calling upon thee in thine own words, to arise, and shine upon my soul, and let thy glory be seen upon me? Do not I know, that thou, and thou only art the source and fountain of all saving light, and life, and knowledge? Gross darkness had indeed covered our whole nature, until that thou, the Sun of righteousness, didst arise on our benighted souls, with healing in thy wings! And

both now in time, and hereafter to all eternity, all thy redeemed derive everything from thee, for grace, and for glory. Gentiles may well come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising, for without thee all is darkness and as the shadow of death. Not all the lights of heaven and heavenly bodies, no nor all the moons and stars of earthly ordinances, can give light or warmth, without thee. Oh! hither come to JESUS, ye sons and daughters of this benighted world; awake, ye that sleep, and arise from the dead, that CHRIST *may give you light*.

And oh! my blessed GOD and FATHER! how shalt I praise thee, and love thee as I ought, for this blessed, this glorious, this unequalled gift of thy dear SON? Oh! carry on the great design, and let not the gates of thy Zion be shut, day nor night; that men may bring to our *Shiloh* the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought: until the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea; and all shall know, that thou, the LORD JEHOVAH, art our Saviour and Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob! Amen.

CHAPTER 61

SUMMARY

Another Chapter, full of CHRIST, in which, under the spirit of prophecy, the LORD JESUS is the preacher. Some precious promises are added, respecting the Church.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! while I read this Chapter, methinks I would beg for grace and faith to be in lively exercise, that I might figure to myself, my GOD and Saviour, thus speaking to my soul, and to the souls of his people, in the same gracious words, as thou didst in the Jewish synagogue in the days of thy flesh. Surely the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH was upon thee then, when thou wast anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; and surely now thou hast finished redemption work, and art returned to glory, thou wilt send down, according to thy promise before thy departure, the SPIRIT upon thy

people, that all may bear thee witness, while receiving those gracious words which still proceed out of thy mouth. Thine arm of power is the same, and thy love is the same, all the purposes of thy salvation are the same; and thou art now daily, by the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the broken in heart, proclaiming liberty to poor captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Hail! thou Almighty Saviour of poor lost sinners.

And oh! ye ministers of my GOD! behold in JESUS, what ought to be your plan of ministration. Sent by him to act as under-pastors in his name, shall not the meekness, the gentleness of CHRIST, be your pattern and example? Did the SON of GOD come to preach good tidings to the meek and will not ye, who have felt in your own souls the blessedness of those tidings of salvation, gladly go forth, and preach the gospel to every creature. Did JESUS bind up the broken in heart, and open the prison doors to them that were bound; and will not ye tell every poor broken-hearted sinner, whom ye meet with, that there is salvation for them in his name? Was JESUS mild and gracious; not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; and shall not the servant of the LORD, *be apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if GOD peradventure, will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth?*

Ye followers of JESUS! whose seed are known among the Gentiles, and your offspring among the people, behold, here, what is said of your LORD; yea, what he saith most graciously of himself; and put in your humble modest claim, that he may comfort all who mourn, and give unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Blessed LORD JESUS? cause all thy people, thy redeemed, to rejoice in thee, as thou hast rejoiced in the salvation of JEHOVAH! And while thou art clothing all thine, with the garments of thy salvation, and covering them with the robe of thy righteousness; cause them to live to thy glory, and let their righteousness and praise in thee *spring forth before all the nations.* Amen.

CHAPTER 62

SUMMARY

The Prophet is at prayer: and GOD is in the confirmation of his promises in CHRIST, and the glories of the Church in her Husband and Saviour, are most joyfully set forth and celebrated.

REFLECTIONS

OH! for a portion of that holy zeal, which inflamed the minds of the faithful of old, when they preferred Zion, and her interests, above their chief joy! But now, alas! it may be said, in the language of the Prophet, *Zion hath none to guide her, among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any to take her by the hand, of all the sons she hath brought up.* Alas! what a day of languishing is Zion now in! Oh! that the LORD would take to himself his great name, and come forth in his own glorious cause, conquering and to conquer; that those sweet promises might be fulfilled, when *his land should no more be termed forsaken, nor be found desolate;* but that *Zion's walls might become salvation, and her gates praise!*

And oh! ye watchmen, whom our GOD hath set upon the walls of his Jerusalem, see to it, that ye hold not your peace, day nor night! Speak to the people for GOD and his CHRIST; and speak to our GOD, for his people in CHRIST. Ye know the vast, the infinite importance of your situation, and the awful responsibility in which the service of the sanctuary placeth you. Like watchmen, therefore, do ye not only watch over your own souls, but over the souls of the people. Look well to their state, to their order, and discipline. Mark well how others walk *with* CHRIST, and *in* CHRIST. See the tendencies of the LORD in his word, in his providence, in his grace, to his Church and people. *Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.* Observe, and tell the people of the motions and advances of the enemy upon the ramparts of Zion; and above all, look up with holy earnestness and importunity to the Great King of Zion, and wrestle with him in prayer, that *when the enemy cometh in like a food, the SPIRIT of the LORD may lift up a standard against him.* Blessed LORD JESUS: make thy Zion, thy Church, as thou hast here

said, *the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD*, and as a city that thou hast sought out, and which shall never be forsaken!

CHAPTER 63

SUMMARY

This is a most blessed Chapter, descriptive of the victories of the LORD JESUS CHRIST over his enemies, and the triumphs of his love and grace in redemption.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! ponder well the blessed things contained in this Chapter; and while the Prophet, in the name of the Church, is humbly enquiring, who CHRIST is, and in what garments he appears; do thou see whether thou canst answer the enquiry, to thy joy, in the most satisfying tokens of thy Redeemer's Person and righteousness. Who is this, that cometh up with salvation, but the LORD, mighty to save he is One with JEHOVAH, in the divine nature; and no less one with us in the human; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. His name is indeed *wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, the Everlasting FATHER, the Prince of Peace!* Surely, LORD, thine own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with thee; and though in all things it behoved thee to be made like unto thy brethren; yet, in redemption-work, thou trodest the wine-press of the wrath of GOD alone. And amidst all our rebellions, and forgetfulness of thee, never didst thou forget us, or forego our interests. In all our afflictions, thou wast afflicted. Thy love, and thy pity, allowed of no abatement, for thou wast always JESUS: *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Oh! then LORD, let nothing of the waywardness of thy children, thwart the gracious designs of thy love; but remember that we are but dust, and let thy strength and thy zeal, and the sounding of thy bowels, never be restrained. We throw ourselves upon Covenant relationship, and beseech of thee, our GOD, to remember that most blessed promise, in which thou hast said, *I wilt not turn away from them to do them good and I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me!*

CHAPTER 64

SUMMARY

This Chapter is one continued strain of prayer, from beginning to end. It is to the same amount in supplication, as the conclusion of the former chapter, and contains the fervent cries of the Church for the divine manifestations.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us learn from this Chapter, how we are to pray, and what we are to pray for. Surely, the HOLY GHOST hath caused this prayer of the Church; which he awakened by his grace, to be recorded and handed down through all ages of the Church, as a standing pattern of what words we are to take, and to come with before the LORD: And how sure that the LORD will hear the prayer he awakens in grace, and answer it in mercy.

Blessed SPIRIT of grace and supplication! thou who didst thus teach the Church; LORD, I beseech thee, teach me! For unless my soul feels thy sweet influences in an hour of prayer, too well I know, that my poor soul will be indifferent and unawakened to the employment, and cold and lifeless in it. But if thou, LORD, wilt graciously set me to pray, sure I am, thou wilt give me a spirit in prayer; And then shall I call upon a gracious Covenant GOD in CHRIST, and neither the mountains of sin in my poor nature, nor the hills of unbelief in my soul will stop the gracious communications from above; but JESUS will be glorified in causing his grace to shine upon my soul; and GOD will manifest himself, as a prayer-hearing GOD, to my humble petitions in JESUS. *Then shall I run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart.*

CHAPTER 65

SUMMARY

We have here much, yea very much of CHRIST, and they who would read this Chapter profitably, here need of much of the SPIRIT

of CHRIST to instruct them in it. JESUS, in the person of his servant the Prophet, in speaking of the call of the Gentiles, and of the sad obstinacy of the Jews. Towards the close of the Chapter we have a cluster of the richest gospel promises.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass by all lesser considerations, to attend, with heart-felt joy, to the many precious things said in this Chapter, concerning CHRIST and his Church: for surely every promise here is, richer and more valuable than a pearl, and all the gold of Ophir.

And, first, may GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath given such blessed views of the LORD JESUS, give us grace to behold, and take home to our own hearts, what is said of and by the LORD JESUS, that *our meditation of Him may be sweet*. And let us not fail, while hearing CHRIST, in such repeated endearments of character, crying out, *Behold me! Behold me!* so to look up, and indeed behold him, as to be saved by him! For surely, such repeated calls to behold CHRIST, must argue a dead heart if we regard them not. GOD the FATHER hath commanded it, *Behold!* (he saith) *my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth!* GOD the HOLY GHOST saith also, by his servant John the Baptist: *Behold the LAMB of GOD which taketh away the sin of the world*. And the LORD JESUS himself; with reiterated invitations of grace, enjoins the same, when he saith, *Behold me. Behold one!* Reader! what are your apprehensions and views of these things? Isaiah 42. John 1:29.

When we have duly pondered over the subject, as it concerns JESUS, and our knowledge and enjoyment of him, let us next consider the many gracious calls and promises given to the Church in JESUS, in this chapter, as it concerns the Church. And oh! for grace here also to receive every promise, and to act faith upon all GOD's covenant promises in CHRIST as the sure earnest of the SPIRIT in the heart. Never, surely, was there a more blessed cluster of promises brought together, for the Church continually to feast upon, than what the HOLY GHOST hath set before us in this Chapter. Let us see to it, my brother, that we accept them in this point of view, and remember, that they are not *yea and nay*, but of GOD in CHRIST are all *yea and amen*; certain, unquestionable, and sure. LORD, I would say, both for myself and Reader, cause them to be all *yea and amen*; to thy glory and our exceeding great joy in CHRIST JESUS forever.

CHAPTER 66

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here come to the close of his Prophetical writings, and a blessed close he makes. The Chapter seems to be but the continuation of the same subject as the former; full of consolation to GOD's people, and marking all their mercies in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over the close of Isaiah's prophecy, and observe with the humblest reverence and godly fear, how the Prophet in folding up his ministry, calls the Church in this last Chapter, once more, finally and fully, to the contemplation of JEHOVAH. With what a solemn close; *Thus saith the LORD*. As if, with an indelible seal, the whole was to be left upon the minds of the people. As if the Prophet had given in his commission, with reminding them, that what he had delivered, was all in the name, and by the authority: of Him that was, and that is, and that is to come! And observe how he speaks of his distinguishing character: *The heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool*. GOD's throne is indeed everywhere, but in an eminent special manifestation of himself, as the Prophet was commissioned to set forth. His throne is in the person of CHRIST. It is there that he promiseth to come and meet and bless his people. CHRIST is, and was the mercy-seat; and in him, and from him, he communeth with *the man that is poor, and of a contrite spirit*, His dwelling is in CHRIST; his ordinances are in him; the whole of his mercy, grace, goodness, love, as displayed to poor fallen man, are all in him. And therefore to slight JESUS is to slight GOD in CHRIST; to kill an ox in sacrifice, is as if the sinner crucified the SON of GOD afresh, because he thereby intimates as if the one offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST, once for all, had not forever perfected them that are sanctified. Pause, Reader, over the solemn view, and let us learn to bless GOD, more and more for his unspeakable gift!

And oh! thou blessed, eternal, glorious JEHOVAH! give us grace to hail thee, in thy threefold character of person, FATHER, SON, and

HOLY GHOST; and give us grace to accept all thy gracious purposes of salvation, thus brought home and unfolded to us, in and by JESUS CHRIST. Truly, LORD, we may, and do cry out, in the words of this scripture, *who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?* Shall the earth bring forth in one day? But, in truth and indeed, LORD, in that one memorable day of JESUS's incarnation, a nation was born in him at once; and therefore shall not every poor sinner, in his new birth in CHRIST, say, Oh! LORD! thou hast indeed *brought to the birth*, and caused *to bring forth*. Thou hast caused *to bring forth*, and *not shut the womb*, oh our GOD! we will therefore rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her in her glorious King; and we will in him, and his name, milk out the breasts of her consolations, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!

Farewell, Isaiah! farewell, thou servant of the most high GOD while we bless thy LORD and Master, because he hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, we would love thee, as the instrument of so much good to his Church and people, as it hath pleased the LORD, by thy preaching and writings, to accomplish; and in thine own words, we would say, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth, good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy GOD reigneth!* Thou art entered into his rest. Thou hast found, according to thine own prophecy, that JESUS is the rest, *wherewith he causeth the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing.* And He that gave thee, and the Patriarchs and Prophets, faith to live and die in the full enjoyment of faith, *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them:* will give us grace and faith now to be *the patient followers of them, who through faith and patience now inherit the promises!*

Oh! thou *to whom give all the Prophets witness!* Do thou, blessed LORD JESUS, give witness by thy HOLY SPIRIT in our hearts, to their word; that *seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, we may lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and that we may run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto thee, the Author and finisher of our faith!* Amen.

JEREMIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE are now about to enter upon the inspired writings of *Jeremiah*. This book of GOD very properly follows that of *Isaiah*; not indeed according to the order of time, for several of the other Prophets placed after Jeremiah ministered in the Church of GOD, between the period of *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* in their services; but from the particular and especial nature, of their distinct commissions. *Isaiah* was directed in the view of gospel days, to bring glad tidings of good. *Jeremiah* was commissioned with tidings of evil. *Isaiah* is therefore, and not unsuitably, called the *evangelical* Prophet, and *Jeremiah* the *mournful* Prophet.

The Reader is called upon, at the very entrance of *Jeremiah's* writings, to notice his commission and authority. The LORD declared to him at his first call, that before he came forth from the womb, he had ordained him *to be a prophet unto the nations*. So that *Jeremiah's* warrant stands unquestionable. It also pleased the Great Head of the Church, to extend the labours of *Jeremiah* to a more than ordinary length. He speaks of beginning his services, in the thirteenth year of *Josiah*, the son of *Amon*, king of *Judah*: and we know, that those services continued to the time that *Nebuzaradan*, captain in the king of *Babylon's* army, carried away *Israel* captive to *Babylon*: a period of between forty and fifty years.

The general scope and tendency of *Jeremiah's* prophecy corresponded to the times in which he lived. The Church was then sunk indeed most awfully. And the LORD was preparing for his people the chastisement of a *seventy years* captivity. *Jeremiah* laboured therefore under such distressing views in prospect of the evil he lived to see accomplished: so that the one object of his ministry, was to call the people to repentance. Hence we find the usual strain of his sermons, is reproof and expostulation. Here and

there, however, the Prophet was led by the HOLY GHOST, to speak most fully and blessedly, of the Person, Work, and Offices of him that was to come, *to bring his prisoners out of captivity, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*

The era of the Church, in which this blessed book of prophecy was written, seems to have been about six hundred years before the advent of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. I only detain the Reader here, as in the entrance upon our perusal of every preceding book, in calling upon him to join my

spirit in prayer, before the high throne of GOD in CHRIST, that an unction from GOD the HOLY GHOST may be upon both Writer and Reader, while going over these sacred records: that while it is promised in the Prophets, *all the children shall be taught of the LORD;* we may be proved to be the children of GOD in being taught of him. And as our ever adorable LORD, graciously marked the true evidences of divine teaching, in that all that were taught of the FATHER of coming to him; we may be of the happy number, who came to him, *to whom give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission Of sins.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with the account of Jeremiah's being called to the ministry. He is instructed by two visions. The LORD's commands to him, and his promise to be with him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us, as we enter upon the subject of Jeremiah's ministry, and especially while we behold him thus divinely called, and divinely appointed; gather the several interesting instructions such an history furnisheth, for our own personal improvement, and mark, in what an endearing point this scripture speaks to us.

See Reader in the first place, the love of GOD over his people, in thus raising up a faithful servant, even in the worst of times, to speak of grace and mercy; when the rebellions of his people merited

nothing but punishment. Behold! in the next point of view, the LORD's predilection of *Jeremiah* and the blessedness of being thus, set apart as he was, for the service of the LORD from the womb. Mark, moreover, how the LORD that called him distinguished him with his favor, and what he set him apart to, he fitted him for. And lastly, fail not to observe, how the LORD undertook to carry him safely, from all his enemies, and to defend and preserve him in all his exercises.

And while we thus behold all these blessings in the case of the Prophet *Jeremiah* let us be on the lookout, that in every minute circumstance that concerns the Church of JESUS now, and the special interests of every individual believer, the LORD is still carrying on the same gracious purposes, and both ordaining and sanctifying the whole of events to his own glory and his Church's welfare.

JESUS was the great Prophet to the nations, and to our nation surely, where we trust the LORD hath a Church. Oh! that all his sent servants, did but know and feel, as *Jeremiah* knew and felt, and in the service of their LORD became more anxious to win souls than to gain a kingdom. Reader! it will be your mercy and mine, if, before we close our meditation on this sweet Chapter, we can find the LORD's purpose concerning ourselves, as fully confirmed in grace as his was, and under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we may discover, such evident proofs of our calling and election, in all that concerns our everlasting welfare, that we may enjoy the full sense of that blessed scripture, in which JEHOVAH saith, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here entering upon his ministry. He begins with expostulation: and he carries it on, in a way of reproof and correction through the whole chapter.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE my soul over the Prophet's sermon, and remark how graciously the LORD pleads with his people for their good; how reluctant the LORD seemeth to give them up, and with what gentle expostulations he reasons with them, on his patience and their determined obstinacy.

Look through the history of the Church then, and look to the Church now: and ask and see, whether we are in better circumstances than they, or more deserving? Did ever Zion languish more than in the present hour? Were ever the interests of JESUS less regarded? Where shall we direct our attention to find any that prefer the prosperity of the Church above their chief joy? My soul! what sayeth thine own personal experience to this statement? While thou lamentest in secret, the little conquests of JESUS's grace in thine own heart; canst thou say, as one of old did, in beholding the sorrowful state of the Church around thee: *rivers of waters run down mine eyes because men keep not thy law*. Alas! *who is grieved for the affliction of Joseph*.

Oh! thou great Head of thy Church, and of thy people! Oh! LORD JESUS! take to thyself thine own glorious cause, and come forth by thy HOLY SPIRIT, in the midst of thy Church! Remember LORD when *Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the first-fruits of his increase*. And as all Israel's holiness was in thee, and is in thee forever: do thou LORD stir up to thyself an holy zeal, in the hearts of thy people. Thou knowest LORD, that were we *to wash with nitre and take much soap*, still would *our iniquity be marked before thee*. *Take away therefore LORD all our iniquity, and receive us graciously, and turn to thyself a people with one consent, to call on the LORD: so shall thy name be praised from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; and the name of our LORD JESUS shall be great among the Gentiles*. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the same sermon as the former. Added to what was there said, in a way of expostulation, the LORD is pleased to follow it up, with invitations, and of the most gracious nature.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! how can I read in this Chapter the unfaithfulness of Israel, in departing from thee, who hast been the kind and loving husband of thy Church forever; without calling to my recollection my baseness and unfaithfulness also. Surely thou art, as, thou hast said in this Chapter, married to us, not only in the assumption of our nature, but in the particular and personal union with every individual soul of thine, whom by thy SPIRIT thou hast made *willing in the day of thy power*. And notwithstanding the lowness of our birth, our loathsomeness by nature, and unworthiness by sin! still hath the LORD of life and glory made us one with himself, that we might be *heirs of GOD, and joint heirs with CHRIST*. And is it possible for me to call to mind, that after such unheard of condescension on the part of the SON of GOD, as to marry our nature, and to unite every individual person of his people to himself, that, I like a treacherous wife, departing from her husband, should depart from thee? Oh! LORD! what an awful state must our nature be reduced to by the fall! And doth my GOD and Saviour, notwithstanding these horrible provocations, doth he really say: *though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the LORD* Oh! for grace, to feel the full influence of such constraining love, and to cry out with an earnestness suited to the affection: *behold we come unto thee, for thou art the LORD our GOD!*

And do thou LORD! fulfil all those sweet and gracious promises, Do thou heal all our backslidings: do thou do, as thou hast said, take us *one of a city, and two of a family, and bring us to Zion*. Put a spirit of adoption into our hearts, O LORD; and both provide the means for our recovery by grace, and give us strength to make use

of them, that we may henceforth call thee Father, and thou mayest put us among the Children. And LORD! let that gracious word of thine be accomplished; let our Pastors be of thine own giving, and men after thine own heart; that we may be indeed fed with knowledge and understanding. Precious LORD JESUS! send to us the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, to teach us, and guide us, and to lead us, into all truth. Then shall we indeed know, under his divine teaching, that thou alone art *the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof* Amen.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

This Chapter, in the opening, is an address to Israel. The subject then relates to Judah and Jerusalem. Both are to one and the same amount; namely, GOD's gracious call to his people, to return to him, from all their backslidings.

REFLECTIONS

STAND still my soul, and ponder over this Chapter, and look up for the divine teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that none of the words here contained may fall to the ground. Were there ever more striking evidences given of the grace and long-suffering of the LORD? Were there ever more decisive testimonies manifested, of the obduracy and impenitency of man? May we not take up the LORD's own words, and say: *What could have been done more to his vineyard, that he did not unto it?* Precious LORD JESUS! oh for some gracious accompaniments of thy HOLY SPIRIT, with thine holy word in the present hour, that thine Israel now, may never despise the riches of thy goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, but know and feel that the goodness of GOD *leadeth to repentance.*

Ye ministers of my GOD! learn from this statement of sorrow in the Prophet, to put on bowels of mercies, and to feel true soul concern for the present desolations of the Church of JESUS. Blind Watchmen, and blind Guides cannot become interested for the saving knowledge of CHRIST, in others, who are destitute of it themselves. But do ye who know JESUS, unceasingly tell of his

preciousness to all around. Let Zion which is so dear to JESUS, be dear to you. And as you know that her name is engraven on the palms of *his* hands: let her interests be always uppermost in your heart. Hath JESUS taught you? oh commend him as a Teacher to all that are ignorant. Hath JESUS saved you from your sins? commend him as a Saviour to other poor sinners. Hath JESUS made you willing in the day of his power? pray to Him that the day of his power may be manifested in many a heart. Zion will again flourish in the church of JESUS if the love of JESUS, and a regard for the interests of his Church, flourisheth in the hearts of his ministers and people. Compassionate Redeemer! let it no longer be said of any of those who call themselves ministers of the gospel: *all seek their own, not the things which are JESUS CHRIST'S.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The same subject is prosecuted through this Chapter, as formed the contents of the former. Here is the call of GOD upon a degenerate people, joined with gracious promises and invitations of mercy.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! seek and take relief from the sad relation of things in this Chapter, in what it holds forth of the general, yea, universal corruption of men and things both of prophet, priest, and people: in the view of Him, who is indeed the Holy One, the LORD our righteousness. Behold! thy GOD and FATHER hath said, that if a man can be found that seeketh the truth and executeth judgment the LORD will pardon the iniquity of his people. Go then my soul, go to thy GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, and tell him that JEHOVAH himself first found Him, and thou hast found One also, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens! Tell him (for thy GOD and FATHER loveth to hear of Him and his dear name) that he is all this and more, and not only so in himself, but so to all his people. Then plead both JESUS'S

righteousness, blood, and sacrifice, as the sure means of thy acceptance, and the Father's own authority in appointing the same: and this will be to find pardon, mercy, and peace, in the rich salvation by JESUS CHRIST. Oh! the blessedness of being found in him, who is one with us, and who was made *sin and a curse for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

And while my soul thou findest relief from the sins and trespasses, both within thee and without thee, in such views of the LORD JESUS; see to it, that thou art humbled to the dust, under a sense of the crying sins of Zion all around thee. Surely, never did Zion lay lower, than in the present hour! Never was Zion in more desolate and languishing circumstances! Oh! that the LORD would take to himself his own great name and power, and go forth, as *a mighty man, and stir up jealousy like a man of war.* Precious JESUS! the cause is thine, the work is thine, and the glory thine. Oh! then, go forth conquering and to conquer, and turn *the hearts of the father's to the children, and the children to the father's:* yea, let all the people praise thee, O LORD, that thou mayest never visit in indignation, nor take vengeance *of such a nation as this.* Amen.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This Chapter is as the former, and but a continuation of the same sermon. It contains the LORD's expostulation with his people for their sins and transgressions.

REFLECTIONS

LORD JESUS! look upon thy Church, thy vineyard, thy Benjamin, beloved: and place her in times of danger, in the *Beth-haccerem* of safety in thyself. Remember thou dear LORD, what thou hast said, and what thou hast promised, and say still: *I the LORD do keep her. I will water her every moment, lest any hurt her. I will keep her night and day.*

And surely thou blessed LORD! if thou hast likened thy Church to a comely and delicate woman: it must be so from being comely in

thine eyes, from the comeliness thou hast put upon her. Precious LORD JESUS! though I am in myself black, yea, full of spots; but if comely in thine eyes, it is thy robe of righteousness hath made me so. Oh! for grace to eye thee, and love thee, and to be living upon thee, and to thee as the LORD my righteousness!

Do thou, Almighty Refiner and Purifier of thy Church and people: sit by me as my Refiner, that men may no longer call me reprobate silver, when thou hast refined me as silver is refined, and tried me as gold is tried. Oh! LORD GOD! by the fire of thy blessed SPIRIT, consuming all the dross of my corrupt affections, and with thy special influences refining and purging away all the seam of a nature foul and spotted, do thou so cleanse me for thyself and thy glory, that I may offer to my LORD an offering in righteousness, and be so purified like the sons of Levi, to be among thy priests, in thy salvation forever!

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Here seems to be the opening of a new Sermon of the Prophet's: but the same subject. The Prophet reproves Judah, and admonisheth to return to the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

I PASS by every other consideration in this Chapter (though there are many which would be highly profitable to regard) to attend to one, yet more eminently striking, suggested in meeting that wonderful word, *Shiloh*, which I never meet with in the holy volume, without having my whole soul led to the contemplation of Him from whom it is derived. Yea! blessed JESUS! when I consider thee as the *Shiloh*, the *Deliverer*, the *Saviour* of thy people; thou art increasingly dear, and increasingly precious, to be beheld, and in these seasons more especially, when thy immense value becomes more striking, from the view of profligacy and corruption all around. And though places, or persons, derive no sanctity, unless from thee,

yet the *Shiloh* will be forever the blessedness of his redeemed, and their portion forever.

While I meet with this glorious and distinguishing name, *Shiloh*, but once in the whole book of GOD, when spoken of a Person, and that Person CHRIST, and this in the prophetical language of the dying patriarch Jacob: yet when found elsewhere, and connected with it, the recollection of Him in his glorious character, as the *Shiloh*; surely it makes the heart of the believer glad, and fills the soul with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Let me never hear of *Shiloh*, or read of *Shiloh* without holy joy. JESUS will be the *Shiloh*, to gather all his redeemed unto himself, that *where he is, there they shall be also*. And what though *Tophet* is ordained of old, and his believers must pass through a valley of humiliation, more than that of the son of *Hinnom*: yet JESUS will be with them. *Shiloh* will bring them *through*, and bring them *out*; and bring them *in*, to his everlasting kingdom. Hail thou glorious *Shiloh*! to thee, shall *the gathering of the people be!*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is going on with the same Sermon, in the same strain and on the same subject. The Chapter is made up of reproof and lamentation.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD my soul, from the perusal of this Chapter, what a poor, ignorant, unthinking, and improvident creature is man! The birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, do, by instinct, what man by reason, now in his fallen state doth not do. If the winter approacheth, the swallow seeks a warmer climate. If a storm falls, the cattle flee to the barn, or to the hedge for shelter. But neither the winter of life, nor the storm of threatened judgments, prevail upon the sinner, void of grace, *to flee from the wrath to come*.

But is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her King in her? Shall there be balm in Gilead, and yet no remedy be applied? Shall JESUS indeed, the great Physician be there; and the health of his redeemed

not be recovered? Oh! let thy name, thou dear LORD, be as ointment poured forth, that by the quickening and regenerating influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, such views of our misery, by reason of the fall, may open before us, and such a sense of thy suitability to all our wants may appear, and become desirable; that apprehending thee by faith, in thy Person, work, and offices, and in all thy relations, righteousness, and grace, our souls may find a recovery. Speak blessed LORD to my heart, to my conscience; and while thou speakest, in the same tender words as of old, to the diseased; *wilt thou be made whole?* Oh! give me grace and faith, in lively exercise, to answer and to believe, and to depend upon thy sovereign, power to heal. Oh! let me know thee by that precious name, JEHOVAH ROPHE! And let me hear thy gracious voice as to Israel, saying, *I am the LORD that healeth thee!* Amen.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with the cry of the Prophet over the sins and calamities of the people. Jeremiah having poured out his soul upon this occasion, and wept before the throne, prosecutes his Sermon, in calling upon the people to hear the LORD'S decrees concerning them.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! look at the Prophet in his tender concern for Israel! Look at the LORD GOD of the Prophets in his unparalleled compassion over our nature, and then ask, what must be the hardened state of the human heart, in the contemplation of the sins and sorrows of life, unmoved and unconcerned? Oh! who that beholds the vast domain of Satan's empire, but must cry out, *oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!* Precious LORD JESUS! though my habitation is in the midst of deceit, and I am constrained to dwell in the midst of *Kedar*, yet LORD, do thou melt my soul, and try me, and in thy faithfulness, cause me to be found faithful!

Where shall I find relief in such views of the general, yea the universal, depravity of human nature, but in thee, who art the LORD my righteousness? Thou art indeed the wisdom, the power, the grace, the goodness of GOD, and art made so to all thy people. Henceforth, LORD! grant that I may never glory but in thee. Thou wilt be wisdom to me, for in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* Thou art my might, for thou art *my light, and the strength of my life, and my portion for ever.* And thou art riches, yea *durable riches and righteousness.* And all these art thou made of GOD to thy people, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* Never then blessed JESUS may I henceforth glory but *in thee, the LORD my GOD.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

In order to reprove the folly of idolatry, the Prophet is in this Chapter drawing a statement between the glory of JEHOVAH and the shame of idols. The Chapter concludes with some observations on the ill conduct of foolish pastors.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I not fail to gather improvement from such views as these scriptures afford of the low and abject state to which men are reduced by the fall. Did not the word of GOD prove it, surely it would be incredible, that any persons, much less nations, should be guilty of idolatry. There seemeth no temptation to the thing itself. Moreover reason revolts at it. And yet, as if to show the horrible state into which our nature is sunk, all men are by nature idolaters, not to images, at least to sin and Satan; to divers lusts and pleasures, and in short, to anything, and to everything; which is made a rival with GOD, for the obtaining the rein of our ruling passion. LORD! undertake for us, and though other lords beside thee have had dominion over us, yet henceforth may we make mention only of thy name.

Under such circumstances of evil everywhere around; and conscious, as this Chapter most strikingly sets it forth, that the way

of man is not in himself; neither in men that walketh to direct his steps; let mine eyes LORD be unto thee! Be thou the source and fountain; the first cause and final end, of all my hopes and views; my expectations and joys, then shall I be sure to be kept from idols, and to be distinguished from all the worshippers of them around, who call not upon thy name, and know thee not. Precious JESUS, thou art indeed my life, both natural, spiritual, and eternal. Maintain LORD in me, the life thou hast begun. Carry it on, refresh it, strengthen it, under languishings: revive it under sharp and trying dispensations. Be thou thyself the source and spring; the Author and the finisher; the everlasting object and delight; the cause *for* whom, and the effect *in* whom, all is made perfect. Yea LORD, be thou *the strength of my heart and my portion for ever*. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The Prophet is prosecuting the same important, but unthankful office of reproof, through this Chapter. The close of it discovers a conspiracy formed against Jeremiah by the men of Anathoth.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! call out of this Chapter for thy meditation what the *Jerusalem* sinners laid so little at heart; the blessedness of that Covenant, the LORD commanded his servant the Prophet to preach in their streets. What can be more sweet, or gracious, than that which is at the bottom of all mercies, and which JEHOVAH himself makes so: *I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people*. Oh! LORD, amidst all my departures and backslidings to this foundation, and in CHRIST confirmed and made known, may I look and take comfort! My GOD will hear me!

Oh! ye who like the men of Judah, have been setting up the many idols in your heart; here let your views be directed, and seek in the gracious Covenant promises of GOD in CHRIST, deliverance from all your idols. GOD in CHRIST is gracious. He will be very merciful at thy cry in JESUS, and when he heareth he will answer.

Oh! for grace to lay hold of the Covenant of redemption in his blood!

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the humble application to the LORD, in beholding the prosperity of the wicked. Towards the close of the Chapter we have some sweet promises of GOD to his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER let us learn from this chapter to form one sure and unerring maxim, concerning the providences of GOD, that however puzzling and unaccountable to us they may appear, the issue of them must invariably be, for the divine glory, and for the welfare of his people. Behold in this point of view, our faith will find frequent cause indeed for exercise; but faith will also find a suited strength to lean upon during the time of exercise. Who should have thought the cruelty of Joseph's brethren, would, in the divine direction of it, ultimately be made the means of so much good? Who would have conceived, that the crucifixion of JESUS, was *in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD*? Such events speak, in a loud voice, to suspend our judgment on all the ways and works of GOD: and to wait to hear what the LORD will accomplish by all his providences going on throughout the earth.

Reader let us learn another sweet lesson from the perusal of this Chapter. I mean, that we study more, in silent and humble adoration, the ways and works of the LORD, both in the circumstances of our own lives, and the order of his Church. JESUS hath the government upon his shoulder. He is the King of nations, as well as King of Saints. *His way is in the sea, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.* But the end is sure. Think what wisdom that must be, which comprehends such an infinite variety of men and things, differently and oppositely pursued by them, but ordered by Him, to his glory, and the Church's welfare! Precious LORD JESUS! grant both to Reader and Writer, grace to be always looking up to thee, and seeking thy wisdom to guide; thy power to protect;

and thy love to bless, all the events which concern ourselves, and thy people. And while we both take confidence, and holy joy, that if thou art for us, who can be against us, may a sense of thine unerring wisdom, constrain us continually to exclaim, *oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD? How unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out!*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this Chapter is teaching by signs, as he had before been instructing by plain discourse. Under the similitude of a girdle made rotten, and of bottles perishing with wine; the Prophet showeth the sad Consequences of the children of his people, consuming in their captivity. The Chapter closeth with a gracious call of GOD to his people.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! while reading the sad history of the Church, in this period of it, and beholding Jerusalem as a marred girdle and a bottle spoiled; oh learn from hence what nature is in itself in all ages; when the preventing and restraining grace of GOD is withheld! How poor, and weak, and blind, and wretched! Oh! thou who alone canst keep from falling; give me LORD I pray thee grace, that darkness come not, and *my feet stumble not upon the dark mountains!*

And shall not my soul take occasion from the review of this solemn Chapter, to look up to JESUS with encreasing earnestness, and beg of him for Zion in the present day? Dost thou say LORD now as thou didst by thy servant the Prophet then; *where is the flock that was given, the beautiful flock?* Behold it LORD, I would say, let thine eye pity and compassionate it. It is indeed scattered in this dark and cloudy day. But wilt thou not gather it, and bring it home, and build it up, and command pastors after thine own heart, to feed it with true understanding and knowledge? Oh! precious LORD JESUS, thou great Shepherd of thy sheep; *be not wrath very sore, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold! see we are all thy people.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

It should seem that the Prophet's preaching, and his types, were followed by a famine. He takes notice of it in this Chapter, and mourns over it. The LORD is not intreated to remove it. Lying prophets deceive the people concerning it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we cannot make a better improvement of this precious Chapter, than by following up the example the Prophet hath here left us, both in times of public calamity, and private visitation; in besieging a throne of grace upon the same ground, and pleading for mercy on the same arguments, as the Prophet here useth. Sit down and ponder over the many strong and unanswerable pleas, every poor sinner hath in this one cause of holy confidence, the name of JEHOVAH. The covenant purposes, counsel, will, declaration of JEHOVAH. Moreover, his unchangeable promises, founded in his own free and eternal love. To these add the word, the oath, those immutable things of JEHOVAH, in which it is impossible for GOD to lie. Then open at the same time, the infinite volume of grace, in the Person, work, blood, grace, spirit, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Call in yet further to your aid, the person, offices, and eternal grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And when these grand and glorious truths are fully impressed upon the mind; sit down and devise names if you can find them to misery and sin, in all the various shapes of it: and see if there be not found somewhat in those blessed views of the Almighty covenanters, to answer and satisfy all. Oh! thou *the hope of Israel* I would say, both for myself and Reader: Oh thou art both *the hope and Saviour thereof: why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land, as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry but for a night, and takest no interest in the concerns of thy people; Do not abhor us for thy Name's sake: do not disgrace the throne of thy glory?*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

This is as sorrowful a Chapter as any in the prophecy. Though the last had closed with prayer, yet this begins and ends with judgment.

REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, I find so much of blessedness leading to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that I cannot need more than the first verse opens to me, to feast upon in JESUS forever. What though Samuel and Moses are no intercessors; *though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not*; yet thou blessed JESUS hast stood in the gap, and dost forever stand, *having obtained eternal redemption for us*. Here then, amidst all the calamities of life, whether in private or public, nationally or individually; here would I rest my plea, my only plea, for I need no other. Looking to GOD my Father in CHRIST, I would say, both for myself and the Church of JESUS; *behold O GOD our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed!* And wilt not thou, O LORD JESUS, take up the case and concerns of all thy people? Though our iniquities testify against us, and our sins are aggravated sore; yet LORD, such is the everlasting and eternal efficacy of thy blood and righteousness; such the infinite merit of both; that they plead more for thy people, than all their sins can plead against them. Oh! how would I treasure this word concerning thee; wherein thou hast caused me to hope. I have found them indeed, and have eaten them; and they have been the rejoicing and joy of my heart: yea LORD, I have found thee, the Uncreated Word; and do thou LORD dwell evermore in my heart by faith. LORD do by me, as by thy servant the Prophet; make me as a fenced brazen wall, strong in the grace of faith, that is in CHRIST JESUS. Be thou with me to save me, and to deliver me, O LORD; so shall I not be confounded, when times of persecution arise, and the enemy cometh in like a flood; for then will my LORD lift up a standard, even CHRIST JESUS against him.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This is a short, but interesting Chapter; in which, the LORD commands his servant the Prophet, in looking forward to the times of the Captivity, to keep himself unconnected because of his judgments. The LORD pronounceth great evils; but the Chapter closeth in sweet promises, concerning the deliverance of his people; which he promiseth shall be even greater than that from Egypt.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! gather from the LORD's precept, to his servant the Prophet; not to marry, nor mingle with the nations of the captivity; how much it concerns thee, to sit aloof, and as much detached as possible, from all persons, and all things, which might have a tendency to draw thine affections from the LORD! Remember, that *thy Maker is thine husband*. And doth he not say to thee, as to the Church of old, *thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot: and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee*. Precious LORD JESUS! blessed be thou, for thine infinite condescension. Oh! give me grace ever to keep it in view, and to call to mind; wherever I am, or however engaged, amidst the Babylons of this wilderness-state, that my indigence, JESUS neither overlooks, nor despiseth; but will keep me during the captivity, and at length bring me out of more than the Egyptian bondage. Neither in the house of mourning, or of feasting, would I lose sight of my LORD! And oh! grant, that I may constantly have the grace of faith in thee; that the peace in JESUS way be never lost sight of, no not for a moment. But oh! let my constant song in this house of my pilgrimage, be, *the LORD liveth that hath brought the souls of his people, from the north, and from all lands whither they had been driven*; and now brought them into the liberty, wherewith JESUS makes them free. Yea, they shall dwell in their own land, even EMMANUEL's land, forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Much to the same purport, as the general scope of Jeremiah's preaching, is the subject of this chapter. The folly and sin of carnal confidence; and the blessedness and security of the divine trust, are beautifully set forth. The LORD's knowledge of the heart is strikingly insisted upon as an evidence of his sovereignty.

REFLECTIONS

WHEN I read of the state of sin on the heart of Judah, as stated in this Chapter: and when I consider, what my own heart saith of the same, and the testimony of GOD concerning the desperately wicked state of every man's heart by nature: my soul feels humbled to the dust, and like the leper we read of, I feel constrained to cry out, unclean, unclean! But oh precious JESUS, thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, *heal me, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved!*

And my soul, ponder well the striking difference between the confidence founded in the LORD JESUS's blood and righteousness; and that trust which is in an arm of flesh. Behold the blessedness of the one, and the awful curse on the other. Oh! thou blessed LORD JESUS, be thou to me the unceasing source of life, and health, and strength, and confidence; and let not my soul be as the barren heath, that knoweth not when good cometh, and as the parched places in the wilderness, that is, as a salt land not inhabited.

Blessed, forever blessed be the LORD for the sabbath, that sweet day for men! Oh! for grace to honour it, to reverence it, to love it, and to sanctify and hallow it to the LORD's glory. Oh thou great LORD of the sabbath, preserve it to our nation, to our people; and be thou the very sabbath of our souls, and our hope of glory forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

The Prophet, in this Chapter, is preaching by type and figure. Under the similitude of a Potter, the LORD showeth his sovereignty. The people are offended at the Prophet's preaching. The LORD threatens them with sore judgments.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let it be your delight and mine, to go down very frequently to the Potter's house, where the LORD will cause us to hear his word. Surely, we may cry out with the Church of old upon every occasion of life; *but now O LORD! thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thine hands.* And shall the thing formed, say to him that formed him, why hast thou made me thus? And if it be (as that it undoubtedly is) the LORD's privilege and prerogative, to make vessels of the same clay, to different purposes, and some to honour, and some to dishonour; shall not the LORD *new make* also, as he pleaseth; and not only new make, but *use also*, to the different purposes of his own sacred will and pleasure? LORD! I pray thee, do by me, and appoint me, and use me as it seemeth best to thine unerring counsel, purpose, and will: but oh! new make me in CHRIST JESUS, and make me a vessel to the master's use, to serve him here, and glorify him to all eternity!

LORD! to all the devices of the ungodly, and all the malice of the foe and his agents, against thy faithful ones, like the Prophet; give to thy servants grace, and to their enemies confusion, that in thy strength, all thine exercised family may be strong, and made more than conquerors, through thee, and thy great salvation.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The Prophet's sermon is here delivered, under the similitude of a Potter's bottle, by way of representing the broken state of the Jews.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a most lovely and engaging representation is here made in the character of the Prophet, of a faithful minister. Oh? that it were the LORD'S will, that all who stand to minister in the things of salvation, and stand up between an holy GOD, and unholy sinners had the salvation of souls at heart as Jeremiah had, and felt no less a zeal for the LORD'S honour and glory. How truly ought they to be affected with the awful responsibility of their commission! How unweariedly ought they to labour, night and day in such a service! And in those instances, where, like the Prophet, their labours are despised, and their persons abased, deeply to feel the want of success, and to weep between the porch and the altar, with cries to GOD in prayer!

Precious JESUS! let that compassion of thine, which filled thy tender heart, when weeping over Jerusalem, constrain thee LORD now, in beholding the state of sin, and the impending Tophet of destruction, to send faithful labourers into thy service. Oh! LORD! commission them: ordain them: fill their mouth with arguments, and their hearers hearts with grace, that they may not spend their strength in vain, and their labour for nought. Yea LORD! come thyself in the power of thy blessed SPIRIT, and turn to thyself a people of a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, *to serve him with one consent.* Amen.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

We have here an interesting Chapter. The man of GOD is smitten and put into the stocks, for preaching GOD'S truth. The governor that commanded this is threatened with judgment for it. The Prophet mourns in the close of the Chapter over his calamities.

REFLECTIONS

OH! *Pashur!* what a vast difference was there even in the moment of thy seeming triumphs, between the suffering Prophet,

and the insulting Governor? And what an everlasting and eternal difference was there when his predictions were fulfilled, and thou wert a terror, a *magor-missabib* to thyself and all around thee! And what is it now? Reader think of that striking passage of the Prophet, and learn from it all that it contains; *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him! Woe unto the wicked it shall be ill with him!*

Precious LORD JESUS! how can I hear or read of the reproaches thrown upon thy faithful servants in every age of thy Church, without having my mind insensibly directed to thee, to behold all the lesser exercises of thy prophets, swallowed up in the floods (as the streams of the earth in the vast ocean) of these unequalled sorrows. *Was ever sorrow like unto thy sorrow, in the day of the LORD's fierce anger?* Here in thee may my soul always find sweet consolation, and under the taunts and reproaches of the world, recollect, that *if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they those of his household.* Grant LORD! that I may never murmur at any of thy dispensations, nor lament the day of my birth, or wish it to have been covered in darkness: but rather desire to be conformed to thy blessed image in all things, that being made partaker of *the sufferings of CHRIST, I may be also of the glory that shall follow.*

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

This Chapter refers to a period in the reign of Zedekiah. The King felt alarmed at the prospect of the king of Babylon's army, and sends to enquire of Jeremiah concerning the event. The Prophet sends back a heavy answer of evil tidings.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I learn from the perusal of this Chapter; how needful it must be in times of trouble to have first learnt, and to have known the LORD in times of safety. What a sad state was Zedekiah and his army in when the King of Babylon's army made war against them. But what a more awful and tremendous state is that man in, when death draweth near, and the LORD is departed from him! Oh! Reader! think, and let the thought never be parted

with, until grace hath followed it up to the means of safety in CHRIST! how truly overwhelmed with sorrow must every man be in by nature, whose conscience then condemns, and there is no whisper of JESUS to speak peace? There is no discharge in that war!

LAMB of GOD! oh by every endearing name let me adjure thee to be thyself the safety to all thy redeemed, in thy blood and righteousness! LORD! when a more formidable foe, than even the *Chaldean* army, comes up upon this people, and there is no way in man to escape; do thou take up our person and our cause, and deliver for thy name's sake, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies! Amen.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Prophet is calling to repentance. Heavy sentences of judgment are pronounced upon Shallum and Coniah.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Who can go through a Chapter of such contents as this unmoved! Who, but for GOD's authority, in his holy word, confirming the melancholy truth, could have believed, that a nation so highly favoured as Israel, should have sunk so foully. But look we within, and there read the same, sad pages of the human heart. Are *we better than they*? Solemn question of the Apostle. And as sad an answer. *No! in no wise: for he hath concluded all under sin!* Blessed LORD JESUS! was it indeed necessary that thy people should be thus taught in Israel's history, what they also are by nature and by practice? Hath GOD the HOLY GHOST held up in them a faithful mirror, to show what all men are? And must thy people, still look and still learn by way of keeping up remembrance, such once were we: but we are *washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD*. Help LORD then all thy people, to see and know more and more that in themselves they are all as despised idols, as broken vessels, wherein is no water! And if now they are renewed, and made as *Gilead*, and as *Lebanon* to

thee: it is thou LORD that art the sole cause of their recovery. Oh! precious JESUS, how increasingly precious art thou to thy people, who see their need of thee more and more, and are desirous of living to thee here by faith, that ere long they may live in thee, and by thee, in glory to all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter a blessed and gracious word of comfort succeeding the awful message, in the preceding Chapter. And what tends to make this Chapter most eminently blessed to the Church is, the glorious account given in it under the spirit of prophecy of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while this Chapter in the awful close of it, holds forth most powerful instructions concerning true and false teachers in the Church of GOD; and which are in themselves enough to call forth the most awakened attention to all that are concerned in the ministry of GOD's word: let us pray over this part with earnestness, that the LORD may commission what is here said to their solemn conviction. But let you and I dwell with delight on the former part of this most blessed Chapter, in which we find so much said, and so blessedly said, concerning Him, who is the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let us look stedfastly and steadily to him, who comes home thus recommended to us, under this endearing character, and let us not lose sight of Him, until that we have so looked, and so loved, and so believed, unto salvation, as to know, that he is indeed the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Reader! You and I cannot but know, that we both need a righteousness: for *without holiness no man can see the LORD*. And as we have not this holiness in ourselves, it is high time that we should seek it in another. And this righteousness is nowhere to be found but in CHRIST. Now if you and I are taught, savingly taught of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who CHRIST is, and what he hath wrought, that *he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the*

righteousness of GOD in him; then shall we indeed know Him, and call Him, by this glorious name, the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. Let us beg of GOD the SPIRIT, to be our teacher, and to bring home CHRIST to our hearts in all his loveliness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. Let us seek with earnestness that unspeakable blessing, to know that He is made of GOD to us wisdom, and righteousness; sanctification and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the LORD. Then shall we have that blessed soul experience, which is spoken of by the Prophet, and both our life and conversation will be the same. Surely shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that believe in him shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

Under the similitude of good and bad figs, the LORD showeth the state of his faithful people, and the sad end of the ungodly.

REFLECTIONS

I BEG the Reader to make due reflections on the contents of this short but most interesting Chapter, and he will find cause in making application of what is here said, in reference to the times of the Church then in being, to see how much the people of GOD are concerned at all times to consider the same doctrine. Both upon a civil, and upon a religious account; times of national distress, are times of great concern. If the good figs as well as the bad figs were to be carried away, we learn from it, that in outward things there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked. Like passengers in a vessel, if the ship founders, all on board partake of the same. And though GOD's people are preserved from eternal shipwreck by grace; yet in temporal concerns, the LORD saith, *I will draw forth my sword out of his sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.* Reader! let us pray for grace, to take part in all the national afflictions of our land, and to sympathize with all the sorrows of the people. But while we do this, let us look up and bless that gracious

GOD, who hath placed our spiritual concerns out of the reach of danger. Precious JESUS, in thy hands, all the concerns of thy people, both their persons and their interests are eternally secure. Blessed, forever blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here preaching to the people, and in the usual strain of reproof. But in the midst of threatening he is commissioned to introduce a gracious promise, that the captivity shall not exceed the seventy years before pointed out.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST LORD JESUS! who can read the sad requital thy faithful servants met with in all ages of the Church, when rising early and speaking to the people, without calling to mind the awful state of the Jews rejecting thee, the LORD of life and glory, when thou camest to thine own, and thine own received thee not, How did Jerusalem, the holy city, kill thy prophets, and despise thy word, when thou wouldest have gathered her people, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and they would not. And yet, blessed LORD, thy patience was not exhausted, neither thy love given over, for in the moment of thy departure, when giving thy farewell commission to thy disciples, to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature, the charter of grace still ran the same, *beginning at Jerusalem*. Oh! for grace always to keep in remembrance, that love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge.

And LORD, I pray thee, that I may always preserve alive through thine HOLY SPIRIT in me the remembrance of thy grace to thy Church, during the seventy years captivity: and the sure fulfillment of thy Covenant promise, in bringing thy people from it. Even, so LORD now, all thy promises, and all thine engagements are the same, and like the great Author and Finisher of salvation; they remain eternally, and unchangeably the same, yesterday, and to-day; and forever. GOD be blessed and adored in all his faithfulness, and truth, made to a thousand generations: and before ever blessed in all his

redeemed, and their enjoyment of them, from henceforth and forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

The Prophet Jeremiah continuing still to prophesy, so irritated the carnal Jews, that they arose against him to put him to death; but the LORD delivered him. In this Chapter this history is related.

REFLECTIONS

YE ministers of the LORD JESUS! here learn from *Jeremiah* the blessedness of being found faithful. Solemnly enlisted under the banner of CHRIST, plead his cause, and fight his battle, with an ungodly world, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. And as the LORD hath said, *fear ye not the reproaches of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but your LORD'S righteousness shall be for ever, and his salvation from generation to generation.*

And oh! thou Almighty LORD of thy servants! do thou stand by them, and help them; give them to see and know, that it is thy cause they plead, and that thou art engaged for their defense. Make them a sweet savour of thyself unto GOD and the FATHER; and though a gazing stock, and a proverb of derision to the world, do thou own and bless their labours to the conversion of sinners, and the comforting of saints; that when thou, the Great Shepherd of thy fold shall appear, they may rejoice before thee at thy coming, and receive *a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.*

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

Jeremiah in this Chapter is addressing the other nations around, at the command of GOD, to tell them of their shortly being subject to the King of Babylon. Towards the close of the Chapter, the Prophet admonisheth the King of Judah to the same.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE Reader! and behold the wretched state of false prophets! for the wretched hire of this world's favor, and to please men, what will they not do. Though the LORD sent his faithful servant Jeremiah, both to the nations around and to Judah, with assurance that the King of Babylon should come, and take them away into captivity; yet allured by those false prophesiers of deceit, they were lulled to their ruin, and put off all consideration of the evil day, until the tremendous event came upon them. Pause Reader! and then ask, is it not too often the case now? Doth not the gospel of salvation uniformly denounce evil upon all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men! Are not we assured again and again, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in GOD's sight*: and that nothing but *the blood of CHRIST can cleanse from all sin*? How are these truths received by the great mass of men? Are they not considered by them as idle tales, and believed not? Oh! for grace, and the teachings of the HOLY SPIRIT, to bring them home to the heart, and to rivet them on the mind. Blessed JESUS! take thy cause into thine own Almighty hand. Bring down every rebellious, every self-aspiring thought; and cause every knee to bow to thee, and to the sovereignty of thy power, until thou hast subdued the nations to the sceptre of thy grace, and made all confess, that JESUS CHRIST *is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER*. Amen.

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

In the preceding Chapter the false prophets were generally spoken of, in their making the people to trust in lies. In this we have an example of one more impudent and bold than his fellows. The awful termination of his career is here recorded.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Can any portion of GOD's holy word speak more decidedly or more awfully, in determining between true and false Prophets and Teachers, than what is said in this Chapter.

Who that had been present at *Hananiah's* message, as he solemnly prefaced, what he had to say in the name of the LORD, but would have taken part with him, leaning so much as it did to the side of mercy? And who but would have looked at *Jeremiah* with displeasure, as one that had been making the people sorrowful, with unnecessary alarms? But what an awful reverse of circumstances soon took place, to determine their true character. And are there not *Hananiah's* in the present hour? Do not many come forth in the LORD's name, whom the LORD never sent? And do not they cause men to trust in lies, saying, *peace, peace, when there is no peace*. Robbing the Redeemer of his glory, and precious souls of their true happiness: in bolstering sinners up in the false confidence of their own righteousness, instead of preaching CHRIST to the people?

LORD! do thou countenance all thy faithful *Jeremiah's* of gospel times, and stop the mouths of them that run unsent, who speak smooth things, and prophecy deceits. Manifest the truth of thine own cause, and let not thy people be brought under their delusions: but give to all thy redeemed, Pastors after thine own heart, that may instruct and feed thy people with true understanding and knowledge.

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter an account of the Prophet Jeremiah's letter, which he sent to the captives in Babylon. Here is also the fearful doom pronounced by the LORD, upon two lying prophets.

REFLECTIONS

READER! after that you have made, under divine teaching, your most serious contemplations on the different subjects proposed, from true and false prophets brought before you in this Chapter; there is a train of thoughts opened to your view, in a portion of the contents of it, to which I would beg to direct more immediately, both your meditation and my own. I mean, in that unequalled grace and goodness manifested by the LORD, in the midst of all his people's rebellion and sin, as set forth in this Chapter. After seventy years, saith the LORD, be accomplished, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you. Reader! is not this the constant tenor and precious words of the whole charter of grace? What is GOD's good word towards his people, but the word of GOD in CHRIST JESUS? What is the performance of JEHOVAH's promise, but the promise of redemption in CHRIST, which he purposed in himself before the world began? And what is the whole coming of JESUS, to deliver from worse than Babylonish captivity, even from sin, death and hell; but to perform *the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy Covenant*? Oh! what a thought is it, amidst all my rebellious ways, and after all my unworthy views of divine goodness, that *his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways*. JESUS saith, and GOD the FATHER saith, and let me never forget the gracious declarations: *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD: thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end!* Do LORD! I would say, as thou hast said. Help my soul to pray to thee, and to seek for thee, as for hidden treasure, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. And do thou LORD, gather thy Church, thy redeemed, thy people, from all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day; yea LORD, bring them all home to thy flock, and manifest that thou art their GOD, and that they are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture. Amen.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter and the following, the Prophet comforting his people with comfortable words indeed. Both the Chapters are full of gospel, and of gospel promises, from beginning to end.

REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst very many beauties in this Chapter, let you and I fix our meditation, and pray that GOD the HOLY GHOST will make it profitable to us both, in beholding Him, concerning whom GOD the FATHER here speaks of being the Governor from among his people. And while we regard the gracious promise, and behold the LORD JESUS at the call of his FATHER, coming forth as the Great Head and Surety of his people; let us behold him in every possible point of view, and see how suited he is in that high character, and how suited to us for all the purposes of salvation.

Doth our GOD and FATHER demand who this is that engaged his heart to approach unto the LORD for his people? And may we not humbly, yet joyfully answer, it is the LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS. One, and the only one, able to make up the dreadful breach which sin had made, between GOD and us, and restore perfect order among all the works of GOD. One who is, and was, and ever will be, mighty to save: *one with the FATHER, over all GOD blessed for ever: and one with us bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.* One who is called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty GOD, the everlasting FATHER, the Prince of peace!*

Oh precious LORD JESUS! help us to be engaged to thee, as thou hast engaged thyself to GOD and thy FATHER for us! Say dearest LORD! how should any of Adam's fallen, ruined, helpless race have ever stood before GOD, hadst not thou stood up at the call of GOD for us, and answered in our law room and place, both by doing and by dying. Oh! for grace from henceforth to give up all engagements, to sacrifice all human covenants, all hopes of creature strength, and creature attainments, to be found wholly engaged to CHRIST, and to follow him in the regeneration. Do thou LORD, who hast undertaken

and accomplished salvation *for* us, accomplish salvation *in* us, and be *in* us *the hope of glory*. Let every faculty, every wish, every thought; be brought into subjection unto thee; that henceforth, we may no longer live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again. Make us thine, and be thou ours, that *being bought with a price, we may glorify thee, both in our bodies and in our spirit, which are thine for ever*. Amen.

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

This seems to be but a continuation of the former Chapter; and a most blessed continuation it is! We have here, the LORD speaking most graciously to his people; and giving them exceeding great and precious promises in CHRIST, confirmed with all the sanction and authority of JEHOVAH.

REFLECTIONS

PONDER well my soul, from the perusal of this most blessed Chapter that sacred source of all thy happiness, the everlasting love of GOD. See to it, that from thence it is, that JESUS Mediator with all his fulness comes, and GOD thy FATHER, becomes the GOD of all the families of Israel. And do not fail to connect with this soul-transporting view, that if thou art CHRIST'S, then art thou interested in this family, being *Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*.

And oh! most gracious LORD! do as thou hast said; bring LORD, thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth: bring them both from the north and south; let the blind eyes be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Nothing shall be impediments in the way of salvation, when JESUS gives but the power; even the women with child shall come, and her that travaileth with child together. And, as true penitents and holy mourners, shall all thy dispersed come, for thou wilt lead them as thou hast said: and their way in JESUS shall be a strait way, wherein they shall not stumble. No lamentation in Ramah; no sorrow for children in the church of JESUS shall be heard, for the child in CHRIST

shall die an hundred years old; while the sinner, who is an hundred years old, out of CHRIST, shall be accursed. Precious LORD! all thy ransomed ones, when instructed and brought back, shall come like Ephraim; and our covenant GOD will be full of bowels of compassion to his poor long lost wanderers. In the incarnation and ministry of JESUS will be all joy; and as JESUS himself was in the morning of his resurrection, as one refreshed with sleep, so shall the triumph of his people be in him!

Will the LORD then bring on to every child of his the sure and certain promise, and now in the last days, fulfil that gracious word, in *putting his law in our minds, and writing it in our hearts*; in being *our* GOD, and making us *his people*: that henceforth we may no longer ask around, or say to others, *Know the LORD*; for *all shall know thee from the least to the greatest*? We look up to thee O LORD for this unspeakable gift of the latter day glory! We wait for the sure accomplishment of it! For as sure as the ordinances of day and night are in the LORD's own appointment; so equally sure are the children of CHRIST heirs of the promise. Blessed GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS; so let all thy promises be yea and amen in him. Amen.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the imprisonment of Jeremiah for his faithfulness. The Prophet complains to GOD. The LORD confirms the word of his servant. The Chapter closeth with GOD's gracious promises of a return to the people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold in the example of Zedekiah King of Judah, how sin hardens. Though every tittle Jeremiah had foretold during the many years of his preaching, had come to pass, and not one thing had failed: though the false prophet Hananiah, that prophesied smooth things, and had promised peace, had suddenly died for his daring impiety; yet no one effect had either wrought upon the mind of Zedekiah, or his princes, or the people. Oh! what an awful state to

be given up to a judicial blindness, and to the obduracy of a hardened and impenitent heart!

Behold the faithfulness of Jeremiah in the times of such impending danger. What a blessed state is that, which grace alone can induce, when neither the frowns nor smiles of men bring a snare!

But chiefly from this Chapter, may the reflections both of him that writes, and him that reads be directed, to behold JESUS in his unceasing tenderness and compassion over his people. Can the imagination form a representation of anything so lovely, as what is here said, of GOD's gathering his dispersed, and bringing home his captives, notwithstanding all their obstinacy and rebellion against him? Precious LORD! let every one of thine say, be it unto us according to thy word. If thou LORD wilt undertake both for thyself and people in this everlasting covenant, then most assuredly all those blessings must come to pass, and in the gift of one heart and one way, to fear thee and love thee forever; neither the father nor the children shall depart from thee! Oh! the sweetness and blessedness of that promise, in which thou hast said: I *will* not; and they *shall* not; I will not turn from them, and they shall not depart from me. Oh! for grace to live in the constant belief of this most blessed truth, by which all thy redeemed are safe, and shall not be cast down nor destroyed forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

The Prophet prophesied in the prison. The LORD confirms the word of Jeremiah. Many gracious promises are mingled with GOD's determined judgments in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET and blessed are the great truths of a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, which are contained in this Chapter! May the soul both of the Writer and Reader, through grace, enter into the full enjoyment of them. And as it was here with the Church in her deep affliction, so is it in all ages with the Church under her exercises; the salvation by

her LORD remains, while her transgressions testify against her. The LORD will cleanse his people from their iniquity, and will turn back their captivity, and will pardon all their sins for his own great name's sake.

My soul! do thou be sure take part in these sweet promises, from the sure interest thou hast in JESUS. It is for his sake, and for his sake alone these mercies are secure. And be thou looking forward, with an holy joy, founded in the confidence of his righteousness, that JESUS will come to call all his redeemed to him, for all and every one, one by one, must pass again under his hand that telleth them. He hath once received them from his FATHER, and they are the purchase of his blood, and the conquest of his SPIRIT; and therefore, he will take effectual care that not one of them shall be found wanting, when he maketh up his jewels. Hail then, thou blessed dearest JESUS! This is the name whereby thy Church, from being one with thee, shall be called, *the* LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS! GOD will confirm his Covenant, and perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he hath sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old.

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

The Prophet is again commissioned with heavy tidings to Zedekiah and to the people. As the time of the captivity drew near, the alarm became greater.

REFLECTIONS

WE cannot close this Chapter without first stopping to admire GOD's patience and man's unworthiness. Though judgment was at the door, and everyone seemed to be tremblingly alive at what would follow, yet sin is not lessened. Gracious GOD! what but sovereign grace can soften the human heart!

Precious LORD JESUS! thou wert indeed the servant, who would not go out free. For the love that thou didst bear thy FATHER, and the love thou didst bear thy wife the Church, and the children which the

FATHER had given thee; thy ear was indeed bored, and thou didst give thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. Thou didst not hide thy face from shame and spitting. Oh! for grace to imitate thy blessed example, and in all the circumstances of life, to show mercy in having obtained mercy.

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

We have here a subject introduced in the midst of Israel's history, of the history of a family obedient to their father. The Prophet makes a suitable improvement from it, to set forth the shamefulness of the disobedience of the family of Israel towards GOD their Father.

REFLECTIONS

LET us not dismiss this Chapter without taking with it the instructions the HOLY GHOST seems to have intended the Church to gather from it; for they are very many, and very interesting also. Surely the LORD hath not handed down to us this famous history of a single family, but with an express design that it might be profitable withal. There seems to be all along intended from it, a great heightening of men's folly in respect to their inattention to divine things, when in mere human things so much respect was shown. The father of the house of the *Rechabites*, had for many ages and generations this veneration manifested towards him, when he himself was mouldered to dust, and his ashes mingled with his original earth. But the inattention GOD's people manifested to the LORD, was to One who inhabiteth eternity: and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! The house of the *Rechabites* knew Jonadab only by name: but the LORD of hosts was known to his people by power and mighty acts, in grace, mercy, and continual favor. The authority of Jonadab certainly ceased with his life. But Israel's GOD was their GOD forever and ever. And had the house of the *Rechabites* disobeyed Jonadab their father, the offence would have been against a man like themselves: but in Israel's disobedience, their rebellion was against the GOD of Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob, for this was his name forever, and this was his memorial to all generations. Pause, Reader! and in the view, think of the forbearance, and long-suffering, and goodness of the LORD: that notwithstanding Israel's perpetual and unceasing rebellion, the LORD still cast not away his people whom he foreknew. Still the LORD carried them on, and still he loved them; until at length JESUS came *to bless them, in turning away every one of them from their iniquities!* Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

The Church is here taught by writing, as the Prophet had before been commissioned by preaching, the same solemn truths. The effect of inattention is here set forth as the same.

REFLECTIONS

How can we better improve the perusal of this Chapter, than in considering our privileges, to whom not only a roll of a book of GOD's gracious dealings with his people is given, but the glorious gospel of the ever blessed GOD is come; and with a fulness of light, and life, and salvation, that all that are in darkness, and the shadow of death, may hear, and know the joyful sound, and be brought to walk in the light of GOD's countenance. Blessed LORD JESUS! what shall we render to thee for thy merciful grace towards us! Thou hast not only sent thy *Jeremiahs* and thy *Baruchs* to write off to thy people the blessed words that came from thy mouth; but thou hast come thyself, out of the bosom of the FATHER, full of grace and truth, *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel!*

Oh LORD! add a blessing to thy mission, and sanctify thy word, to the great purpose of salvation. LORD, let it not only be unto thy people, a *may be*, that they may hear and obey thy word; but make it a *shall be*, that they may be *willing in the day of thy power!* LORD, give to them the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, and the receiving and believing heart. Oh! that thy word may at all times come with

power to thy redeemed, that it may be the savor of life unto life; and eminently show itself to be, *the engrafted word which is able to save the soul*. Amen.

CHAPTER 37

SUMMARY

The history of the siege by the Chaldeans, is related in part in this Chapter. At the report of Pharaoh's army, the siege is raised. Jeremiah going to the land of Benjamin, is smitten and cast into prison, but after many days is taken out. He still prophesieth evil to the land.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I pass by several other weighty things, which might be proposed, from the view of the events recorded in this Chapter, to call your attention, while I wish to exercise my own, on the situation of the poor, despised, and mournful Prophet, Jeremiah. Behold his faithfulness in the midst of danger; no change in his preaching could be wrought by all their threats, or his sufferings; whether cast into prison, or whether brought forth for death. It should seem, that for many days, he lay in the dungeon unregarded and unpitied, and without food. But yet, when brought from it to deliver the word of the LORD, he had no soothing message for the king. Reader! it is the happiness of GOD's people, in the present hour, that they are not called forth to such trying times and exercises: nevertheless, faithfulness in every age, though not exposing to bodily punishment, must and will expose to painful reproaches from the ungodly. It is very blessed to eye JESUS upon all these occasions; and to rest in the assurance that JESUS eyes his servants. Jeremiah was in the prison: John the beloved Apostle at Patmos, and Paul and Silas in the stocks: but JESUS was there also. Men may persecute, when he permits, as *Shimei* did *David*; but the day of retribution will come. And oh! what a tremendous day to those that offend one of CHRIST's little ones! Precious LORD! let thy grace support all thy people, during the dark and trying hour, until the bright and glorious

morning come, when those their enemies, that now seem to triumph, they shall see their faces no more forever.

CHAPTER 38

SUMMARY

From bad to worse, the history is prosecuted concerning the conduct of the people, Jeremiah continues preaching until their passions are excited, and he is cast into the dungeon. The LORD stirreth up a stranger to intercede for his life with the king. He is taken from the pit; but still preacheth of ruin.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we peruse this portion of GOD's holy word to little purpose, if so be that we do not, under his divine teaching, gather from it the blessed instructions it holds forth. For what is it that we behold in the different characters then, but the same as we behold in the different characters now; that the LORD's children are conformed to his lovely image; and the children of the evil one to Satan their master. Their malice is against CHRIST and therefore it is manifested to his people. As then saith an Apostle, speaking of the days of old, *he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.* And so it will go on, until time shall be no more. And then the LORD will come, and take out of his kingdom all things that offend. Blessed LORD JESUS! I would say both for myself and Reader; give us to know, and see clearly, the marks of our adoption character. Let our souls discover, that our spots are the spots of GOD's children. And then, like Paul, like Jeremiah, like all the faithful gone before, we shall be enabled to say, *though bonds and imprisonment await us, yet none of these things will move us; neither shall we count our life dear to ourselves so that we finish our course with joy, and the calling we have received of the LORD JESUS to testify the gospel of the grace of GOD.*

CHAPTER 39

SUMMARY

We are now arrived at the long predicted event, the taking of the city. Zedekiah hath his eyes put out; and all the people are made prisoners.

REFLECTIONS

WHO would have believed (saith the Prophet) among the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem! But the cause is immediately given. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, it is that which hath shed the blood of the just in the midst of her. But Reader! behold not only in this history, but in the history of all the earth, what sin hath wrought. It was sin that caused the destruction of the old world by a flood! It was sin that gave rise to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire. And it as sin, by which death hath entered into the circumstances of all mankind, and destroys all, because all have sinned. And would you see a yet more tremendous display of the effects of sin, than the everlasting destruction of rebellious men and angels, put all together; behold it in the death of CHRIST; when he *who knows no sin became sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*. Yea, Reader, in the SON of GOD taking upon him our nature, and dying, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD, there is a greater manifestation of the awful nature of sin, than the overthrow and annihilation of all the creation of GOD would have been in proof!

Pause then, my soul, over these solemn considerations! Behold the judgments against sin, going on throughout the earth! Look at the effects of sin, in the sorrows, and wars, and carnage, and miseries, both in private life and public bodies. And when the full influence of these solemn things are suitably felt in thine own apprehension, look unto JESUS, the only refuge and consolation under all. Oh! for grace to know him, who *by death hath destroyed him that had the power of death; and delivered them who through fear of death are all their life time subject to bondage*.

CHAPTER 40

SUMMARY

We have here some of the events which took place at Jerusalem, immediately after the city was taken, the history is carried on.

REFLECTIONS

I BEG the Reader to make a solemn pause over this Chapter, and to remark, how soon a sense of divine judgments lose their effect, except divine grace keep the remembrance of them, with all their blessed consequences, alive in our hearts. Who should have conceived that after so alarming a visitation, in the putting out the eyes of the king, and carrying him and his nobles away into captivity, with all the residue of the people excepting the poor, that rebellion and disaffection should have sprung up among them. But so it is. There can be no change but what grace makes. And much it is to be feared, that if the miserable in everlasting chains, under darkness to the judgment of the great day, were once again to be permitted to come on earth, their minds would be the same, and the sin and malignity of their nature remain unchanged. LORD JESUS! give to thy people that *new heart*, and that *new mind*, in which the new birth consists: that by regeneration they may be prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of thee in glory; since thou thyself hast said, without it, we *cannot see the kingdom of GOD!*

CHAPTER 41

SUMMARY

The treachery spoken of in the preceding chapter, is said in this to have been accomplished. Gedaliah the new governor is slain; and much confusion followeth.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the great relief to a Child of GOD, when turning over continued pages in the word of GOD in relating man's depravity, is the view of JESUS, who was manifested, as an apostle saith, *to take away our sin, and in him is no sin*. Precious LORD JESUS! I would ask, both for myself and Reader! what could support the soul, under the consciousness of one common nature of evil, but the consciousness also, that thy people have one common nature of righteousness in thee? *As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many were made righteous*. Every way, and by every view, to which the mind directs her attention, in *Zedekiah, Ishmael*, and all the residue of the people, we see nothing but evil; and in ourselves feel the breaking out of the same. But in thee, blessed JESUS, we behold a fulness of grace and truth; and those graces abounding for thy people. Oh! LORD! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, if it be thy blessed will, the needed grace, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST; that of thy fulness we may all receive and grace for grace. Amen!

CHAPTER 42

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter, a renewed instance of the incorrigible hardness of the human heart, void of divine grace. Johanan pretendeth to seek after GOD, and enquireth of the Prophet. Jeremiah kindly tells the people, but in vain.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I shall lose all the beauties of these scriptures, if from the representation here made of the Church, in the days of Jeremiah we do not gather instruction, to suit the Church in our's. Depend upon it in all ages, more or less, it is the same. Oh! how doth Zion languish! How are the glorious distinguishing truths of our holy faith kept back, or believed only in part! And as these pillars, and ground of the truth, are but coolly received; so in

proportion, like Johanan and his party, we are looking more to an arm of flesh for our confidence, than to the living GOD. Thus turning from one creature to another, we seek salvation from any, and from every resource, rather than the one great and finished redemption of JESUS! Oh that the LORD would give his people grace, that in the present hour the advice of Jeremiah might be followed; that we may abide in CHRIST, that the LORD might build us up, and plant us in the glorious salvation by JESUS! For then when the LORD comes to bless his land and people, he will bring with him grace to pardon, grace to renew, grace to sanctify, grace to save, and an abundance of grace, to enable us to triumph; over all our enemies. Precious LORD! fulfil all thy merciful dispensations towards us, and return to thy people, as thou hast said, a pure language, that *they may call upon the name of the LORD with one consent.*

CHAPTER 43

SUMMARY

The awful rejection of the Prophet's advice, by Johanan and his party, is related in this Chapter: and with daring impiety he and his followers carry Jeremiah, and the remnant of the people by force into Egypt.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! do not close this book of GOD, neither pass away from this Chapter, without first dropping in prayer before the mercy seat, for the continual leadings, and preventing, and restraining influences of the HOLY SPIRIT. Who can read the astonishing hardness of the human heart, as set forth in the relation of *Johanan* and his followers, without trembling? Who would have supposed it possible, that when a nation for its impiety had been given up by the LORD to the sword, the remnant should have set forth yet more outrages and marks of rebellion against GOD! But, alas! what is man, in his highest attainments, if for a moment left of GOD! The best of men are but men, and are equally capable of falling: for corruption is the same in all men, by nature. And, my soul, never for a moment lose

sight of that most certain and unquestionable truth, that they that are kept, *are kept by the power of GOD, through faith unto salvation.* And that thou art not like Johanan and his party, is not owing to thee; or to thy prudence, but wholly to the merciful grace of the LORD. Oh! for grace to seek grace; and to be on the lookout for the sweet visits of him and his love, who alone keepeth from falling, and will present his people before his throne faultless, with exceeding great joy. Precious JESUS! Do thou keep me, and I shall be kept. And grant LORD, that I may never *grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD; whereby thy people are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

CHAPTER 44

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here preaching, though in Egypt, in the same strain of reproof as before. And the LORD foretells by him the destruction of that kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we are engaged, in the perusal of this Chapter, in a most solemn and awful history. Israel, given up to idolatry, and their neck hardened against all the calls of the LORD's long suffering and patience. Let us pause over it, and remark the tremendous and fearful condition of such a state. There is, indeed, in every man, by nature, a blindness, an ignorance, and even an enmity, against GOD. Our wills, our inclinations, our faculties, are all on the side of rebellion; and until an act of grace is wrought upon the heart, there is none that will seek after GOD. But, when added to this, a *judicial* blindness follows, this is most alarming indeed! Thus the LORD by his servant proclaims, *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me.* Intimating the natural hardness and impenitency of the heart, shut up in unbelief. *So I gave them up unto their own heart's lusts; and they walked in their own counsels.* As if the LORD had said, *Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone!* Oh! precious, precious LORD JESUS! thou that art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! blessed forever be thy gracious interposition, in coming to take away sin by the sacrifice of thyself! LORD! open our

hearts, and keep them open by thy grace, that they may never more be shut against thee!

CHAPTER 45

SUMMARY

We have here a short, but precious Chapter, in which Baruch, being dismayed at his situation in Egypt, is comforted by the Prophet.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! it is enough that thou art my portion; Oh! let me seek no great things beside. To have my spiritual life secured, mid my natural life given me for a prey, in such a world as this, where the arrows of death are flying around in every direction; LORD, help me to consider these as distinguishing mercies; and by faith to live on thee now, and ere long to enjoy the full fruition of thee in glory; oh! what marked and distinguishing grace is mine. And now, LORD! I pray thee, let *Baruch's* history continually furnish out subject of instruction; for in having thee, O LORD, I really and truly possess all things.

CHAPTER 46

SUMMARY

Egypt is here threatened, and Babylon is pointed to as her conqueror. In the close of the Chapter the LORD comforts his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass by a thousand beauties, as they arise before us in this precious scripture, in GOD's destruction of all the enemies of his Church and people, to dwell upon that most blessed and gracious portion of it, in his tender mercies over his redeemed.

Every part of the holy word tends to confirm what this most merciful passage so faithfully proclaims, that GOD's Jacob shall not finally be lost, nor his Israel forsaken. *Cast down* his children may be, when their sins and rebellions render chastisements necessary: but *cast off* they never can be; for how unworthy soever in themselves, they are beheld precious in JESUS. Oh! thou sin-bearing LAMB of GOD! what everlasting love and praises will the ages of eternity bring in to thee, in an endless revenue of glory, when thou shalt have finally brought them all home, and forever secured them beyond all future possibility of danger, in thine own eternal righteousness in thy kingdom!

CHAPTER 47

SUMMARY

We have the same subject prosecuted through this chapter as in the former. The LORD is about to punish Israel's enemies, and having begun with the Egyptians, he here declares the destruction of the Philistines.

REFLECTIONS

METHINKS the LORD, the HOLY GHOST, hath opened to the believer's view sweet instructions in this Chapter. Here we learn, that however long and oppressive the Philistines, in all ages and generations, may bear hatred, and show forth their malice against the LORD's heritage, yet a day of reckoning is sure, and a time of recompense must come. The LORD may, and the LORD will correct his children when they offend, and with the rod of men, for so the Covenant of grace declares; but all this shall be but in measure, while in the end their enemies will finally perish, and that forever.

And is it not a gracious, part also in GOD, to teach his people these precious truths, and to help them by such promises, even during their exercises, to live by faith in the expectation what the end shall be? Oh! for grace to watch and mark the unceasing tendencies of divine love in all his appointments. Surely the LORD doth *stay his rough wind, in the day of the east wind. By this*

therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away sin.

CHAPTER 48

SUMMARY

In this Chapter Moab is called to account, and a long and trying account it is. The last verse, however, (and probably in allusion to the Gentiles given to CHRIST in Moab,) closes with a gracious promise.

REFLECTIONS

READER! who, but must be struck with holy awe and reverence, that contemplates the LORD'S judgments in the earth! And though from a conscious sense of being made a partaker of grace, cannot but find cause to be humbled, under a sense of sin and undeservings, and *to rejoice with trembling*.

It would be a blessed and sanctified use of all afflictions, judgments, and visitations, that we behold, or hear of, among nations, or families, or individuals: if, while we view the sorrows of others, we duly considered our deserts also. The LORD hath caused it, to be recorded, for the solemn admonition of his Church and people, that a *fruitful land is turned into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*. And when we see, as that we do now see, nations, like Moab, convulsed and shaken to their very centre, for the wickedness and impiety of the people; surely our British Israel hath reason to humble herself before GOD, lest she should see also an enemy in her habitation. It will be blessed to him that writes and to him that reads, if Moab's sorrows here threatened, lead the hearts of both in prayer to GOD in CHRIST, that our minds may be always deeply affected with the sense, of national sins, and the just apprehension of national judgments. *Oh LORD! I would say with the Prophet, spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thy heritage to reproach! Oh! grant that this our British Zion may never see the Golden Candlestick of the Gospel removed out of its place: neither the going down of the sun among our Prophets: but, oh! that*

the LORD, with whom alone is the residue of the SPIRIT, would *turn to the people a pure language, that they might all call upon the name of the LORD to serve him with one consent.* Amen.

CHAPTER 49

SUMMARY

The judgments of the Ammonites takes up the former part of this Chapter. In it we have also the condemnation of Edom, Damascus, Kedar, Hazor, and Elam.

REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, and beholding the gracious Covenant promises of GOD in CHRIST, thus held forth to the full assurance of faith for the final destruction of all the Church's adversaries every child of GOD by promise, as *Isaac* was, may well join that hymn of old, and say; *so let all thine enemies perish, O LORD, but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might!* It is blessed, it is precious to see, that the issue of the holy war is not doubtful. JESUS hath conquered in our name and nature; and He will subdue *for* us and *in* us, all that oppose.

Reader! we find cause however, in the midst of triumph to be humbled, in the recollection, how often through sin and unbelief, those *Ammonites* and *Edomites* vex our souls with their wiles: and act as scourges to chasten the LORD's people, when by sin we transgress. When we provoke the LORD to jealousy with our rebellion, and cause him to hide his face from us, then those enemies gain their advantage over us. But oh! how blessed still to recollect, that He that is for us is more than all that is against us; and he will, as in this Chapter is promised, account with, and rebuke all nations for his people's sake. He will subdue the enemy, and bring all their power low, for his own righteousness' sake, and for his Covenant promise in CHRIST JESUS!

CHAPTER 50

SUMMARY

Here Babylon, who had been the scourge of so many nations, now comes to be reckoned with herself. Her judgments are described. There are many sweet promises interspersed in this Chapter to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! contemplate in this Chapter, what all Scripture proclaims, and all experience in the history of men and things confirm; GOD's people must ultimately triumph, and all the enemies of GOD, and of his CHRIST, must be destroyed. How little did proud Babylon calculate the dreadful purchase they made when leading Israel into captivity! How little did Egypt suppose, for the deliverance of their poor brick making slaves, Egypt should be destroyed! And how little now, in the present hour, doth mystic Babylon frame an idea, that in one day her ruin will be accomplished. Oh! that the people of GOD, when racking under chastisement and oppression, would *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it:* and in their transgressions and unbelief, trace the source of the LORD's displeasure. But let them not forget, amidst all, that though like lost sheep, as this scripture beautifully describes them, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, yet they are still the sheep of CHRIST. And in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and both in Jerusalem and Judah, *the flocks must pass again under the hands of him that telleth them.* Oh! the blessedness, when grace inclines the heart, of doing as the poor Captives from Babylon are described, going and weeping, they shall seek the LORD, and shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to join themselves to the LORD, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be broken. And as in grace, so in glory, what blessedness will break in upon the soul of all the LORD's outcasts, which here dwell with *Moab*, and are constrained to have their habitation in the *Babylon* of the world, when finally and fully they shall return, and come to the Zion which is above, *with songs of*

everlasting joy upon their heads, when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

CHAPTER 51

SUMMARY

The same subject is prosecuted in this Chapter. The utter destruction of Babylon is declared, and the LORD's judgments upon her determined.

REFLECTIONS

HERE Reader! we arrive to the termination of Jeremiah's prophecy, and have seen how sure the word of the LORD is, in destruction to his enemies, and in grace and faithfulness to his people. And we who have lived to see, not only the whole accomplishment of the things predicted, but the introduction of that blessed era of his gospel, in whose kingdom all the great events of salvation to GOD's people are founded, and by whom all nations of the earth are blessed, may well bow down, with thanksgiving and praise, for this precious portion of the word of his grace. Blessed be the LORD for his servant's ministry! And blessed be the LORD for having such precious scriptures handed down to us, for our instruction! And blessed be the LORD, who teacheth us to profit by the ministry of his servants!

Farewell *Jeremiah!* thou faithful servant of the most High GOD! painful indeed were thine exercises, to have thy ministry so despised and scorned; and thy person treated with such indignity and suffering. But sure was thy reward: and JESUS, in whose name thou didst minister, did not leave thee without witness in the most perilous times. Oh! that the LORD JESUS, in all ages of his Church, would grant tokens to his faithful ones, as to Jeremiah, when opposed by false prophets: and to the *Hananiahs* and *Pashurs* of the present day, speak in his decision, that they may be *Magor-missibib*s in terror all around. LORD take thine own blessed cause, unto thine own Almighty arm; and in the ordination of thy ministers, as in the case of Jeremiah, make them as a defenced city, an iron pillar and brazen walls, that they may be strong in the LORD, and in the power

of his might. Yea, make them what thou wouldest have them to be, and make them more than conquerors, through thy grace helping them, that JESUS may be glorified in their instrumentality, and the souls of thy people made joyful through them, in the LORD our GOD.

CHAPTER 52

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the historical relation of the siege of Jerusalem; the capture of the city and people, and the deplorable treatment of Zedekiah and his Sons, and nobles.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what vast subjects open to our most devout meditation, while going over in the perusal those prophetical writings of the mournful Prophet Jeremiah. How gracious to his Church and people, the LORD is here manifested! How patient, and long suffering! And, finally, what an issue to his mercy! How tried, afflicted; distressed, and exercised, his faithful servant the Prophet! And what a series of the most aggravated provocations, rebellions, and sins, did the people of Israel and Judah set up against the LORD; and against Jeremiah!

Reader! solemnly ponder well the whole subject. Then call to mind the Covenant faithfulness of JEHOVAH, as the one only cause of Israel's salvation. Oh! the blessedness of that rich mercy and grace given the Church in CHRIST JESUS, before the world began. Here Reader! centre all your views. Here trace all mercies to their source. In JESUS behold the whole purpose of redemption: and *from* JESUS see that you draw all your consolation. GOD in CHRIST *reconciling the world to himself*, explains the whole mystery of redemption, and places the whole on a firm foundation, not to be shaken. May a gracious GOD, give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, more and more to rest on this Rock of Ages, and to be looking forward with holy faith to that hour when the LORD will bring again,

Zion, and overthrow all the enemies of the Church, as Babylon, with an everlasting destruction! Amen.

LAMENTATIONS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE title of this book is rather gathered from the general contents of it, than from any other reason; for there is in fact no title given to it by the Author. The Old Church was accustomed to call it *The Book of Lamentations*: and under the New Dispensation we have adopted the same. There can be no question, but that the Prophet *Jeremiah* was the penman; and on which account indeed, it invariably follows in the order of the books of scripture, his prophecies. And the occasion upon which the Prophet gave vent to the sorrows of his heart, in the desolations of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, is but too palpable an evidence upon what account they were written.

The Lamentations are for the most part written in the style of the Hebrew poetry, and agreeable to that style of writing, are alphabetically arranged; that is, each verse beginning with the letter as standing in the order of the alphabet. They are very beautiful in point of poetry, but much more so in respect to piety; and no doubt have in many parts strong allusions to Christ; as the Reader, taught by the Holy Ghost, will soon discover. With respect to their date, it must be left to conjecture to determine. It is more than probable that they were written at different periods, as the calamities of the nation gave scope to the sorrowful exercises of the Prophet. I only detain the Reader, to add a prayer to the Holy Ghost, that his grace may accompany our perusal of them, and make them profitable in a gracious manner, to lead unto Christ: that in tracing the lamentations of God's people, we may always keep in remembrance, that *in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his*

love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

In twenty-two verses, corresponding to the number of the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet, the Prophet mourns the desolations of his people, and his beloved city Jerusalem. He confesseth sin, and acknowledgeth the justice of the divine judgments.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Who can contemplate the dreadful state of the Church at that season, when the Prophet thus mourned, without feeling the most sensible and sorrowful impression? Who that loves Zion, can thus behold Zion, and not take part? And yet, if in the days of Jeremiah there was sad cause for taking up lamentation, surely now there is still greater reason for mourning. It is true indeed, Zion is not gone into national captivity: but what of that, spiritual captivity is an infinitely greater evil. So few are there now seeking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, that the language of the Prophet will hold good; *there is none to guide her, among all the sons whom she hath brought forth: neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.* And in a day of such degeneracy in Zion, may we not well suppose that Jesus is looking on, and feels sensibly for the defections of his people! Lord raise up thy power and come among us. Take to thyself thy great name, and go forth conquering and to conquer, until that thou hast converted the nations to the sceptre of thy grace, and called home thy banished ones to thy glory. Thou wilt arise to have mercy upon Zion, to comfort all that mourn, and to take to thyself a pure people, with one consent to call upon the Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here a continuation of the same subject as the former. The Prophet mourns over the desolated circumstances of Jerusalem, and complains of those afflictions to God.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it will be our wisdom from the perusal of the lamentations of the mournful Prophet, to gather consolation to our exercises, and. the exercises of Zion in all ages: and study to learn those sweet and gracious lessons the Holy Ghost intended, from such a record in his sacred scripture.

We see then in this part of the history of the Church, to what a state of sorrow God's people may be brought, when their sins and backslidings testify against them. And will not God in every age, chasten the same in his people? Will he overlook sin in them, more than in the world? Nay, will He not chastise them much more, in proportion as sin in them is more offensive in the divine eye, than in others? Sin indeed, as sin, is the same thing in all. But, nevertheless, it is worse in God's children than in the ungodly; just as a weed in a garden, though the same as in the hedge or field, is yet more offensive, and more proper to be rooted out. Let us learn therefore from hence, how sure sin, in all its various forms, must induce the divine displeasure, and bring on the chastisement of God.

In the next place, let us under all our exercises of affliction trace our sorrows to the source, and when we find the Achan in the camp, bring all with deep contrition before the Lord: and say in the Lord's own words, *take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips!*

And above all, Reader! see to it, that in all our sorrow for sin, and desires after pardon from the guilt of it, the whole is done with an eye to Christ. It is He which hath borne our sins and carried our sorrows; and it is wholly in respect to him and

his finished salvation, that God pardons the sin and accepts the sinner. Even the corrections of the Lord are not for the satisfaction of God's justice, for that justice hath been fully satisfied by the blood of the cross; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, by whose stripes we are healed. But all corrections for sin become the testimony of God's holiness; and are in the charter of grace so set forth, and not by way of expiation. Therefore with an eye to Jesus, and the everlasting efficacy of his sin-cleansing blood, let our sorrow for sin, and repentance towards God be always accompanied: And oh! how sweet and precious the thought, that the same merit is in the blood of the Lamb as ever, though new contracted defilement be in his people, from day to day. Precious Jesus! thou hast made my peace by the blood of thy cross.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The same subject of lamentation runs through the whole of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! In your afflictions and mine, like the Prophet's, or the Church, can only find motives to assuage and soften them in the contemplation of the unequalled sorrows of Jesus. While we have our eyes stedfastly directed unto Him, we shall find our sorrows lightened, and our faces will not be ashamed. For while we eye Him, we hear a voice speaking to our hearts in a way of the most gracious accommodation; *behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?*

Reader! let me only detain you with a short observation, just to remark, how blessed the after fruits of exercises are, where our sorrows are sanctified with grace, and Jesus mingles our tears with the spiced wine of his pomegranate. And if afflictions lead to Him, prompt the soul to lean upon

Him: determine the heart to abide by Him, and like an ancient sufferer, compel the soul to say, *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*; depend upon it, these afflictions which are thus sanctified, be they what they may, are among the all things which work together for good, and will be found in the end to be *the light afflictions of the moment, which work out of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The fallen and sorrowful state of Zion is made the subject of lamentation through the greater part of this Chapter. Towards the close the punishment of Edom is threatened.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Let us, in beholding the sad consequences of sin, in the case of the Church of old; seriously consider, to what the same cause might justly reduce the Church in any, and in every age now; if the Lord were to enter into strict judgment with his people. Was there ever a period more alarmingly distressing on this account than now? And as the Lord hath not promised exemption from the rod in case of sin: though in Christ he hath assured the Church of an exemption from everlasting ruin on that account, have we not just reason for fear? And should the Lord arise to visit our national offences with a rod, who but would tremble?

Precious Jesus! though we are gone away as a people, yea, far away in rebellions: though for profaneness and impiety, sabbathbreaking and transgression, the land mourneth: yet, Lord, turn to us, and turn our hearts to thee, that we may fear thy name. Oh! come to us, and bless us with awakening, converting, renewing, confirming grace. Be as the dew unto Israel, that *we may revive as the corn, and grow as the vine*: and that our scent in thee and from thee, may be as *the wine of Lebanon*. For then, and then only, when thou

comest to bless, shall we go forth to meet thee, and have our souls renewed in *the light of thy countenance*.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Prophet puts a close to his lamentations in prayer; and a most sweet and gracious prayer it is!

REFLECTIONS

I CANNOT prevail upon myself to close this Book of Lamentations, without once again blessing the Lord for having endued the mind of his servant the Prophet with such large portions of grace, so to take part in the afflictions of his people. And I take occasion therefrom, to beg the Reader to join my spirit in prayer also, that He would of his infinite grace and mercy, give to his praying people now, large portions of the same precious frame of mind, that all selfish considerations may be lost in the view of the present languishing state of Zion. Surely there never was a period when her interests were less regarded. Where are the praying seed of Jacob to be found? Who is there that lays it at heart, how very low she now is? Moreover, are not, as in Jeremiah's days, the Lord's judgments in the earth? And may we not, without danger of committing an error, trace up the cause to the Lord's jealousy for his Zion? Did Jesus purchase the Church with his blood; and can he be indifferent to her best interests? My soul! lay these things to heart. Reader! I charge it upon you, do the same! Whatever the event of the present commotions of the earth may be, let a throne of grace be enabled to witness for both, that Zion is there remembered by us in our warmest prayers, and her welfare preferred above our chief joy. Oh! that every nerve was exerted, and every heart-affection on the stretch, under the Holy Ghost's influence, and that we entered into the retirings of our God in Christ, to plead with him for Zion. *Spare Lord*, I would say,

spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Reader! the Lord prepare both for his holy will and pleasure, that we may sing our song upon *Alamoth*, what was composed for the Lord's hidden ones, *when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.* Amen.

EZEKIEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

STILL prosecuting the subject of prophecy, we enter now upon the inspired scripture written by Ezekiel. This Book of GOD very properly follows that of *Jeremiah*, in that, as *Jeremiah* predicted the captivity of the Church: *Ezekiel* becomes a confirmation of it, in dating his prophecy from among the captives in Babylon.

The author takes his name from an Hebrew word, of striking signification, meaning, that he was upheld, or *strengthened* by the LORD. The burden of *Ezekiel's* writings is chiefly of events to be accomplished in the Church; and his Sermons, which he delivered to the people, are many of them recorded with his prophecies. Many of the predictions he uttered, had their accomplishment after the return of the Church from captivity: and some remain to this hour to be fulfilled: and perhaps some are now fulfilling in the earth.

The time of *Ezekiel's* ministry is easy to be gathered, from calculating the duration of the *seventy years* captivity. *Ezekiel* began to be favoured with visions from the LORD, about the *thirtieth year* (which was the *fifth* year of the captivity) of *Jehoiakim*: and his prophecy continued near *three and twenty years*; so that it is no difficult matter to fix, the era of *Ezekiel's* ministry. But we do not find it so easy to unravel and explain the great scope and tendency of his prophecies. There are in it many dark, mysterious, and deep things of GOD. Some indeed, have been so blessedly explained, when accomplished in their corresponding events, as have called forth the admiration, love, and praise of the faithful to the LORD GOD of the Prophets, for giving to the Church such tokens of his favor, in watching over their interests in those periods. And these remaining to be fulfilled, will no doubt in due season lead to the same end. Every part of prophecy is discovered, when accomplished, to have been pointing to Him, *of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote*. And in the mean time, they serve by their obscurity, to call up the

attention, and to exercise the faith of the Church, in waiting their accomplishment. And as very much of JESUS is in the writings of these holy men; yea, as the whole have no one object ultimately considered, but as holding forth Him: so it is to the unspeakable joy of the Church, when through the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, believers are led to discover, that to *Him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins.*

I beg the Reader, before he enters upon this precious book of GOD, that he will bend the knee of the heart in prayer with me, that He, who directed the Prophet's pen, may influence the Reader's heart to a right apprehension of the great truths contained in it. And as the HOLY GHOST hath taught the Church to understand, that *no prophecy of the scripture was of any private interpretation*; he will be always on the lookout for the divine leadings of the same Almighty Author of his Sacred Word, in the discovery of the LORD JESUS. And having such a sure word of prophecy, he may *take heed unto it, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star shall arise in his heart.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with an account of the time and place of Ezekiel's prophecy. Some remarkable visions the Prophet describes, with which he was favoured.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause at your entrance on this sacred book of GOD, and ponder well over the great things recorded in this Chapter. Observe the grace of the LORD in following his Church into Babylon. Though his people, are led into captivity for their sins and rebellion: yet the LORD will not, because he cannot, forget his Covenant-relation to them. Blessedly was it said ages before this, that *though he gave them into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them: yet he remembered for them his*

Covenant, and made them to be pitied, of all them that carried them away captives. Oh! for grace to remember this, in all and amidst all the unworthiness of our own hearts. The efficacy and worthiness of the LAMB *slain from the foundation of the world* continues the same; though there be new transgressions in the LORD'S people, from day to day.

Observe also, how graciously the LORD raised up for his people, this faithful servant the Prophet, that while the people had no temple, no service, no sanctuary, to repair to; the LORD'S ministry by his servant, might be the LORD'S witness. Oh! how sweet is it, in the absence of ordinances, to have a faithful friend sent from the LORD, to remind us of his grace, and that his mercy endureth forever!

And Reader! do not forget the awfulness of this vision, by which the Prophet was taught. No doubt, *Ezekiel* contemplated what he saw, with the most profound humility. And in the reading of it, may our souls go forth under similar impressions, crying out with the heavenly host, *Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD Almighty which is, and which was, and which is to come.* What can be more becoming than for creatures such as we are, to fall low to the dust of the earth, in the contemplation of His divine majesty, before whom *all the nations of the earth are but as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance!*

One word more by way of reflection, on this most sublime but precious Chapter. May both Writer and Reader never forget, that amidst all the mysteries of this vision, the face of a man was held forth in it, and a voice was heard by the Prophet, which he distinctly observed. Surely, this could be no other than the LORD JESUS: and the design of it to represent the incarnation of the LORD JESUS, as the most blessed of all revelations to the Church. Reader! pause once more over this view, and ask your own heart, whether such visions of the LORD hath been made to your soul's joy? Have you seen GOD in CHRIST, and hath the LORD the SPIRIT formed GOD'S CHRIST in your heart *the hope of glory?* Oh! the blessedness of thus knowing CHRIST! Oh! the mercy manifested to any, and to every poor sinner, whom the LORD JEHOVAH hath given *the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* Every place is then a *Chebar*, and every day then a *Sabbath!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here ordained, and a most blessed ordination it was The LORD showeth him what is to be the nature of his ministry, and aids him to be armed for the service.

REFLECTIONS

IF my humble commentary could be supposed to fall under the eye of any of the ministers of GOD'S sanctuary, I would venture to say to such an one, behold, my brother! the solemnity of *Ezekiel's* ordination; and then enquire, whether it can be supposed, that in the Church of JESUS now, the ordination of any can be less solemn, or less important? Did One like the SON of man, ordain *Ezekiel*? And did the SPIRIT enter into the Prophet, as the LORD spake to him? And can there be any real ordination now, but under the same Almighty authority? Did I say at mine ordination, that I believed myself to be inwardly moved by the HOLY GHOST to take upon me that holy office? And have I never enquired since, whether that Almighty SPIRIT hath spoken *in* me to my own soul, and *by me* to the souls of others? Oh! what an awful thing it must be, in any, to rush into the ministry unsent, uncalled, unauthorized, unanointed. Oh! for grace to be given to the ministers of my GOD, to be faithful to GOD and to souls! LORD JESUS! do thou fulfil thy gracious promise, and give to thy Church, *Pastors according to thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with understanding and knowledge.* LORD JESUS! impress it upon the minds of unfaithful Pastors, how truly awful must it be, When the sins of the priests make the offerings of the LORD to be abhorred by the people. 1 Samuel 2:17. Reader! join my soul in prayer to GOD, that none may go forth to the LORD's ministry, but such as are of the LORD's ordination. And then like *Ezekiel*, whether *men will hear, or whether they will forbear, they shall know that there hath been a Prophet among them!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The ordination of Ezekiel is continued through part of this Chapter. About the middle of the Chapter we find the Prophet beginning his ministry. The Prophet relates, how powerfully the hand of the LORD was upon him.

REFLECTIONS

How few, how very few would rush into the ministry unsent, uncalled, unanointed; did they but study the commission of *Ezekiel* closely, and well ponder over what the LORD here saith to him, of demanding the blood of souls at his hand, if found negligent and unfaithful! Surely it is enough to make the heart of the most upright and conscientious minister to tremble, lest after all his diligence, somewhat should he overlooked; some precious souls should be forgotten; or through ignorance or inattention, *that which is lame should be turned out of the way*. And what tremendous judgments must be in the final issue of that man's ministry, whose sole object is not to win souls, but the world; and like the unworthy descendants of the old *Eli*, desire to be put *into the priest's office* only that they might *eat a piece of bread*. Gracious High Priest and Bishop of thy Church and people! do thou send forth faithful men in thy service, and give, as thou hast promised, *Pastors* to thy sanctuary, *after thine own heart and mind, that shall feed thy people with understanding and knowledge!* LORD! make them what thou wouldest have them to be, and take both ministers and people, under thine own divine teaching, that they may be found faithful, when thou comest to take home thy Church, in the great day of account.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Prophet is engaged to instruct the people; and which he doth under the similitude of a siege, to show the state of their captivity.

REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst many very sweet and profitable subjects suggested to our contemplation by the several types in this Chapter, I feel my mind constrained to one or two more immediately striking; and may the LORD direct yours also to the contemplation of the same. Who can overlook the LORD CHRIST as the great burden-bearer of his Church and people, while reading of GOD's appointment of *Ezekiel* to represent the bearing of iniquity: or, who that knows the blessedness of abundance, both in temporals and spirituals, but must be instantly led to eye CHRIST, as the bread of life, and the sanctifying mercy in the bread that perisheth with using, when sitting down to the enjoyment of either. Surely the Prophet was but the faintest type of JESUS, under the character of a burden-bearer, when laying on his side. Painful as the posture must have been, yet, what was it to JESUS hanging on the cross, suffering not only agonies of body, but the deepest anguish of soul when dying, *the just for the unjust to bring us unto GOD!* Precious LORD! may my soul behold thee often under this blessed character! And may I daily know, what it is to live upon thy fulness, and that the HOLY GHOST breaketh to me daily of thee the staff of life, *of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever.* LORD! *evermore give me this bread!*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this Chapter, is still carrying on his instruction by similitudes. Under the type of hair shaven from the head, and beard, is shown, how the LORD will bring under close punishment the people of Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us in the perusal of this Chapter, observe the gracious mercy of a Covenant GOD, who in the midst of judgments, will have his people regard his love. Hence the Prophet shall be commissioned to preach to them, as well by type as sermon, to show

the people, that, though rebellious children, they are not forgotten by him. So that though the man of GOD is to cause the razor to pass upon his head, and the hair is partly to be burnt, and partly divided with the knife, and partly scattered to the wind: to intimate, the separation for a time of the people from their glorious head; yet still in covenant-relations, the LORD will not finally cast away his people whom he foreknew, though he will reprove them for their wickedness.

Reader! we shall find a sweet subject of consolation from the contents of this Chapter, in hearing how CHRIST comforts his Church under a similar similitude. *Thine head upon thee, saith JESUS, is like Carmel; and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!* And when we behold JESUS, as the Head of his body the Church; and the hair intimating the innumerable members which grow upon him; JESUS is held by virtue of this union, in the galleries of covenant grace, and the purple vesture of his blood becomes the token of cleansing from all sin. Though by sin and departure from him, the children of GOD lose sight of their privileges; yet his grace and mercy remains the same: *though we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.* Precious Redeemer! how blessed is it to see our safety and security in thee. Truly LORD, all thy redeemed may say with one of old, and in reference to every individual of thy family, *though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This Chapter is but a continuation of the former: the LORD is still expostulating with his people. We have in the middle of the Chapter a gracious promise.

REFLECTIONS

READER! amidst numberless subjects, which arise everywhere and in every part of the word of GOD, some there are, which from their vast importance, arrest the mind more earnestly, and call up the

warmest attention. Such in an eminent degree, is what is here said, of *the remnant* the LORD would leave among his people in the worst of times. It was so in the Church of GOD in the Prophet's days: and the same is so in ours. Never, I believe, did the waters of the sanctuary run at a lower ebb, than in the present period of the Gospel; but yet, even now the LORD hath not left himself without witness. He hath *a seed* that serve him: *a people near to himself*, that *dwell alone*, and are not *reckoned among the nations*. And indeed, we may well exclaim with the Prophet, and say, *Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah!*

Shall not you and I be anxious to know whether we are of this happy number? Surely it is a momentous concern. Behold here then, in this Chapter, are their characters faithfully and clearly drawn by JEHOVAH himself. The LORD saith, that they are *a remnant* among a multitude, and *such as have escaped*. They are brought into an acquaintance with themselves, and know the plague of their own heart; and from this conviction, *they loath themselves for all the evils which they have committed, and for all their abominations*. They are brought *to remember the LORD also*, and are made acquainted with his salvation. And from the grace of JEHOVAH manifested to them, and the conscious state of their own undeservings; they discover, that their mercy all flows from JEHOVAH'S covenant relations, and in that discovery they learn to know the LORD. My brother! say, hath the LORD thus wrought for his great name's sake in your soul? Oh! the blessedness of GOD the HOLY GHOST's teaching, in convincing *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*. It is thus that all the LORD's remnant are *taught of GOD as his children*, and great then *is the peace of his children!*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet still continues to bring his alarming message to the house of Israel: and having in several preceding Chapters announced the judgments that were coming upon them; here in this

Chapter, by several awakening forms of expression, informs them, that those judgments are now at the very door.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! help both Writer and Reader in the perusal of this solemn Chapter, to make application of the awakening contents to themselves, as it concerns the great day of the LORD. Yet a little while, and as it relates to either, the cry will be, *the end is come, now is the end come upon thee*. My soul, if the archangel's trump was now to sound, how art thou prepared? There is indeed laid up for them that fear GOD, a crown of glory, which the LORD the righteous Judge will give them at that day, and to all them that love his appearing. But the question is, do we love his appearing? Is JESUS in his person, in his work, in his saving grace, in the conversion of sinners, and the comforting of saints, precious. If so we may look forward with holy joy, and hail the approach of this great day of GOD. Blessed we shall then say be the day, when the end is come to sin and sorrow; to pain, sickness, and care. Oh,! for grace thus *to be looking for, and hasting to the great day of GOD!*

Reader! as we pause over the review, let us bless our gracious Covenant GOD in CHRIST, if so be our souls are both prepared for the troubles coming upon the earth. The day is coming, when, as this scripture solemnly assures us: *all hands shall be feeble, and all knees shall be weak as water*. In the *outward* calamities of national judgments, the same flame that burns up the city, consumes both the righteous and the wicked in it. All swim in the same ship. All are saved or stranded together. But in respect to *inward* comforts, grace lifts the soul above all danger. Oh! the blessedness to be found in that day among the redeemed of the LORD, and sealed as the LORD's hidden ones, by the HOLY SPIRIT unto eternal redemption. Grant, heavenly FATHER! for the LORD JESUS's sake, if it be thy heavenly will, both to Writer and Reader, such rich assurances of faith, that when the great day of the LORD shall come, and JESUS himself shall appear, *we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming!*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

Under the similitude of the image of jealousy, the Prophet in this chapter sets forth the awful state of the people. And in the figure of the idol Tammuz, the deplorable condition to which all orders were reduced by sin, is described.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over the sad view of this Chapter, in the contents of it, for it is most solemn: and consider well, the dreadful representation here given, of the human heart! Could it have been conceived possible, that while a whole nation was reeking under the LORD's chastisements, in one of his sore judgments of captivity; that the few which were saved by divine mercy, could have braved divine justice, with such horrible impiety! But Reader! in Israel, we only read the history of all the world, and every heart. So very true, and so universally just, is that scripture, *all the world is become guilty before GOD*. Who shall count the many transgressions which arise in one heart, and in one day only, against the sovereignty of GOD? Who shall write down the multitude, which in the aggregate, are found in that day, in a single town or village? And who shall describe the patience, and long suffering of GOD, before whose view, and to whose all discerning eye, the great mass of human transgressions, from the whole earth, comes up every day, and all the day, in an accumulated cloud of daring offence? Oh! how blessed, how truly blessed that proclamation made by the LORD of himself, in the holy mount, when *he passed by and proclaimed, the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness, and truth!* Precious LORD JESUS! how truly is it seen in thee, and in thy great salvation, the evidences of this divine truth! Here indeed thy Church behold the wondrous grace and mercy displayed to the full. In thee the LORD JEHOVAH hath shown, that he *keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin*. In thee, and by thy blood, and righteousness, the LORD hath clearly testified that *he doth by no means clear the guilty*, without an equivalent sacrifice. LORD! help both Writer and Reader, to fall

down under the deepest sense of sin, and to look up, under the humblest hope of acceptance, in JESUS. Blessed forever, blessed be the LORD, who so *loved the world that he gave his only begotten SON, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The Prophet is following up the subject of the former Chapter in this, with an account of divine judgments. The destruction of the ungodly, and the salvation of the righteous, are here solemnly related.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, and dwell with long, and solemn meditation, over this sacred scripture, which holds up to thy view a double aspect; like the pillar of cloud in the camp of Israel; brightness and defense to the LORD's friends; darkness and destruction to his enemies. Recollect, my soul, as thou ponderest over what is here written, that voice the Prophet, heard, thou wilt shortly hear; and a loud voice, to awaken all that are in the graves it will be. And at that voice, the angels will assuredly come forth, to destruction, with JESUS at their head. *The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from Heaven, (the Scripture saith) with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of CHRIST.* Precious LORD JESUS! hast thou marked me as thine own? Do I sigh, and cry, for the abominations that are done in Jerusalem? Do I mourn in secret, for the languishing state of Zion, in the present hour? Is it indeed a grief to my soul, that so few are asking the way to Zion, and so few live up to their high christian calling? Yea, is it a grief to my very soul, that my own enjoyments of divine things are at so low an ebb, and that I live so far from Him *whom. my soul loveth?* Are these among thy daily exercises; and dost thou sigh, and cry, both for Zion's low estate around thee, and the low estate in divine things, within thee. Yea! dost thou groan, being burdened, as holy Paul did, for that thou carriest about with thee, this body of sin,

and death? Pause, my soul, over the solemn consideration; and amidst these sighs and sorrows, recollect that these are the features of the LORD's holy mourners. These are the spots of GOD's children. These are the evidences that the man, the glory-man, the man CHRIST JESUS, from his pierced side, hath marked thee, and sealed thee, unto the day of eternal redemption. Take comfort my soul! The LORD hath in thine instance, fulfilled that precious promise, and hath poured out upon thee, a *spirit of grace*; thou art looking unto Him, *whom thou hast pierced*; and thou art mourning for Him, *as one mourneth for his only son, and as one in bitterness for his first born*. And look up, and hope with full assurance of faith; *he that soweth in tears, shall reap in joy*. Shortly the LORD will come, to be *glorified in his saints*, and to be *adorned in all that believe*. And while the ungodly, and unbelieving, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power, the LORD will own thee for his own, and number thee among his jewels.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here introduced into other visions of GOD. Under the similitude of coals of fire, between the Cherubim, and the form of a man's hand, the Prophet hath his attention greatly excited.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! I pray thee to give both Writer and Reader, a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS: without which this scripture, yea all the scriptures of our GOD, will be as a sealed book, and a vision not opened. And if, Almighty LORD, there be anything leading to JESUS in this divine chapter, oh, do thou lead my soul also to the knowledge of him, that knowing him, I may be growing up to the knowledge and love of him forever. And oh, precious LORD JESUS! as in thine infinite condescension thou didst once appear, as the intercessor of thy redeemed, give me to look up, and view thee in the same character still: yea, LORD, may I follow thee by faith, when thou goest up from the cherub, and see thee

entered into the holy of holies, yea, into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us. Oh! thou dear, thou glory-man CHRIST JESUS; give me to be clothed with thy righteousness, that when thou comest finally to judge the world, and to scatter indignation and wrath upon all the adversaries of GOD, as the fire here spoken of was scattered between the wheels; in thy righteousness I may have confidence, and *not be ashamed before thee at thy coming*. Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still on the subject of the visions of GOD. A striking judgment is recorded of the immediate effects of Ezekiel's preaching. The LORD gives also many exceeding great and precious promises before the close of the Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD beg the Reader to pause over this Chapter, and behold the Prophet in his faithfulness, and the people in their folly. With what earnestness the whole events which were brought before the Prophet in vision, did appear; and how was his heart melted in the review of them! And with what indifference, perhaps contempt, did *Pelatiah* receive the Prophet's commission, and what a solemn judgment followed! LORD! give grace to sinners, in this our day, of the public ministration of thy word, that they may receive thy truth, in the love of it, and it may prove a savour of life unto life in the soul. Oh! blessed JESUS! come forth in a preached gospel, subduing the hearts of sinners to the sceptre of thy grace, causing every knee to bend before thee, and making every tongue to confess, that thou art LORD, *to the glory of GOD the FATHER*. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here, at the LORD's command, preaching by type. Several situations he is placed in, purposely to follow up the more advantageously, the LORD's purposes.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if we spiritualize this chapter, in the several sermons contained in it, may not you and I read the LORD's word as addressed to ourselves? Child of man, saith JEHOVAH, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house; yea, we may answer, true, LORD, for we carry about with us, in ourselves, a rebellious heart. Everything, indeed, both within and without; the remains of indwelling corruption, the whole world that lieth in wickedness, and the great enemy of souls, make open rebellion but too often in the soul. And ought we not, under such circumstances, to do as the Prophet was commanded, prepare for removing; and from one place to another, from strength to strength, in the sight of all the people, testify to every beholder, that *here we have no continuing city, but are seeking for one to come*. Surely the people of GOD should be for signs and wonders, as *Joshua* and his fellows were, *men wondered at!* yea! the bread of life and the water of life, even while the children of GOD receive it, and live upon it, in the review of our unworthiness, and distinguishing grace, which makes all the difference between the precious and the vile, may well be eaten with holy fear and with Godly astonishment. Believers, while they rejoice, *rejoice with trembling*. Precious LORD JESUS! how increasingly precious dost thou appear, when the undeservings of thy redeemed are kept in remembrance. Well may every child of GOD cry out with the Prophet, on beholding visions of his glory, *woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King the LORD of Hosts*. What a relief to a soul under these awakening views of sin and uncleanness is it to behold, and with *an eye of faith*, the LAMB of GOD *taking away the sin of the world*.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

In this chapter the Prophet is reproving the false prophets, and denouncing a woe upon them and the lying prophetesses.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a mercy is it, in our day, that amidst all the false prophets and heresies; which have come in like a flood, the SPIRIT of the LORD hath lifted up, and doth continue to lift up, a standard against them; so that if any precious child of GOD is at a loss to know the truth, amidst the multitude of pretenders to it, there is a promise, which, if duly attended to and regarded, cannot fail to preserve from error. *Though the LORD give you* (saith one of the Prophets) *the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more; but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, this is the way, walk ye in it when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* And, as if this was not enough, there is another absolute promise made by the LORD to all the children of CHRIST, namely, that *they shall all be taught of GOD*. Here therefore the LORD engages for them, that they shall be kept from false prophets, and be brought under true teachers; and the LORD JESUS makes this a standing testimony or mark, that all that are truly taught of GOD come to him. Reader! I beseech you, let this be your improvement and mine from the perusal of this chapter. Do we dread lying prophets? Are we earnest to discover *the chaff from the wheat*? Is it a momentous concern to know the truth, that *the truth may make, us free*? What then are we taught of CHRIST? What do the present prophets, I mean the preachers of the present generation, tell us of JESUS? Do they hold Him up as the Scriptures reveal Him, *the way and the truth and the life*? Do they delight to speak of the glories of His person, and of the everlasting and eternal merit and efficacy of His blood and righteousness, as GOD the HOLY GHOST delights to glorify him? If so, these are the true Prophets, because they lead, as the star guided the wise men, unto CHRIST; *and hereby know we*, saith the Apostle, *the spirit of truth from the spirit of error.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

We have here the Prophet Ezekiel surrounded with certain of the Elders of Israel, to hear him preach. The LORD himself answers them.

REFLECTIONS

READER! have you never seen a congregation like the one here described by the Prophet? But what a bubble is man to himself, that thus trifles with the LORD and deceives his own heart? LORD! help both Writer and Reader to keep the foot when, going to the house of GOD, and earnestly desire to worship GOD, *who is a Spirit in spirit and in truth.*

Precious LORD JESUS! do I set in Thy types *Noah, Daniel, and Job*, behold yet more and more Thy glorious person, work, and righteousness? What but Thine holiness, O Thou LAMB of GOD! can shelter from Divine wrath in the day of Divine visitation? And what but Thy blood, sprinkled on the consciences, can keep the destroying angel from entering in on the day of slaughter the houses even of thy Israel? Oh! Almighty GOD and FATHER! we bless Thee for Thy grace and mercy, and the fulfillment of all Thy covenant engagements, in bringing out from destruction, and bringing home to everlasting safety, the remnant of Thy sons and daughters. Blessed forever be JEHOVAH, in all his doings and all his ways. Truly, LORD, it must be said, both in judgment and in mercy the LORD hath done all things well. He hath made all things for himself, *yea, even the wicked for the day of evil!*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The LORD is still by His servant the Prophet preaching to Israel. He here useth similitudes. Under the figure of a vine-tree as unfit for

timber, he showeth the unsuitableness of Jerusalem, in her dry and withered state, to any good.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! who can read this chapter, and call to mind Thy wonderful condescension in calling Thyself the vine, without connecting with it Thy people's everlasting safety in Thee. Thou, dearest LORD, wert the true vine of the LORD's right hand planting. Thou wert the branch of growth. And though, from the unequalled humbleness of Thy person, Thou didst appear nothing more than as a root out of a dry ground, as unpromising as the stalk of the vine, yet Thy branches have run over the wall. And though the archers sorely grieved Thee, and shot at Thee, yet Thy bow abode in strength, and the arms of Thine hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty GOD of Jacob.

Thy Jerusalem, Thy holy city, O LORD, hath found redemption from being united to Thee. As branches in Thee Thy people flourish and bring forth fruit. Without Thee they are nothing. Oh! for grace to live wholly *in* Thee and *upon* Thee, and forever to be tasting of the precious fruit of Thy soul-strengthening grapes; yea, LORD, to drink of the fruit of the vine which Thou didst yield for Thy people, when trodden in the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty GOD. LORD JESUS! *I would take the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the LORD. I would sit under Thy shadow with great delight, for Thy fruit is sweet to my taste.*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

Under the similitude of a new-born female infant cast out and left to perish, this chapter describes the hopeless state of human nature by the fall. The riches of grace in the salvation of such is beautifully represented, and both are very strikingly and elegantly described.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this most beautiful and interesting chapter until that, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we have gathered some of the many blessed instructions it contains for our Improvement, both in humblings and consolations.

Behold what a complete representation the LORD here makes of every sinner as brought into perishing circumstances by the fall! What are we, what is any man, yea, every man, by nature and by practice, but like this poor, helpless, and unconscious infant thrown out to perish in the open field! We are not only exposed to endless ruin, and unable in ourselves, like the new-born babe in nature, to put forth a helping hand to our own recovery; but we are, like the babe, unconscious of our danger, and not sensible of our wretched state.

Hath JESUS passed by and bid us live? Hath He, notwithstanding all our vileness, when loathsome to angels and to all the creation of GOD, beheld us and loved us in our low estate, married our nature, united us to Himself, washed us, clothed us, fed us, sustained us, and, even in the midst of all our after back-slidings and departures from Him, still, from His covenant love, kept us by His almighty power through faith unto salvation? Oh! what shall recompense, or, since all recompense fails, what shall testify a sense of His grace and our undeservings? Precious, precious JESUS! do Thou, by Thy blessed SPIRIT, *work in us both to will and to do, of Thy good pleasure*. Oh! make us to know indeed and in truth, as Thou hast said, that Thou art the LORD; for surely none but the long-suffering and patience of JEHOVAH could hold out against the continual provocations and whorish heart of Thy people. LORD! I do pray Thee, that, as a sweet and precious testimony of our being still within the rich covenant mercies, both the heart of him that writes and him that reads may have those blessed properties of grace here recorded. *That we may, indeed, remember and be confounded, and never open our mouth any more in a way of self-justification or self-delight, because of our shame when thou art pacified towards us for all that we have done, O LORD GOD. Amen.*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The LORD, by His servant the Prophet, is still teaching by parable. Under the similitude of two eagles and a vine is showed GOD's judgments upon Jerusalem. The Chapter, however, closeth with sweet promises.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read a chapter of this nature but with wonder and astonishment, while beholding the baseness and deep-rooted sin of man, and the overflowing and preventing mercy of GOD! To view Israel as a nation and people overturned, in captivity and ruin, and yet unhumbled under such alarming providences! To behold them, from the king to the peasant, unfaithful, perfidious, and base; adding falsehood to rebellion; and, by the solemnity of an oath, calling in GOD himself to witness to a lie, and to bear testimony to an assurance which they never intended to perform! LORD! what is man, even when brought down under the most humbling providences? How evident is it from such a view of human nature, that no sufferings, no trials, no afflictions, can work any change, unless the sovereign grace of GOD commissions and sanctifies!

From such distressing subjects of human worthlessness, LORD give both Writer and Reader grace to turn unto Thee. Surely, blessed LORD, in the representation here made of our natural depravity, and the riches of thy mercy, taking occasion therefrom to the greater display of thy goodness, that sweet scripture is most blessedly fulfilled, *Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace through righteousness unto eternal life, through* JESUS CHRIST *our* LORD.

Blessed LORD! help us to praise Thee, that Thou didst not only promise, but hast performed, that great work of redemption, in planting that *branch* of renown in Thine holy mountain! Yea, LORD, in the person of Thy dear SON Thou hast manifested Thy grace and Thy glory, and opened to Thy Church a blessed and everlasting tree of life in the paradise of GOD. Oh! for grace to come under the healing branches of it here, and under the full enjoyment of it

hereafter, when there shall be no more curse, but all the captivities of sin, sorrow, and death shall be done away.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This chapter is a beautiful commendation of divine justice, and no less a condemnation of human folly.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over this solemn chapter, and ponder well the contents of it, looking up to GOD the HOLY GHOST, with an humble eye of supplication, that He will be our teacher. Here we learn most awfully the sure end of sin. Here also we learn in what must consist the righteousness and everlasting safety of the redeemed.

Precious LORD JESUS! how increasingly precious is thy righteousness in this point to every truly awakened heart, convinced by the HOLY GHOST *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*. Truly, O LORD, there is, there can be no righteousness but Thine to be depended upon or trusted in. *All our righteousness is as filthy rags*, in which there is no confidence. From every fancied goodness of ours, for it is but fancied, not real, we should all apostatize, and die in our iniquity. Truly, LORD, in Thee alone is salvation found. LORD! turn poor sinners to behold Thee and Thy loveliness, and to seek Thy face in Thy strength, that their souls may be saved in the great day of the LORD!

Dearest LORD JESUS! help both Writer and Reader to praise Thee, in the consciousness that *Thy salvation is for ever, and Thy righteousness that which cannot be abolished*. Thy people, kept by Thee, upheld by Thee, and justified by Thee, and in Thy righteousness, cannot turn away. If, dear LORD, the righteousness was their own, and wrought out in their own strength, then indeed both themselves and their merit might and would be lost, and as it came, so it would go. But founded in Thee, and in the power of Thy might, they are *strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS*. Help

then, O LORD, both Writer and Reader, to be forever looking unto Thee for righteousness and strength. Let it be the constant language and experience of both our souls to say, as one of old did, and to rest in the same blessed assurance, *I will go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only. My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers thereof.*

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The Prophet, at the command of the LORD, is, in this chapter, lamenting for the princes of Israel. The language is, as usual, figurative.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how truly blessed it is, that, amidst all the lamentable circumstances attending Israel and Judah, the GOD of Israel and Judah is the same, and the worth and efficacy of His salvation is forever and ever. Though Israel, like a lion's whelp, may be taken in a pit, and carried in chains into captivity, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah must prevail, and all his enemies be brought under His feet. The royalties of His person and majesty, the courage and constancy of His labours, the triumphs of His glory and salvation, these open to our souls unceasing subjects of delight and joy, and especially when, from our union and oneness with Him, we know our interest in all His victories. Hail! Thou glorious, gracious Lion of the tribe of Judah! in Thy blood and righteousness our sure triumph, over death, hell, and the grave, is already accomplished, and we are now *more than conquerors through Thy grace helping us.*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have a brief relation how the LORD had dealt with Israel through a long series of years, and how sadly they had requited His mercy. There are many sweet tokens of divine love here and there interspersed through the relation.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful account is here given, and by the LORD Himself, of a congregation of worshippers. Are there any such in the present hour? Alas! it is to be feared but too many; for, in every age, there are multitudes who draw nigh to GOD to honour Him with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him. *Thou art ever in their mouth* (saith the LORD by the Prophet,) *and far from their reins.*

It will be no unprofitable improvement of this chapter, if, from beholding the deception of the heart, in this instance, of the elders of Israel before the Prophet, you and I, Reader, bring home the subject to ourselves. In how many ways, and by how many avenues, evil enters into the soul. Corruption within and temptation without, rob the soul of sweet communion and fellowship with the LORD, even where a work of grace hath passed upon the soul; so that every true believer in JESUS finds but too often cause to complain with the Apostle, *When I would do good, evil is present with me.* And if so, what must it be in the heart wholly unawakened by grace, unregenerated by the HOLY SPIRIT, and uninterested by any sense of the divine goodness? Precious LORD JESUS! how eminently here, as in a thousand other instances of grace and mercy, is the recollection of Thy High Priestly office, in bearing away *the iniquity of our most holy things!* Thy one offering once offered, and the everlasting and eternal efficacy of it, pleaded in Thine unceasing intercession, become the only cause of Thy Church's acceptance. Yea, LORD our very prayers, but for this, would seal our condemnation, Reader! let us both beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to impress these soul-reviving considerations upon the mind and heart of each. While you and I but too often, in the great congregation, hear as though we heard not, and pray or sing as though we felt not, oh! what a relief to my poor

soul is the conviction; that in the same moment there is one with the FATHER whom the FATHER heareth alway, and Who *is the propitiation for our sins*. His glorious person and His finished work become the security and sanctity of all His redeemed. And while the LORD JEHOVAH hath respect to Him, and the Church in Him, in all the purposes of grace, so the everlasting acceptance and joy of the Church will only arise out of the same, in all the manifestations of glory.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still going on with his commission of preaching to the people. In this chapter he prophesieth against Jerusalem, under the image of a sword.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the perusal of this chapter will be rendered very profitable, both to your heart and mine, if, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we gather from it the instructions evidently intended from it to the people of GOD; namely, how blessed it is to have the LORD for our GOD; and when outward afflictions abound, inward consolations abound also in JESUS. When a child of GOD is under trouble, still, be the trouble what it may, while he hath a gracious covenant GOD to fly to, and the righteousness and blood-shedding of JESUS to trust in, all is well. But to have the LORD coming forth as our enemy, when the world presses hard upon us, it is that which aggravates the sorrow, and renders the load unbearable indeed. *Saul*, King of Israel, felt this to the full when he cried out, *The Philistines make war against me, and GOD is departed from me*. Here was the bitterness of the affliction. The war of the Philistines had been nothing, for Saul had constantly subdued them when the LORD went with him to battle; but every sword, every arrow of the angry Philistine, became doubly dreadful when the LORD was seen in the appointment. Reader! let you and I learn from it the blessedness of having JESUS always with us and for us. To Him let us go, and in Him always confide. When He undertakes our cause,

victory is sure; yea, we are made *more than conquerors through His grace helping us.*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still prosecuting the sad subject of the sins of Jerusalem; and the LORD's displeasure, and threatened punishment, added.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a sad catalogue of sins and transgressions hath the Prophet here charged Jerusalem with. Surely to read it, is like the roll of Ezekiel written with *lamentations, and mourning, and woe.* Reader! What an awful state of degeneracy is the heart of men capable of falling into! What a still more awful consideration is it, that this is Israel of whom these things are written!

Precious, precious LORD JESUS! what a relief is it to the souls of thy people, the consideration of thy holiness and thy finished salvation! Didst thou not know, dearest JESUS! when thou didst undertake the redemption of our nature, what polluted, sinful nature it was, and would be? And was not thy love chilled in beholding such vileness? Oh no! *I knew* (thou saidst) *that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb.* And is it so that all this and worse, did not check the workings of thy compassion; but rather made thee, long for the fulness of time, when thou shouldest enter upon thy great work, *to seek and save that which was lost.* Surely then, blessed LORD, thou wilt still have compassion on the poor, wretched, lost, and undone creatures of thy grace and mercy; and wilt save thy Jerusalem sinners from all their filthiness, and from all their idols! Yea, LORD, thou wilt give them a *new heart, and a right spirit wilt thou put within them. Thou wilt be their GOD and they shall be thy people.* Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

Under the similitude of two adulterous women, the Prophet is here taught to speak of the spiritual fornication of Samaria and Jerusalem. The Prophet sets forth the iniquity at large, and the just displeasure of Israel's GOD upon the occasion.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what are your own views of human nature at large, in reading the sad account of sin and rebellion in this Chapter? And yet more what think you of the Israel of GOD, in beholding the baseness here manifested by a professing people to the GOD of Israel? What will any man think of taking confidence in himself, after such views of a fallen nature. Reader! is it not enough to cause every believer to go softly all his days? And will not such humbling representations of nature, serve, through grace, to keep open a perpetual spring of repentance and sorrow in the soul? Will it not prove, under GOD, the best and strongest of all arguments to hide pride from our eyes, and to divorce the heart from all legal frames and self-righteousness? Will it not also prompt the soul to look to GOD continually for grace, that by his HOLY SPIRIT, we may be enabled to *mortify the deeds of the body and live*, in a suitable deportment of holy conversation and godliness? Above all, can anything tend equally to endear CHRIST in all his loveliness, and in all his glory? Oh! precious, precious JESUS! how doth every view of ourselves and all around us, bring home with increasing conviction in the soul, the absolute need we have of thee, and thy great salvation? Oh LORD! let the great improvement of this Chapter, and indeed of all thy Holy Scriptures, be to lead our hearts to thee; to live *upon* thee, to walk *with* thee, and everlastingly to enjoy thee, as the whole sum and substance of all our happiness. Truly blessed Redeemer, thou art indeed the all in all to thy people: and most gracious was it commanded the Church, to call thee by thine adorable name: the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

By the figure of a pot, the Prophet is commanded to set forth the ruin of Jerusalem. And the Prophet is again made a type to the people, in respect to the not mourning for the death of his wife, to show, that Jerusalem's chastisements merit no sorrow.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us for one moment place ourselves in the Prophet's situation, and suppose for the LORD's glory, and the instruction of his Church, such a breach was made in our domestic comforts, as this of *Ezekiel's* by death: how should you or I conduct ourselves? Alas! I fear, unless a full proportioned degree of faith and grace were to accompany the bereaving providence, *Ezekiel's* deportment would mortify ours. And yet, the Prophet lived under a dispensation of the Church, far less blessed with advantages than you or I are blessed with.

It is very blessed when believers can acquiesce, yea, more than acquiesce with the LORD's appointments; and can approve, and even rejoice in them, *Naked*, said one of old, (and a blessed frame of mind must he have been in when he said it,) *naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the LORD.* Precious JESUS! do thou give both to Writer and Reader, (for the gift is wholly thine to bestow,) grace for every exercise, and for every trial. And to whatever thou art pleased to call us in thy providence, give us suitable frames of mind by thy grace. May we under thy blessed teaching have always the same views of thee, and thy love towards us, whatever outward or inward circumstances may arise in, thy appointments. LORD, give us to hear thy blessed voice in every dispensation, as to thy servant the Prophet; *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.*

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

The subject of Jerusalem and her transgressions is dropped in this Chapter, because the Prophet is directed to set his face against the enemies of Jerusalem, the Ammonites, Moab, Seir, Edom, and the Philistines.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I pray you do not hastily pass away from the perusal of this interesting Chapter. See! how the LORD takes notice of his people, even in those seasons, when for their backslidings, one might be prompted to fear the LORD took no part with them. Israel was at this time under chastisement, yea, heavy affliction. But will their enemies insult them in their misery? Will they rejoice when Israel profanes the LORD's sanctuary: or feel glad when Israel's land lays desolate, and the house of Judah is gone into captivity? Surely the LORD seeth the enemies triumph, and heareth their reproaches. JESUS takes up the quarrel as directed against himself, and woe to all such oppressors when He ariseth! Hear how the LORD, by another Prophet, undertakes for his afflicted ones, and reproves the enemy for their sakes. *Shall I not, saith the LORD (by Obadiah the Prophet) in that day, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mouth of Esau? For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.* Reader! it is very blessed and most gracious, to find the LORD taking part with his redeemed against all their oppressors; and though He corrects them himself, they shall not be corrected by others uncommissioned by him. *Whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye.* Precious LORD JESUS! give thy people grace to see, and rightly to value their union and oneness with thee; and that even in their distresses for sin, and under thy displeasure, thou wilt not suffer the enemy to triumph; but wilt condemn every tongue that riseth against them in judgment; *for this is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.* Amen.

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

This Chapter, as well as the two which follow, contains the LORD's judgment upon Tyre, and upon the same account, her rejoicing in the afflictions of GOD's Israel. The King of Babylon is decreed to become the scourge of Tyre.

REFLECTIONS

OH! Eternal SPIRIT, who by thy servant the Prophet, hath here brought us into visions of GOD! condescend blessed LORD, to be our Guide and Teacher in them: If by the *Tyre* here spoken of as an enemy to the Church, we are to consider the ancient Tyre the foe to Israel, we bless thee, O LORD, for thus showing thy people how graciously thou hast always watched over them for good, notwithstanding their unworthiness; and considered the injuries shown to them, as directed against thyself. And if LORD, this prophecy hath a further reference to the after dispensations in thy Church; and this becomes some *mystic Tyre*, that shall be thrown down, and thy Church triumph over her, when *thou shalt set glory in the land of the living*; give, gracious LORD, wisdom, both to him that writes and to him that reads, humbly to wait at thy footstool, thy revelations, in their due season; and never presume to be wise above what is written. Grant Holy LORD, all suited and becoming grace to this purpose, and make the heart of each infinitely more studious, to be found among thy faithful people, when *thou shalt set glory in the land of the living*, than to be among the wise and prudent in their own conceit, from whom divine things are hidden. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! be it our one only desire, to be found in thee: that *when the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning*; it may be our portion *to be found written, among the living in Jerusalem!* Amen.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

The subject of the former Chapter is continued through this, relating to the fall of Tyre. Her riches, and vast trade, are described, and the Chapter closeth with an account of her humblings.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this Chapter, and remark the transitory state of everything earthly! What are become of all the great monarchies of the world? They, who made so great a noise, and boasted in their day, in giving laws to the world! Alas! the flood of time hath passed over them, and washed them all away!

Reader! in a view of such changeable, fluctuating circumstances of human life; shall not you and I look unto Him, who is the same *yesterday, and today, and forever!* Precious LORD JESUS! how blessed to my thoughts is it, that thy love, and thy salvation are unchangeably, and for ever the same. Though nations and empires rise and fall, and everything earthly is given to change, JESUS and his great salvation is forever, and his righteousness that which cannot be abolished. Sweet is that scripture, *The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

The same subject, concerning the LORD's judgment upon Tyrus is prosecuted in this chapter; until, towards the end, Zidon also is arraigned at GOD's tribunal.

REFLECTIONS

READER! among the several improvements to gather from this chapter, that is not the least which ariseth from the consideration,

how dear Israel must be to the LORD, for whom, and on whose account the LORD thus chastiseth Israel's enemies. The LORD may, and the LORD will, correct Israel for her backsliding; but, in the midst of all, he will not suffer the foe of his redeemed to triumph. *I said* (said the LORD) *I would scatter them into corners; I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men; were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy; lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all this.* Oh! how blessed is it to hear the LORD thus speak! And, Reader! if the LORD so loves his people, and so protects them, notwithstanding all their unworthiness, how ought the people to love the LORD, and delight to adore his distinguishing grace, in such unparalleled mercy. Well might David exclaim, under a deep sense of this, *Who am I, O LORD GOD, and what is my house, that thou has brought me hitherto?* Praised be the LORD for *his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 29

SUMMARY

In this chapter comes in the threatened overthrow of Egypt. The LORD is reckoning with the nations, and Israel's ancient foe must not go unpunished.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold Egypt here humbled for all her sins, and all her oppressions over Israel. Think how long and grievous were her cruelties exercised over the LORD's heritage! But her time is come, and *woe to the oppressor when GOD ariseth.* Oh! how sure and certain it is, that JESUS will account with all the enemies of his people; sooner or later the LORD will recompense sevenfold into their bosom.

Reader! do not overlook, however, GOD's grace in man's humblings. If Egypt be visited by grace, Egypt shall be brought from her captivity. The LORD can, and the LORD hath said he will, raise up an altar to the LORD in the midst of Egypt: and when they cry by

reason of the oppressors, the LORD will send them *a Saviour; and a great one, and he shall deliver them.* Precious LORD JESUS! what may we not hope from thee and thy great salvation? When the LORD JEHOVAH causeth the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth, and JESUS shall arise to bless his redeemed, then shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of Hosts shall bless, saying, *Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of mine hands, and Israel mine inheritance!* Amen.

CHAPTER 30

SUMMARY

Here is still the ruin of Egypt described, and those who come to her help. The LORD promiseth to strengthen the arm of Babylon for Egypt's destruction.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and connect with it the former; and learn from both the sure and certain purposes of the LORD in their accomplishment. When we thus view the LORD JEHOVAH going forth to punish the nations, and especially with an eye for the injuries done to his people, what a solemn representation doth it afford of the sovereignty of GOD? Oh! could we but learn more humbly to bend before the just and all-wise decision of the LORD, in his dispensations both of men and things, how differently would be our estimate of right and wrong to what it now is? Here, in this chapter as well as in several others around, we behold the LORD's jealousy for his people in the punishment of the nations; in all which we ought to mark his sovereignty, and to bow down implicitly before it. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Wherefore and whence his dispensations are so directed? why CHRIST, his great gift, is held forth to one nation with a full, free, and extended hand, while others know not the LORD, nor the operation of his hand? who shall take upon him to determine? *It is the LORD,* (said an ancient deeply-exercised soul, under the heaviest afflictions,) *let him do what seemeth him good.* This was enough to

stop all complaints. He adds no more. Blessed LORD! give me grace in the reading of thy judgments, and, marking thy mercies, to learn, like David, to sing of both, and to direct my song to thee. For sure I am thy glory is in all; and when this is the object to be attained, Egypt's destruction or Israel's deliverance, must be right. Again I say, *Shall not the Judge of the earth do right?*

CHAPTER 31

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still discoursing concerning Egypt. The great monarchy of Assyria is brought forward by way of illustrating, that al Nineveh fell, so shall Egypt.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is hardly possible to read of the LORD's judgments of other nations, and of his tenderness to Israel, without being struck with astonishment at all we meet with concerning his distinguishing mercy and favor. Well might the people be called, *a people that dwell alone, and who should not be reckoned among the nations*. For we find marks and evidences of this distinguishing peculiarity of the LORD's chosen through all the Bible. They dwell alone from the very first notice taken of them in the written word, in GOD the FATHER's gracious purpose, council, and will; in GOD the SON's attachment to them, regard for them, and union with them; and in GOD the HOLY GHOST's bringing them to the knowledge, love, and enjoyment, of their singular character, as *not reckoned among the nations*. And, Reader! when you consider the fewness, the littleness, and personal poverty of Israel, and contrast their state with what is here said in this chapter of the grandeur and earthly glory both of *Egypt* and *Assyria*, what an amazing thought it awakens of the glory and grace of a covenant GOD in CHRIST? Reader! let us look up for every suited grace to follow up the blessed and merciful appointments of our GOD; and since the LORD's Israel *dwell alone*, may it be our desire and study to dwell indeed alone, by keeping aloof from all unnecessary acquaintance and connection with a world in whose

friendship and interest we are not reckoned. Precious LORD JESUS! be it my portion to be living only to thee and to thy service, that every one may know whose I am, and whom I serve; that being redeemed from among men, and bought with a price, I may glorify the LORD in my body, and in my spirit, which are his, Amen.

CHAPTER 32

SUMMARY

This chapter is but a continuation of the former. The burden of it is still Egypt, for whom the Prophet is commanded to take up a lamentation.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause, as the Prophet himself hath done, in closing this Chapter. He here finisheth his judgments upon the several nations around, and in the next Chapter, we find him returning to the instruction of Israel. Before we follow him to that service, let us look back, and in a short collected point of view, ponder over those solemn judgments of the LORD determined upon the heathen.

Sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin. This is the unalterable declaration of scripture. So that whenever sin be found, death must follow: temporal death, spiritual death, eternal death, *Death*, (saith the same authority) *passeth upon all men, because all have sinned.* Hence, where-ever sin is found, unless done away in CHRIST, there must be *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* Pause over the subject; and with these solemn scriptures in view, read over the whole that the Prophet hath said in this, and the many preceding Chapters, concerning the condemnation of the ungodly. Reader, may GOD the HOLY GHOST accompany by his Almighty teaching, both your perusal, and mine, of these solemn events. And from the uniform correspondence of scripture on those momentous things may both learn awfully to reverence the striking decrees of GOD. Here we find the LORD speaking in the same, or similar language, by his servant the Prophet

Ezekiel, as in another scripture he doth by his servant the Apostle *John*. Here the LORD declares, that he will *cover the heaven*, and *make the stars thereof dark*; that *many people shall be amazed*, and *their kings shall be horribly afraid*. And there the LORD saith, that *the sun shall become black as sackcloth*, *the moon shall be as blood*, and *the stars of heaven shall fall upon the earth*. And *the kings of the earth*, and *the great men*, and *the rich men*; and every bond man, and every free man, shall call to *the mountains and rocks to fall on them*, and *hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne*, and *from the wrath of the LAMB*. Precious, precious LORD JESUS! grant to him that reads, and to him that writes, grace to know thee in thy love, and in thy great salvation, that when the LORD shall arise to shake terribly the earth, we may be found everlastingly safe in thee, as *the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*! Amen.

CHAPTER 33

SUMMARY

Under the figure of a Watchman, the LORD sets forth the duty of his Servants; in the blessed consequence of their giving warning, and the awful consequence if they neglect it.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! How can I hear or read of a watchman to the house of Israel, without having my soul led out to the contemplation of thine unequalled love and mercy to the souls of thy redeemed, when thou camest to watch over thy fold and flock, lest Satan should surprise them, and carry them away. Thou hast indeed, blessed LORD, set watchmen upon the walls of thy Zion. Oh! LORD make them faithful to GOD, and to souls, that *they may never hold their peace day nor night*; and give the LORD *no rest nor peace, until that thou hast made Jerusalem a praise in the earth*! But blessed JESUS! in vain do men build the house, except the LORD be both the foundation, and the builder! In vain do watchmen take their stand by night, except thou, O LORD, shalt keep the city. Oh! then Almighty Watchman and Keeper of thy people! Do not I behold thee, in the

glories of thy person, GOD-MAN-mediator, set up from everlasting? Do I not trace thy daily love, and nightly vigilance, in all the goings forth for the salvation of thy people? Yea, precious JESUS, are not the goings of my GOD and king to be seen in his sanctuary? Who but JESUS is set forth in all the Old Testament promises, types, and shadows? And who but JESUS is manifested in all the New Testament fulfillment, in the everlasting realities of grace and salvation? A watchman art thou not, O LORD, in watching over thy Church, who never slumberest nor sleepest? And didst thou not take this office when thou camest up at the call of GOD thy FATHER, in thine incarnation? And in all that pertains to redemption-work, thou and thou only, art the great watchman, the standard, the ensign for war, against sin, death, and hell; all of whom thou hast conquered! Precious LORD! watch over me I beseech thee for good; and may I never lose sight of thy watchfulness; so that I may cry out with one of old, *the LORD is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 34

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here again instructing the Church by figure, in representing the unfaithfulness of the Shepherds who neglect the LORD's fold, and the faithfulness of JESUS the first Shepherd, who layeth down his life for his sheep. The subject under this similitude, runs through the whole Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

OH! ye shepherds in the fold of CHRIST's Church by whatever name or rank ye are distinguished among men; here read the solemn declarations of the LORD, and behold the awful and tremendous consequences of unfaithfulness in your several and distinct charges! Who, for the sake of a trifling, short, and transitory distinction among men, would take the solemn care of the fold of CHRIST upon them, and have the blood of souls to lie at their doors! Oh! ye hirelings! who from carnal ends, and not from love to CHRIST and his sheep, rush into the service of the LORD's pastures! Here behold the

sad and miserable termination of a life so wretched, and a trust so abused! Oh! that the LORD, in compassion to his flock, would stop the mad and desperate attempt of men so lost and depraved; and give, as he hath graciously promised, to his Church, *Pastors after his own heart, who shall feed his people with knowledge and understanding.* Jeremiah 3:15.

But from a subject so truly awful, Reader, let you and I seek relief in looking to JESUS, the good shepherd, who hath given his life for the sheep! Truly, LORD, thy FATHER graciously gave thee thy flock, and made them thine when thou camest to seek and save that which was lost. Through every part of this Chapter, in all that is promised of the faithful pastor, we trace thy footsteps, and mark the distinguishing features of thy character. Yea, blessed JESUS! it is thou, and thou alone, that hast gone over the mountains, and through every hill and vale, in quest of thy flock; and thou hast brought home, and wilt bring home all and every one on thy shoulders rejoicing. It is thine office to separate the goats from the sheep; and to distinguish between the precious and the vile. And ere long, thou, who art now the LAMB in the midst of the throne, feeding those now above, and leading them to fountains of living waters, wilt bring home the whole flock that remain out of the spiritual Egypt of this world, and not an hoof shall be left behind. Then blessed LORD, all thy sheep shall be brought into one fold, and everlastingly secured from all future wanderings, when thou, the *Chief Shepherd shall appear; they all shall appear with thee in glory.* Amen.

CHAPTER 35

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here commissioned by the LORD to pronounce judgment, on Mount Seir, for Edom's hatred of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful thing to be of the *Esau* race! By nature, and by practice, a race of evil-doers: children that are full of hatred and bitterness against the LORD and his CHRIST. And not only

born under the condemnation of a broken law, but their very nature indisposed to all desires after CHRIST and his righteousness. How truly solemn and affecting is the exhortation the Apostle delivers to the Church, of watching against this root of bitterness springing up in the soul. *Lest (saith the Apostle) there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.* Despising CHRIST; he soon advanced to this point to get rid of him! LORD! blessed for ever be thy name, in keeping thy redeemed, thine Israel, from the Esau's of every generation!

Blessed LORD JESUS! how sweetly doth this scripture set forth, as in all other places, thy watchful and tender regard over thy Israel. Dost thou indeed, dear LORD, take their cause as thine own, and declare thy determinate purpose to punish all that offend thee, in offending them? Oh! then, enable all thine exercised family to keep a constant eye to thee, whilst thou art looking after them, and defending them. May every one of thine household, O LORD, feel a growing and increasing confidence in thee, and the assurance of thy favor and protection; and be continually crying out with the Prophet of old, rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall rise: when I sit in darkness the LORD shall be a light unto me.

CHAPTER 36

SUMMARY

The Prophet is drawing in this Chapter a striking contrast between the nations that know not GOD, and his people, to whom He hath manifested himself.

REFLECTIONS

EVER blessed and ever gracious GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! help every poor sinner that reads this Chapter, on whom these sweet promises come, and for whom they are from all eternity designed; help him to adore the riches of that free and sovereign grace, by which they are bestowed upon the Church, in and through the finished salvation that is in CHRIST JESUS! Surely, O LORD! the Gospel was never more fully preached than it is here done, by thy servant the Prophet. Let the enemies of the cross fancy they have

triumphed in thy people's humiliation by reason of their sin. Thy people, O LORD, have reason indeed in the view of their transgressions, to be ashamed and confounded for all their ways, and to loath themselves in their own sight. But in the sovereign salvation of GOD and the LAMB, they may and will rejoice. It is for thine own name's sake, O LORD, that mercy is shown to thine Israel: yea, LORD, thou hast wrought for thy name's sake, and hast had pity for thine holy name: though thy rebellious children have profaned it by reason of their transgressions in the sight of the heathen, among whom they dwell. But, praises forever to thy redeeming love and grace, thou hast, in thy dear SON'S merits, blood, and righteousness, procured more glory and honour to thy great name, than could have been done by the everlasting and unsinning obedience of men and angels to all eternity. And oh! thou gracious LORD, JEHOVAH! is not thy Church more lovely when sprinkled from all her filthiness, and from all her idols, by the blood of the LAMB, than could have been done for her had she never been polluted? Is not the Church more beautiful when beheld by our GOD in the holy garments of CHRIST'S righteousness, than ever she could have appeared in his sight in any righteousness of her own: even had she never polluted herself from the original righteousness in which she was first created! Surely, LORD, the holiness of the Church in JESUS, her glorious head, is more blessed to thy view, now washed, cleansed, and adorned, as a bride for her husband, than in any garment short of JESUS'S robe of salvation, men or angels could have found to appear in before JEHOVAH. Oh then, fulfil those sweet and precious promises in CHRIST to all thy redeemed. Yea, LORD! cause the heathen that are left round about to know, that it is the LORD that hath built the ruined places of his people, and planted that which was desolate. And do thou, LORD, by the sovereignty of thy grace in the hearts of thy people, as thou hast thus wrought by thy mercy, salvation for thy people, cause ever redeemed true Israelite of thine to be continually enquiring of the LORD for those blessings, that the LORD may do what he hath promised for them. Yea, make known thy great name both far and near; and let all the earth know that thou art the LORD our GOD.

CHAPTER 37

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here by vision instructed of the LORD, in order that he might preach yet more pointedly to the house of Israel. Many blessed views are here opened of CHRIST'S kingdom.

REFLECTIONS

READER! make a long pause over this most blessed Chapter; look up for the renewal of that HOLY SPIRIT to shed his influences upon you, who put breath into those dry bones the Prophet saw; that so the glories of the doctrine here taught may appear fully to your view, and their saving effect be fully felt upon your mind. Consider this lower world! Is it not indeed a valley, and full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness? By nature, and by practice, the whole world is *dead in trespasses and sins*. Who then but GOD the SPIRIT can put life into those bones, that they may live? Come, LORD, we pray thee, with all thy sweet and genial influence upon the souls of thy people, and while they groan under a sense of sin, and the oppressions of the enemy, do thou, LORD, put thy blessed SPIRIT in them, that they may live!

Chiefly, ye ministers of my GOD! learn from this divine subject, and of the LORD's own preaching by the Prophet; in whose strength all spiritual labours must be carried on with the least hopes of success; and on whose blessing depends the fruit of all your ministry. All the congregation of the faithful are in themselves, simply no other, than those bones of the valley. The dead in every Church-yard, long buried there, are no more dead to any *bodily* act, than the dead in trespasses and sins are to any *spiritual* exercise, And when we behold a minister of CHRIST addressing his flock, he is to all intents and purposes, as much as the Prophet in the valley, calling upon the dead to hear the word of the LORD; or as one in the Church-yard would be, in bidding the dead around him to arise at the sound of his voice. Both are alike incompetent to any energy. And the recovery of either must be a miracle. If these things were but properly impressed upon every Preacher's mind, with what earnestness would he plead and wrestle with GOD in prayer, before he entered upon his labours, for a blessing from the LORD! Will such

an one (if peradventure he should condescend to read these observations,) forgive me, if I close the Chapter with an earnest exhortation, that this solemn view of the subject may have its proper weight upon his mind. And oh! that the LORD the SPIRIT may induce every heart, so engaged in holy things, to be continually looking up to him for his blessing, both upon himself and his people. LORD, I would say! breath upon the dry bones of the valley, and bid them live; then shall we know that *the LORD hath spoken it, and the LORD hath performed it!*

CHAPTER 38

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the LORD's judgment upon Gog, and his folly is exposed, in his threats against Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! instead of being wise above what is written, and spending our time in fruitless and unbecoming researches concerning the person of *Gog*, and the kingdom of *Magog*: let us accept what probably GOD the HOLY GHOST meant to teach the Church by this scripture; that the eye of the LORD is upon his people to defend them from all their enemies; and that at a time when the waters of the sanctuary run low, and the foe seems to threaten with an high hand; that then the LORD is more particularly coming forth for their defense; for JEHOVAH hath declared himself to be against all Israel's enemies for his own sake. You and I cannot stand in the day of exercise in our own strength, or attempt anything in our own power: but hear what the LORD saith; *I will put hooks in thy jaws, O Gog, and turn thee back, and all thine army with thee.* Precious LORD JESUS! be thou to all thy people the sure hiding place from every storm, and the covert from every tempest; that *when the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD may lift up a standard against him.* Then shall thy people dwell in safety in the land of unwallled villages; because the LORD himself will be *a wall of fire round about, in a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of*

a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defense.
Amen.

CHAPTER 39

SUMMARY

The subject is continued through part of this Chapter, which formed the subject of the former. Towards the close there are sweet and gracious promises made to GOD's Israel.

REFLECTIONS

How truly great, and how truly solemn at the same time is this scripture. Is it not like the pillar of cloud in the camp of Israel; which, while giving light and joy to the people of GOD, became darkness and terror to the Egyptians. LORD JESUS, I beseech thee give thy people grace in beholding the ruin of the foe, in the midst of their own safety to learn where to ascribe the glory, and thankfully to recognize the gracious hand that maketh all the difference! If, LORD, thou sendest a fire on the *Magogs* of the present hour, oh! how justly mightest thou destroy all the adversaries of rebellious sinners. And if Israel of old was sent into captivity for their iniquity; who is there, LORD, of thine, that in themselves can venture to suppose that they are better than they, when JEHOVAH hath included all under sin? Precious LORD JESUS! do thou bring again, as thou hast promised, the captivity of Jacob, and bind up the wounds of thine Israel. Do, LORD, as thou hast said. Cause them to dwell safely in their own land, and let none make them afraid. Be thou sanctified in them, O LORD, and be thou their sanctification also, from thy HOLY SPIRIT dwelling in them, that all the earth may know that thou art a faithful Covenant-GOD in CHRIST, and that for his sake thou never wilt hide thy face from them anymore, *when thou hast turned back their Captivity before their eyes!*

CHAPTER 40

SUMMARY

The Prophet is in this, and all the succeeding Chapters, to the end of his prophecy, wholly dealing in vision. He describes in these visions of GOD, the appearance of One like the Son of Man; who delivers to the Prophet an account of a splendid and immense City.

REFLECTIONS

In following the Prophet in these visions of GOD, we have now much advantage from the gospel light which the after ages of the Church, through Grace, were blessed with; so that explaining Old Testament scripture, by the New Testament revelation, we are enabled to see more of the LORD's gracious designs, than our fathers in the earlier dispensations could attain. Evidently, these solemn scriptures pointed to the day of gospel grace; and we cannot sufficiently bless GOD for the discovery he hath been pleased to make of himself, in, and by the Person, work, and grace, and salvation, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Yes! blessed LORD JESUS! whatever City, Church, or Temple, the Prophet saw, in thee we now in open glass behold the accomplishment of the whole. Thou art indeed the goodly Mountain of Lebanon! Thou, and thou alone, the foundation-stone JEHOVAH hath laid in Zion, on whom is built, both of Apostles and Prophets, that temple on which all rest, and in whom all are made secure, and eternally happy. LORD! hasten the glorious hour, when all thy Church, founded on thee, shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea, and all nations shall flow to it. Amen!

CHAPTER 41

SUMMARY

This is but a continuance of the former Chapter. The Prophet is still led by the hand to the further measurement of the city of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD of thy Temple! how can I read this Chapter, and follow the Prophet's steps whom thou art leading by the hand through the several apartments of thine house, without immediately connecting with the subject the very endearing characters and offices in which thou hast condescended to reveal thyself. Do I not behold thee, O thou unequalled pattern of excelling humbleness, as the gate and door to thy temple, thy fold? Didst thou not at thy FATHER'S call come up before all worlds, as the whole source of thy people's salvation? And art thou not the one and only way of access, in grace here, and glory to all eternity? Can any enter, but by thee? And hast thou not promised that all that come to thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out? Oh! precious JESUS! stand, LORD, I beseech thee widely open, as those wide spreading doors the Prophet saw, that thy people may come like the troops of *Teman*, and fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows! Yea, precious LORD! as thy gracious invitations, and promises, and proclamations of mercy, are going forth to the East, and to the West, and to the North, and to the South; oh, dispose the souls of poor perishing sinners, to come to thy large, and wide spreading doors, and find access in and through thee, by one SPIRIT to the FATHER. Surely those blessed gates and ordinances to thee, like the gates of the New Jerusalem above, are never shut day nor night; for JESUS stands ready to receive all that come to GOD by him, and all that do come, thou hast graciously said, thou wilt in no wise cast out; Oh! LORD! make thy people willing in the day of thy power. Amen.

CHAPTER 42

SUMMARY

The same subject is prosecuted through this Chapter, as in the former. Ezekiel is further introduced into the several apartments of this magnificent place.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you and I are following the Prophet, led by JESUS, through the several apartments, let us not lose sight of Him, who is himself the habitation of his Church and people, and their portion forever. Here let us contemplate the LORD indeed, under every endearing character, and we shall find him to be our dwelling place, our Temple, our Altar, High Priest, and Sacrifice! And how do all his perfection's suit our souls, for our abiding place, and rest, and, solace, and delight forever. In his person, righteousness, and grace, are hid and live securely all his redeemed. JESUS takes them all in, brings them all home, clotheth them with his own garments of salvation, feeds them with his own body and blood, and communicates to them of his fulness, grace here, and glory forever. Exult, my soul, in this delightful view of thy glorious Saviour, and cry out in the words of the Prophet; *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my GOD: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

CHAPTER 43

SUMMARY

The Prophet having been in the preceding Chapters introduced into the house of GOD, is now led to behold the glorious Inhabitant, and LORD of it. A similar appearance, like that Ezekiel had seen at Chebar, is here manifested to him.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let not an eye be taken off this glorious vision the Prophet saw; but let us look stedfastly and steadily on Him, who came from the way of the east in the glory of GOD. Hear the well known voice of JESUS, as the voice of many waters. Behold, the earth shining with his glory: and then contemplate under all, the glorious person of the LORD JESUS, teaching and explaining all

things, in the great events contained in this Chapter concerning himself.

Was this house a type of the Gospel Church? Do all his people whom he hath made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, belong to this house? Ask then your own heart, yea, let every Reader ask himself, what entrance hath been admitted to him into this holy house? Have you got boldness to enter into it by the only way in which any can enter, even by the blood of JESUS. By whom did you enter, and who was the porter that opened to your view JESUS and his glory; JESUS, and all his sufficiency; and prompted you to believe in him? What are the sanctifying impressions wrought upon your soul by this allowed entrance? Here you see your own vileness, and JESUS's glory? Are you well pleased for his righteousness sake, and do you repose in it? Are you renouncing all other holiness, and fully determined to be found in CHRIST's only? These enquiries, when truly answered, are sweet, and precious evidences of being entered in; and that He, whom *Ezekiel* saw in vision, you have seen also by faith, and are rejoicing now *in hope of the glory of GOD*! Precious LORD JESUS! do as thou hast said. Dwell now forever in the midst of thy people, and suffer them no longer to be defiled in their abominations, but be thou their GOD, and make them thy people; and cause them through thy grace, to separate themselves, and come out from among all the polluted around, that they may touch not the unclean things, but be truly, and in heart, made the sons and daughters of the LORD GOD Almighty! Amen.

CHAPTER 44

SUMMARY

The subject is still continued, and advancing in sublimity. Here is great honour shown to the Prince, whose entrance through the East gate forbad all others from so doing, to notify his glory and distinction. After this, divers ordinances are appointed in this Chapter, concerning those who minister in holy things.

REFLECTIONS

AND art thou, my soul, indeed a Priest, in this glorious House of thy GOD? Oh! then consider the great Apostle, and High Priest of thy profession, CHRIST JESUS. It is by virtue of thy union *with* Him, and redemption, *by* Him, that thou art brought into this royal Priesthood, and made an heir of GOD, and a joint heir with CHRIST. *In* him, all thine authority is found. *By* Him, all thy priestly exercises are carried on. *Through* Him, is the whole, both of thy person and offerings accepted. And *for* Him, and His sake alone, JEHOVAH hath respect to the whole Church, which is His body. Hail! thou LAMB of GOD! who art still the LAMB *in the midst of the throne*: equally attentive to thine house below, as to thine house above! All is made holy, and blessed, being chosen by JEHOVAH, in thee, before the world began! And now, and forever, is every individual member of thy mystical body made honorable and glorious, by the sprinkling of thy blood, and by the sweet communications of thy blessed SPIRIT. LORD! add a blessing to these immense privileges, and cause me daily, hourly, minutely, to remember, and live up to that remembrance, that thou art my inheritance; that I have no inheritance in any thing here below; no possession in earth, and earthly concerns; for *the LORD is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, thou maintaineth my lot!* And oh, for grace, to be as momentarily living to the glory and praise of my LORD; and presenting my body a *living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is my reasonable service.*

CHAPTER 45

SUMMARY

The subject of the preceding Chapters is still continued through this. The Prophet is informed of the different portions to be set apart, for the sanctuary and the city, and the Prince.

REFLECTIONS

To whom shall I look, blessed JESUS, but to thee, as the glorious Prince here spoken of, and the sovereign of thy Church, thine house, and thy people. Surely, LORD, all and every oblation is of thine own free cost, and thou art the sum and substance of all. In whatever point of view thy redeemed behold thee, under whatever period of thy Church, thou art regarded, thou art the same: the Alpha and Omega; the LORD of thy Temple; the Prophet, Priest, and King. Through every dispensation, whether Law, or Gospel; under every government, in thy suffering state, and triumphant state; the reign of grace, and the reign of glory: the Church militant, or the Church victorious; the millennial, or the everlasting kingdom; thy dominion extends through all, and thou art over all, GOD blessed forever! Oh! then cause *every man to bow before thee*, and *every tongue to confess that thou art JESUS CHRIST*, the ever blessed ever glorious Prince and Saviour, *to the glory of GOD the FATHER*. Amen.

CHAPTER 46

SUMMARY

The subject is still continued. Various appointments are here set forth, for the due government of the Prince's Kingdom, and the blessedness of his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we have now for several Chapters past, been following the footsteps of the Prophet through the wonderful apartments of this great city, which the LORD showed in vision to the man of GOD; and whether it relates to the Church militant, or millenary, in either sense or in both, still it becomes an interesting question; are we citizens of it, and entitled to its blessed privileges? Truly, we may take up the language of the Prophet concerning it, and say, *glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of GOD* Surely an admission here must be blessed. Surely the inhabitants of it must be peculiarly under the eye and good will of their LORD. Say then, my brother, do we speak the language of Canaan; delight in the place;

the society; and above all, in the glorious king. Is JESUS precious; his Name always as ointment poured forth for fragranc; his people, ordinances, holy days, greatly beloved by us? It is truly gracious to have these testimonies in proof, that our conversation is in heaven, and that we are looking for the LORD's return to it, that when He, who is our life shall appear, we may appear with him in glory. Precious LORD JESUS! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, sweet and incontestible evidences, that we are thine, and growing up in thee to an holy temple in the LORD. Oh! the blessedness of belonging to the household, and family of faith; for if thou LORD hast made us free, in thee we shall be free indeed!

CHAPTER 47

SUMMARY

We have here the continuation of the same subject, but in a vision somewhat clearer to be understood. The Waters issuing from under the threshold of the House; the account of fishermen; and of trees growing on the banks of the river.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let my soul take her stand, where the Prophet once stood, and as I behold by the eye of faith, as he then did by vision, the waters issuing from under the threshold of the LORD's house, I would call to mind and contemplate that pure water of life, clear as crystal, which *John* also saw, to the same purport, and from the same cause, even *from the throne of GOD and the LAMB*. Yes! truly, O LORD, all blessings flow in and from JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Person; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; through the LAMB, CHRIST JESUS. And oh! how full of healing, sovereign, quickening, cleansing, refreshing, sanctifying grace, are all the thousand streams. Oh! what rich, full, everlasting, ever flowing, and overflowing waters, these are! How they run in the ordinances of the Gospel, and through the several means of grace! In some places to the ankles, in others to the knees, in others to the loins, and in others becoming even a river for the redeemed souls to bathe in! Surely they are

commissioned by Him, from whom they issue, to give life, and *to give it more abundantly!* It is only those marshy and miry souls, who resist the life-giving stream, that are given up to perpetual barrenness! But everywhere, even to the Dead Sea of dead sinners hearts, where this water comes, it quickens to immediate life. Truly, blessed JESUS, mightest thou well call this perennial spring *living water*; and *the water of life*; for it springeth up in my soul, and in every soul whom thou causest to partake of it, *a well of water springing up to everlasting life*. Oh! for every poor sinner that hears of this life-giving stream, to come to it, freely given as it is, *without money and without price!*

Reader! contemplate the many blessed things of Gospel mercies, contained in this lovely Chapter. Behold the streams of grace; behold the trees of life on the banks of the river, and the many, yea, very many trees of the LORD's right hand planting, on either side! Behold those living waters going forth towards the East Country, and toward the desert of our poor dry nature. And then look up with me, yea, let us both look up together, to the great source, and fountain of those mercies, in JESUS, and pray the LORD to send the healing streams in every direction, to bless the Church of our LORD JESUS throughout the whole habitable earth. O Sacred River! *do thou make glad the city of our GOD*. Amen.

CHAPTER 48

SUMMARY

The Prophet, having been led by the hand through all the Apartments of this wonderful house, is now, in the close of the whole, instructed concerning the portions of the people. The several tribes of Israel are enumerated, with their several proportions, and the prophecy closeth with the most blessed title given to the city, intimating the perpetual presence of JEHOVAH.

REFLECTIONS

AND now, Reader! before closing the book of this prophecy, say, what hath the LORD taught thee of its blissful contents? Taken in one great whole, it seems evident, amidst all the obscurity upon those

writings of Ezekiel, that it is the Gospel Church, and not the Temple of the Jews, after their return from Babylon, the Prophet was taught to contemplate by this vision. The immense city here described in the last nine Chapters of Ezekiel's vision, not the whole territories of Israel; no, nor the whole world could contain! According to the smallest calculation, one hundred thousand miles is the dimensions! Hence we must behold therefore, somewhat beyond anything material in the building. It is, it must be, spiritual. And as the LORD JESUS CHRIST, by his entrance into the second temple, gave a greater glory to it than all the splendour of the first; and as both these are done away, why may we not, as the Apostle saith we do, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Reader! what saith your heart's expectation to those things? Oh! for both Writer and Reader, to be as the Apostle describes the Church, looking for, and hasting to, the coming of this great day of GOD! JESUS will come, to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. His feet (*the Prophet saith*) shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives. He, whom the wondering disciples saw ascending, shall so come in like manner, as they saw him go into heaven! Reader! here let you and I rest, in full assurance of faith. The Church, both militant and triumphant; in grace and glory; shall know his name, for from that day the name of the City shall be called, the LORD is there.

And now adieu, Ezekiel, faithful servant of thy GOD! Thou hast indeed shown, that thou wert rightly named *Ezekiel*, which is, *the strength of GOD*. For thou hast shown the strength of the LORD to have been in thee. Highly favoured Messenger! What though the river *Chebar* witnessed thy captivity; yet made free in JESUS, *thou wert free indeed*. And blest with such visions of thy GOD, how peculiarly set apart wert thou for thy LORD's service. Through every generation thy inspired records have been commissioned to thy LORD's glory. I thank thee, as my LORD's servant, for what He hath taught me by thee. I thank my GOD for raising up such a servant in his Church. And now, thou hast long seen all the grand events here taught thee in vision, assuredly to be realized in their due season; thou hast sat down among the goodly fellowship of Prophets in heaven, waiting under the golden altar their final accomplishment! Farewell for a little space, *Ezekiel*, until the whole Church meet in

this blessed city thou has so divinely described, and every tribe have each their separate and distinct mansion in JESUS, and JESUS the one portion of each and of all. In that blessed hour, may it be the felicity, both of him that writes and him that reads, (if consistent with the LORD's will,) to join *Ezekiel* with all the ransomed which are there returned to Zion, *with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads*. There in one vast assembly, all to shout aloud, and all to enter into the full and everlasting enjoyment of their LORD. Each for himself, and altogether equally blessed, in the unspeakable and never ending happiness of His presence. JEHOVAH SHAMMAH! Then will it be indeed known and indeed felt; the LORD IS THERE. Amen, and Amen.

HAWKER'S
BIBLE CHAPTER
SUMMARIES
AND
REFLECTIONS
VOLUME 3



BY
ROBERT HAWKER

DANIEL – REVELATION

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CONTAINING
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PREFACE

Dr. Hawker delighted to speak of his Lord as “My most glorious Christ.” In his *Poor Man’s Commentary on The Old and New Testament*, “Christ and Him crucified” was emphatically the burden of his comments and the keynote of his ministry. Hawker, began his comments on each Bible chapter with a *Summary* of the chapter at hand, and concluded his verse by verse comments with *Reflections* on the same. This three volume set, entitled *Robert Hawker’s Bible Chapter Summaries and Reflections* omits all of the verse by verse comments and presents only his chapter summaries and reflections. Perhaps it could more appropriately be termed Hawker’s concise commentary on the entire Bible. While it *is* abbreviated, you will find it very thorough.

Dr. Hawker preached his last sermon in Charles Church on March 18th, 1827, and on April 6th he died, after being six years curate and forty-three years vicar of the parish. On the last day of his life he repeated a part of Ephesians 1, from the 6th to the 12th verses, and as he proceeded he enlarged on the verses, but dwelt more fully on these words: “To the praise of His glory Who first trusted in Christ.” He paused and asked, “Who first trusted in Christ?” And then made this answer: “It was God the Father Who first trusted in Christ.”

C. H. Spurgeon once commented concerning Robert Hawker by saying, "Gentleman, if you want something full of marrow and fatness, cheering to your own hearts by way of comment, and likely to help you in giving your hearers rich expositions, buy Dr. Hawker's Poor Man's Commentary. Dr. Hawker was the very least of commentators in the matter of criticism, but he sees Jesus, and that is a sacred gift which is most precious whether the owner be a critic or no. There is always such a savor of the Lord Jesus Christ in Dr. Hawker that you cannot read him without profit."

The Publisher

DANIEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE now enter upon a most interesting part of Scriptural Prophecies. The Book of *Daniel* demands our highest attention, affection, and regard. It is indeed but short, both in the historical part of it, and the prophetical. But there is so much in that little concerning the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and his Church in him, that we never can be sufficiently thankful to GOD the HOLY GHOST, both for the ministry of this man, and that this precious record of inspiration hath been watched over, preserved, and handed down to the Church to the present hour upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Of the certainty of Daniel's prophecy being authentic, the testimonies are undoubted. The LORD seems to have over-ruled things in such a manner, as to put it out of all question. The Jews, indeed, in order to invalidate Daniel's prophecies concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, cause his writings not to be put among the other writings of the Prophets. And the reason is very obvious. For so pointed and express is this man's whole tendency in his prophecies, to the person and glory of CHRIST, that had they acknowledged his writings to have been prophetical, they must have acknowledged CHRIST also. Therefore, by separating *Daniel's* book of prophecy from the general prophecies of scripture, they aimed to do away the Prophet's testimony concerning CHRIST. But added to the whole authority of the Word of GOD to prove that *Daniel* was a Prophet, the church of GOD hath one that is most blessed, conclusive, and satisfactory. I mean the testimony of the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself. For in that memorable discourse which the LORD JESUS delivered, and which may be called CHRIST'S own prophecy concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem; the LORD expressly refers to the prophecy of *Daniel* in confirmation of it: and as expressly calls *Daniel* a Prophet. So that nothing can be more in point. See Daniel 12:11. and

compare what he there delivers with the words of JESUS, Matthew 24:15.

The name of *Daniel* is not without much signification considered with an eye to his ministry. It is a compound in itself, and means, *the judgment of GOD*. And if we consider, that both his ministry in the court of Babylon, and the scope of his prophecy concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose office is, to set *judgment in the earth when the isles should wait for his law*, Isaiah 42:4. There is a great beauty in the servant's name who ministered to such a Master. *Daniel* was of the tribe of *Judah*; and as we find carried away among the captives to *Babylon* when very young. His ministry was lengthened, it is more than probable, through the whole of the captivity. But what I would more particularly beg to remark concerning the ministry of Daniel is, that he not only prophesied of the events to be accomplished in the Church from the *Chaldean* to the *Roman* monarchy, but his prophecies looked much further. I do not presume to speak decidedly upon this, or any other subject, that is unexplained by GOD the HOLY GHOST; but with an eye to his divine teaching, I venture to enquire, whether the prophecies of *Daniel*, are not in some parts of them accomplishing in this very hour? For, as the Roman empire, to which, as by the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies in part hath been already proved, this holy man of GOD plainly referred, we behold the reference of his prophecy: so as *Rome* was mystically the Babylon spoken of in the Revelations, it should seem, that the Prophet was directed by the HOLY GHOST, to look as far forward as the present, and perhaps a future day of the Church.

The Book of *Daniel* is partly historical and partly prophetical; and the subjects are frequently incorporated. The first six Chapters are chiefly the history of the times of *Daniel*; yet not without an eye to future events in the Church. The last six Chapters are chiefly prophetical. And very blessed they are, as hath been proved in such as time hath explained by the accomplishment. And equally blessed are those, no doubt, which are to be fulfilled, and which perhaps are now fulfilling in the earth. For what can be more blessed, than what refers to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and to his Church in Him?

I beg the Reader, both at his entrance upon the threshold of this sacred Scripture, and through all the departments of it, to keep a stedfast eye to GOD the HOLY GHOST for his divine teaching;

remembering our LORD's own words concerning it; *Let him that readeth understand*, Mark 13:14. Almighty Teacher! I would say both for myself and Reader! make these words, both at once, a precept and a blessing. And the grace of understanding which thou commandest to the Reader, do thou LORD thyself give him; and let both Writer and Reader be enabled to receive and accept those sayings as faithful and true. And may the LORD GOD of the Prophets explain them to the heart of both: and prove, here as in every other instance, that *the testimony of JESUS is the Spirit of prophecy*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The prophecy of Daniel opens with an account of the captivity of Israel. Daniel is among those who were carried to Babylon in the captivity. He finds favor in the sight of the keeper of the prisoners. Is permitted to abstain from the food of the Court. Is commended for his understanding.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over this first Chapter in the history of Daniel. And let us remark in his instance the wonderful properties of distinguishing grace. Behold! how the LORD made way for him, and guided all his paths, and directed all his ways. Though carried into captivity, yet, from that very captivity, all the great events which followed in the Prophet's life took their rise.

And when we have duly pondered the history of *Daniel* in order to mark the progress of grace in his instance, let us see if we can discover nothing similar to the same in our own. If, peradventure, the eye which reads those lines hath been opened by sovereign grace, to discover the LORD's dealings in his own experience; he will find enough to melt his very soul into tears, in the recollection, how the LORD hath been, and always is, leading on his people, making their way to differ from others; yea, to differ from themselves, in a thousand instances before their unthinking minds were brought into the least apprehension of divine mercy towards them. What a subject of this kind doth every child of GOD in his history, open to view

when once grace opens the book, and turns back the leaves of what is past. Every one finds cause to join in what the Prophet was commissioned to deliver? *Wilt thou not from this time* (saith the LORD) *cry unto me; My father, thou art the guide of my youth.* Jeremiah 13:4.

LORD JESUS! give to every follower of thine grace to know thee in these things; and cause us to stand before thee in those subjects of wisdom and learning; beyond all the knowledge of worldly skill that we may discover from whom, and by whom, we derive understanding in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

In Consequence of the King of Babylon forgetting the subject of a dream which had troubled him; Daniel, through the LORD, tells the monarch both his dream and the interpretation of it, and is advanced to honor.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I contemplate the GOD of Daniel in his providences, as well as in his grace. Oh! what an arrangement of events and things were here, in order to raise the LORD's poor captives from their low estate, to an high. Surely, that scripture was eminently fulfilled; *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.* But let us not rest here, but remember also, that the events recorded in this Chapter were for the comfort of the Church then in captivity: or as Daniel told the King, *it was for their sakes* that the secret was disclosed to Daniel, that is, the sake of his Church, his chosen. Not to inform an idolatrous King and his court, unless to damp and mortify their pride, that Babylon must fall, and all monarchies unto CHRIST, be as the potsherds of the earth; but that the Church of the living GOD might know that JEHOVAH was still as ever, watching over their interests, and would in due time, hasten on and establish forever the

kingdom of his dear SON. Here, Reader! let you and I make our improvements of this blessed Chapter, and at the same time recollect, that this, and this only, is at the bottom, of all JEHOVAH's dispensations, to bring forward JESUS and his great salvation; that, as the scripture gloriously explains it, JEHOVAH might, *in the dispensation of the fulness of time, gather together in one all, things in CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in Him.* Hallelujah, Amen.

But chiefly, Reader! let our improvement of this Chapter be to contemplate Him, whom under the similitude of a *little stone* cut out without hands, was both to destroy all the images of idolatry, and to become a mountain, and fill the earth! Oh, precious, precious LORD JESUS, in thee I behold all this most blessedly fulfilled! and on thee would I hang the whole of my soul's meditation, as the Bee hangs upon the sweetest flower. Surely, LORD, without human hands, or human power, or human policy, or human strength, thou camest forth unknown, unperceived, unsought of men, at the call of GOD thy FATHER, for the salvation of thy people, and the destruction of thine enemies. Little indeed, and despised, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*; but, oh! how infinitely precious in the sight of JEHOVAH, and in the love and admiration of thy people. And how hast thou, LORD, since the day of thy servant Daniel, fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, all that was then promised. Oh! do thou Almighty mountain! fill heaven and earth; yea, all the hearts of thy people with thy glory. Hasten, LORD, the glorious hour, when *all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdom of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and thou shalt reign forever.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The dedication of a golden image for worship, is appointed by Nebuchadnezzar; the people commanded to bow before it: the Jews are accused of neglecting it, and are cast into the furnace, but miraculously delivered.

REFLECTIONS

READER! can you desire a stronger explanation of what scripture continually holds forth, *between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth GOD and him that serveth him not*; than what is here brought before us. Behold the daring impiety of the Babylonish King and his nobles! Behold their cruelty also. Then mark the end of these men! Look, on the other hand, at the LORD's servants! see what confidence faith in the LORD JESUS can and will induce. And behold, how the LORD bears testimony to his people, and confirms the dependence of his redeemed. And such, depend upon it, more or less will it be in every instance. Faith in JESUS enables the believer to triumph, when all outward circumstances are most unpromising and dark. Hence some of the martyrs of GOD have been enabled to *sing* songs of rejoicing, even in the flames. They well knew, that however painful to the body, it was full of blessedness to the soul; and therefore, these afflictions were but *the light afflictions of a moment, which were working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!*

Precious JESUS! make both him that writes and him that reads, if it be thy blessed will, followers of them, *who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. And seeing that we are thus encompassed about with so great *a cloud of witnesses*, may we run also the race that is set before us, *looking unto thee the Author and Finisher of our faith*. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We are here brought acquainted with another dream of Nebuchadnezzar; which Daniel interprets. The event of the same is also awfully related.

REFLECTIONS

I pray the Reader to ponder well, from the history here given, in the character of one of the greatest monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of the world, the wretched state of man void of the grace of

GOD. Respecting outward circumstances, there was nothing Nebuchadnezzar wanted to constitute happiness. But what were all outward circumstances, when thus left a prey to the desolate state of a guilty mind, under the hand of GOD! Reader! mark well the solemn lesson, and turn it every way, the instruction is the same. In the present fallen state of mankind, there is nothing that can bring comfort but JESUS. Everything beside is tinged with vanity. As many as are under the laws of Moses are condemned; and they without the law, are, as the Apostle saith, *a law unto themselves*; their conscience accusing, or else excusing; and they are, and must be always miserable. Let their condition be what it may, there is nothing that can give peace. But, my brother, if CHRIST be your portion, He sweetens all; He sanctifies all. Beautifully to this purport, speaks the LORD by the Prophet. *In that day (saith the LORD) will I make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.* The sense is; All things, and all creatures, shall promote the peace of him that is at peace with GOD. *He that overcometh (saith another scripture) shall inherit all things. I will be his GOD and he shall be my son.* LORD JESUS! make such views blessed, both to Writer and Reader, that in thee, and in thee alone, we may seek for a portion to live upon, in time, and to all eternity!

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Having done with Nebuchadnezzar, we here enter upon the history of his descendant Belshazzar; and a short history it is. We have here, his impious feast; his profanation of the vessels of the sanctuary: his awful alarm and death.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! dismiss not this solemn chapter, until thou hast gathered some of the many instructions, which, under grace, it holds forth to the Church of GOD, and to all the members of CHRIST'S

mystical body. It is blessed to behold, in the swift judgment of sinners, how sure the LORD's appointments are; and how JESUS is unceasingly watching over the special and personal interests of his people. And while *the hand writing on the wall*, or what is the same thing, the voice within, in the sinners conscience, loosens the loins of the enemies of CHRIST; the HOLY GHOST is witnessing to the spirits of the LORD's people, peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Oh! ye *Daniels* of the present hour! *be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might*. Witness for your LORD, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, Shortly the midnight hour of the ungodly will come, when all the enemies of the cross shall perish. Shortly that day will arrive, when the LORD wilt call his faithful home to glory! And oh! what a vast, what an eternal distinction will then take place, between the *Daniels* and the *Belshazzars* of every generation! Precious JESUS! in that day, be thou my hope, my joy, my confidence; that when the whole world of unbelievers are *weighed in the balance and found wanting*, my soul, among the redeemed of Zion, may be able to shout aloud for joy, crying out in the language of GOD's own word, *In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall I then come, with all that believe in Him, and never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end!*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Daniel is raised to preferment under the new government. He is cast into the den of lions. He is saved from danger, and his accusers destroyed.

REFLECTIONS

READER! remark here how unremitting the malice of hell hath been of old, and continued from age to age, against CHRIST and his Church! When nothing could be found to ruin *Daniel* in his trust with men, such is the venom of hatred, that the attempt is made to poison his reputation in his dealings with GOD. Such hath been, and ever must be, the bitterness of the *Esau's* against the children of

promise. But how blessed is it to behold the grace of GOD in its actions, and on the hearts of GOD's people! Oh! for the same spirit as actuated the soul of Daniel! The prohibition of men is nothing, when the fear of GOD possesseth the heart. *Among the gods*, said one of old, *will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD!* And so will every faithful follower of the LORD, though lions be in the way, and hell and destruction oppose. It will be a blessed improvement of this Chapter, if the heart both of Writer and Reader be led therefrom, to seek to the LORD for a portion of the same spirit as actuated the mind of Daniel. Precious JESUS! in thy bright example we behold how blessed it is, when bulls of *Bastian* set themselves against thy people all around, to lay hold by faith of thy strength and grace, and to be more than conquerors through thy power helping us. Oh! LORD! be thou my confidence all the day, so shall I be saved from the lions dens, and from the mountains of leopards: and my GOD will be mine everlasting strength and my glory.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here in this Chapter introduced into strong visions of GOD. He is blessed by one that stood by with an interpretation of what he saw.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! over this most sublime and blessed Chapter; and passing by every lesser consideration, contemplate this, as the highest and the best on what is said of Him, whom Daniel *saw, the Ancient of Days*, in the glories of his person, and Almightyness of his character! Perhaps the whiteness of his garment might be meant to intimate the purity and holiness of his nature and essence. And it is possible, by the hairs of his head, like the pure wool, might be intended to represent the sovereignty of his glory and majesty. But, alas! what figures or similitudes can afford the least resemblance of Him, *who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see!* Almighty JEHOVAH! before thy footstool help both Writer and Reader to fall

down with the lowest possible prostration of soul and body; everlastingly keeping in remembrance, that both now to a throne of grace, and hereafter to glory, there is no possibility of access, but in and through a gracious Mediator, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

And concerning thee, thou blessed EMMANUEL, whom the Prophet Daniel saw also, in this solemn vision, under the similitude of One like the Son of man; help us to look up with all that love and adoration, and holy fear, and faith, and delight, as becometh thy redeemed. For do we not know, dearest JESUS, by the teachings of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that since thou didst finish redemption-work, and art returned unto glory, it is thou that hast opened a new and living way by thy blood, and ever livest to keep it open by thine intercession. Hail! precious LAMB of GOD! worthy art thou to take the kingdom, and power, and glory, for *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*

And no less, thou Eternal SPIRIT of all truth, who art one with the FATHER and the SON! be thou exalted and glorified LORD, in thine own personal power and GODHEAD! And may all the Church, both in heaven and on earth, daily be enabled to send forth their united praises to FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the One glorious and incomprehensible JEHOVAH in endless adoration and love, through the boundless ages of eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here favoured with more visions of GOD. An angel interprets the vision to Daniel. special allusions in the vision to the Church.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both beg of GOD for grace to gather suitable improvements from this Chapter, and such as GOD the HOLY GHOST evidently intended the Church should derive from the perusal of it in all ages. The image of the ram with two horns, and the goat with a notable horn between his eyes, these similitudes are explained to us in the Chapter, and had their accomplishment in the kingdoms of

Media and *Persia*, and of *Grecia* that succeeded both, and have long since been done away. But the vision of the *evening*, and the *morning*, and the *daily sacrifice*; these are subjects of everlasting meditation, and lead to unceasing improvement under divine teaching, as long as the Church shall continue on the earth. And who doth not see, blessed and eternal SPIRIT, when taught by thee, the sweet allusions in those things in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, and daily sacrifice, to the person, blood, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Is not JESUS *the* lamb *slain from the foundation of the world*? And if the exhibition by type of this sacrifice was needful, so the LORD thought fit that it should be set forth both morning and evening, to manifest, that from the morning of life to the evening of it in death, a propitiation is needful for sin, and becomes continually necessary! And Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of the subject, as often as the HOLY GHOST graciously brings it before thee, that this contemplation of the LAMB of GOD taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is of all subjects the most momentous and interesting. Think, Reader! how infinitely meritorious in itself. Think how blessed must it have been in the sight of GOD the FATHER, when for four thousand years together, before the thing to be accomplished was brought to pass, the LORD appointed a daily memorial of it, in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, to be sacrificed! Precious JESUS! let it be our daily delight, both in the morning and evening of every day, to contemplate thy body bruised, and thy soul made an offering for sin! Frequently, LORD, at thy table, and in thine house of prayer, be it our happiness to commemorate thy death in holy communion. And while we behold the LAMB of GOD taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself; give to us such rich views of GOD the FATHER's complacency, in the blessed act of CHRIST dying for us, that we may enter into the most lively conviction and certainty, that when he died on the cross, for the sin of his people, he *died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD*. JESUS was then made sin, and a curse for his redeemed, that *they might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have here as interesting a Chapter as in the whole book of prophecy, and which wholly treats of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Daniel is taught of GOD, by books, to count the number of the years determined to the Babylonish captivity. He is deeply engaged in fasting and prayer; when he is favoured with a vision. The exact period to Jerusalem's bondage is marked out to him.

REFLECTIONS

GRACIOUS GOD! what praises hath the Church of the LORD JESUS to offer for the illustrious prophecy contained in this Chapter! Blessed be GOD, in that he left not himself without witness, when for the transgressions of Israel he gave them over into the band of the enemy! Blessed be GOD, in sending his Prophets *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* with the Church, that *the law should not perish from the priests, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the Prophet*. Blessed be GOD, that enabled Daniel to read the word of the LORD, in a strange land, and gave him grace, and wisdom, to understand by this blessed Book of GOD, the number of years to be accomplished in the desolations of Jerusalem. And blessed be GOD, for handing down to the Church in succeeding generations, and so on to the present hour, the records both of the prophecy and the accomplishment; whereby we behold the exact correspondence; and can, and do, trace our mercies to their source, and discover the LORD presiding over and appointing all. And now, O LORD! as we have here seen thy grace and mercy magnified to thy servant the Prophet; so we beseech thee, that thou wouldest go on to display all the riches of thy grace to the Church at large, in the person, work, blood-shedding, and glory of thy dear SON. We behold, LORD, in this glorious scripture, the features of JESUS very plainly and clearly drawn. And we have seen in the Gospel, how truly the original answers to the portrait. Yea! blessed JESUS, thou wast indeed in the days of thy flesh, anointed as the most holy, to seal up the vision and prophecy, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness. Heavenly Redeemer! let this righteousness be unto all, and upon all thy

people, for there is no difference. And, oh! LORD! grant to thy servants now, as to thy *Daniels* of old, such revelations of thine holy will as may suit the wants of thy Church now, as the ministration of thy Prophets were needed then. And may every enlightened eye, like that of Daniel, be always on the lookout in the expectation of thy second coming; that when the weeks appointed for the desolations of thy people be run out, JESUS may come to take his people home to himself, that *where he is, there they may be also*. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

We are here introduced into the acquaintance of another vision of the Prophet's. Daniel is observing a long and solemn fast, when he is suddenly visited by One, who appeared in great glory. The Prophet being exceedingly troubled in the view of the vision, is comforted by an angel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let our improvement of this blessed Chapter be, to admire the wonderful grace, love, and condescension of our adorable LORD JESUS; in his manifestation to his servant the Prophet: and the solemn effect wrought upon the Prophet's mind, even in the mercy.

Precious LORD! never can thy people sufficiently admire the astonishing love that must be in thine heart, when we behold such evidences of thine attention towards them. Was it not enough, blessed JESUS, when the fulness of time should come, that thou shouldest so readily and freely give *thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair*? And was it not to show thy people in the several ages before the time arrived, how much thy soul was bent to redeem them, and that thine whole heart was towards them, and full of love? And in confirmation of it, didst thou, dearest EMANUEL, visit then one and then another of thy saints, and tell them, that they were greatly beloved? LORD! shed abroad a portion of that love in our cold hearts, and cause, us to love thee, who hast so freely and so greatly loved us!

Reader! do not close this Chapter, neither pass away from the contents of it, until that thou hast duly pondered what is here said of Daniel's comeliness, turned into corruption, in the view of the Holy One. Think, my brother sinner, I beseech you, how solemn, how awful, how overwhelming, must be the open view of CHRIST in his glory; What must be the feelings of the soul, in the moment of death, when departing the body, at the first interview; yea, the first glimpse, of the LORD JESUS? I am speaking now of GOD's redeemed ones; of souls truly regenerated, and who are clothed in the robe of JESUS's own righteousness. Yet even with them, how solemn, how truly awful and affecting! But, if so, think again, my brother, and ask the heart, what it must be to the soul of him, who cometh up from the bed of death without a surety, without the Redeemer's righteousness, and without CHRIST as an advocate! What trembling, what paleness, what horror, must then be upon the soul? LORD JESUS! be thou my righteousness now; and then wilt thou be my everlasting confidence, through life, in death, at the day of judgment, and for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have here a long and particular account of Kings in Persia, and of the realm of Greece. Daniel receives the relation from the same person as in the foregoing Chapter. In the close, a short, but striking account is given, of some formidable foe to the Church, which shall plant his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and behold in it the evidences of the LORD's tender mercies over his people. Though they were in captivity, and justly suffering punishment for their sins, yet, still the LORD hath an eye over them for good, and will not, finally *cast away his people whom he foreknew*. Hence they shall be told what is to happen to them, after their deliverance from Babylon. The Persian, and the Grecian, and the Roman government, are shown to

be in succession to each other, and all to make way for CHRIST. And no doubt, He that brought the Prophet acquainted with the events which were to come to pass, gave him also an assurance of the Church's redemption in JESUS, with all the blessings that were to follow, by reason of CHRIST'S coming.

Reader! and shall not you and I find confidence in the whole of GOD'S promises in CHRIST, to look still forward, with the most pleasing faith, for the accomplishment of all yet remaining to be fulfilled, in the person, work, and righteousness, of GOD our Saviour? Did Daniel thus receive knowledge in the events to come concerning the Church; and is the interests of the Church less dear to CHRIST now? Have not we lived to see all things accomplished, which were here foretold; and are not all these so many additional testimonies to the truth, as it *is in* JESUS? Hail holy, blessed, Almighty LORD give to both Writer and Reader, grace, to wait in full assurance of faith, for all the events connected with thy second coming. And oh! grant, that that faith, may be so lively, in all its actings upon thee, that *when thou shalt appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before thee, at thy coming.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The prophecy of Daniel closeth in this Chapter; with some most gracious assurances of Israel's deliverance; from all her troubles. Daniel's mind is exercised with thoughts concerning the same. The LORD's gracious consolation to the Prophet.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I cannot better close our view of this blessed portion of prophecy, than in following the direction given to Daniel. Here is enough for us each to rest in! *Michael* our prince; JESUS the captain of our salvation, hath stood up, is standing up, and will forever stand up for the children of his people, even his redeemed, his blood-bought royal seed! Trouble there will be; trouble there must be; for sin brings trouble. But where *sin abounded, grace doth much more abound: and* grace triumphs in JESUS CHRIST. And while

our Almighty JESUS lifts his both hands to heaven, he lifts them to bless his redeemed, and he will bless them, when time shall be no more. Oh! LORD! do thou bless us, and we shall be blessed. Purify and make white thy people in thy blood, and bring thy Church, yea, all thy redeemed, to the greater knowledge and love of thee, let thy knowledge be increased, and in thee shall we find all blessing. And now Daniel, O thou man of GOD, greatly beloved! we take our leave of thee; blessing thy LORD, and our LORD, for thy ministry; and loving thee for thy services. Thou hast gone thy way indeed, and we are going ours, in the same faith. Even to old age the LORD thy GOD carried thee; and even to hoar hairs the LORD will carry all his people. By and by the LORD will come. One of those days the shout will be heard from heaven, and Michael our glorious Archangel will appear in the clouds. Oh! for full confidence in that hour, to lift up our heads, when our redemption, draweth nigh, crying out with the Church, *Lo, this is our GOD, we have waited for him, and he will save us. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

HOSEA

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE word of GOD, in the prophetical part of it, hath been committed for writing by GOD the HOLY GHOST, to various penmen. *Hosea* is the first, in point of order, as placed in our present Bibles, of what is called the *twelve minor* Prophets. Not minor Prophets, because the writings of those holy men were less inspired, or less important, than the others which are placed in the word of GOD before them; but on account of their smallness in point of bulk. Some of the ancients put the whole in one book, and hence, perhaps, in the speech of *Stephen* before the council, (Acts 7:42.) he quotes a passage, and calls it as *written in the Book of the Prophets*.

The name of *Hosea*, is of the same import as that of *Joshua*, and signifies a saviour. The Jews were remarkable for calling their children by names very expressive of somewhat great and good. *Hosea* ministered in the Church about eight hundred years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; consequently, though placed after the whole *four*, of what is called the *greater* Prophets, he lived before all of them; and delivered his prophecy before all of them. Notwithstanding this, several of those prophetic writings, which are placed after *Hosea*, were written before his: *Joel*, *Amos*, and *Jonah*, were all prior to *Hosea*. However, it is not of so much moment to know the exact order in which are placed those holy men of GOD; as it is to know, that they all wrote, as well as spake, *as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST*.

It is blessed to observe, in confirmation of the faith, how the servants of the LORD correspond in word and doctrine. If the Reader will compare the writings of *Jeremiah*, who exercised his ministry long after *Hosea*, with the writings of *Hosea*, he will observe in several instances their agreement. *Jeremiah* 7:34. with *Hosea* 2:11. So again, *Ezekiel* 16:15-19. compared with *Hosea* 2:8, 9. And the New Testament Writers, yea, the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself,

confirms the divine authority of the prophecy of *Hosea*, by quotations from it. Matthew 11:13. Romans 9:25, 26. Matthew 2:15. 1 Peter 2:10.

The chief scope and tendency of *Hosea's* writings, seems to be directed towards preparing the minds of the people to be on the lookout for the coming Saviour. Acting under the mission of the HOLY GHOST, the Prophet is reproofing the people of GOD for sin, and at the same time directing their minds to him who came *to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader any further, by general observations on *Hosea's* prophecy, but immediately to enter upon the book itself, first previously desiring the LORD the SPIRIT, to lead both Writer and Reader by the hand, through every part of it, that we may discover the mind of the LORD in the same, and *know the things which are freely given to us of GOD*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The prophecy opens with an account of the Prophet himself, and the period in which he ministered to the Church. The Prophet becomes a Type, as well as a Preacher, in the Church of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! We may truly say, with one of the Sacred Writers, in reference to the Church in her latter-day glory; glorious things are spoken of thee thou city of GOD! For to behold, as this Chapter relates, the low and impoverished state of the Church; and GOD putting away, as it were, his people, and yet recovering them by the riches and sovereignty of his grace, all of himself, and from himself, and his own purpose, counsel, and will; surely we are constrained to exclaim, what hath GOD wrought?

Reader! is it so, that we are by nature, and by practice, like the children of whoredoms, and richly deserve to be forever called, Lo ruhamah, and Lo ammi; but yet by the infinite grace of adoption, brought into acceptance by CHRIST, our spiritual Head? Is it in JESUS, and by JESUS, the one glorious Head of his body the Church,

the whole of Judah and Israel are gathered; and when not a people are made the sons of the living GOD; oh! for grace to admire and adore these high privileges, and ascribe all the glory, and the praise, to whom alone it is all due. Precious JESUS! let my soul henceforth be forever eyeing thee, as the cause, the whole means, the whole end. Earnestly as my soul desires to love thee, let not my love to thee be made any more the standard of my safety in thee, but let me consider thy love as the whole sum and substance of all my safety and my joy. Oh! for grace to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge. In heaven itself, the full and clear apprehension of thy love, constitutes the chief happiness of the place. Give me then, dearest LORD, by thy SPIRIT, to be able to comprehend with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love, that I may be filled with all the fulness of GOD!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here a most interesting Chapter, describing the LORD's gracious dealings with his people, in bringing them from a state of sin to salvation.

REFLECTIONS

READER! ponder well the very many precious things contained in this blessed Chapter. It is all over gospel from one end to the other; and contains within its sacred bosom, that which always was, and always must be, the very, essence of gospel grace; namely, JEHOVAH'S love to poor lost sinners, in the person, work, and righteousness of his dear SON, and their sure acceptance in him, through the infinite merits of his blood, and the covenant-faithfulness, of JEHOVAH.

Behold again and again, how all the mercies of salvation flows in and through this one most gracious channel, by our LORD JESUS CHRIST. JEHOVAH first calls, and calls most lovingly. Say ye to your brethren, *Ammi*, my people; and to your sisters, *Ruhamah*, beloved. Both sons and daughters are called upon: for JEHOVAH had promised in redemption-work, to call CHRIST'S sons *from far, and his*

daughters from the ends of the earth; therefore, here the LORD sends to call them, agreeably to his most sure promise. And observe yet further; though the LORD was about to plead with them, and to tell them of their transgression, and the house of Jacob of their sins; yet the original covenant of redemption, founded in CHRIST before the world began; and consequently, before their fallen state, was not destroyed. JEHOVAH'S love to his Church in CHRIST JESUS, Was founded in the ancient settlements of eternity; so that her after-fall in Adam did not prevent GOD'S original purpose and grace, *given in CHRIST JESUS before the world began*. Observe further, the gracious methods of divine love, in bringing his Israel unto him. The LORD hedges up the way with thorns, brings the soul into the wilderness; makes crosses spring out of our supposed comforts, and thus by the convictions of his HOLY SPIRIT, compels the soul to return to her first Husband, because all else is vanity and vexation of Spirit. And when the LORD hath his infinite mercy accomplished the purposes of his grace; then the name of JESUS, husband, brother, friend, become sweet to the soul; and all the fulfillment of GOD'S covenant engagements follow; the LORD acknowledges them for his people; and they acknowledge the LORD for their GOD.

Reader! doth your personal knowledge of these things make this scripture blessed to your own heart? Hath GOD so dealt by *you*? Hath he indeed taken away the names of *Baalim* out of *your* mouth? and is JESUS altogether precious to your soul in his person, work, and righteousness? Oh! how truly lovely is it, when GOD'S Word corresponds to our experience; and while we read the sacred testimony; we are enabled *to set to our seal that GOD is true!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This is a short but interesting Chapter. The LORD commissions the Prophet, under the same figure of an Adulteress, to set forth the very shameful departure of Israel from the LORD; and his grace in CHRIST for their recovery.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS, precious LORD JESUS! let me pass by and pass over every ether thought and consideration furnished by this Chapter, to attend to thee, and to that lovely character of thine set forth in this scripture, as the husband of thy people! It is thou, dearest LORD, and not thy servant *Hosea*, that is here set forth, as loving a woman, an adulteress, in thy love to thy Church and people. We have indeed all played the harlot, and done that which even the worshippers of the dunghill gods of the earth, never did; changed their gods, which were no gods; but we have changed that which is our glory, for that which cannot profit. But in the midst of all this rebellion, and apostacy, and departure; thou hast not changed thy love, nor given a bill of everlasting divorce, but if at all, yet only for a season. Every act of thine, in all ages of the Church, very fully shows, that thou hast not put away thy people whom thou didst foreknow. And after many days, thou wilt return and visit thine inheritance, and Israel shall again fear the LORD and his goodness, after many days. Oh! for faith in lively exercise, to be always on the lookout for the LORD's coming. Hasten, O LORD, the gracious promise, and arise and have mercy upon Zion; for *the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have here a very sorrowful Chapter. A picture is drawn of the people's transgressions; and the LORD's threatened punishment follows.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! cause my soul to read this solemn Chapter with an eye to what thou hast said, that thou hast declared in it that thou hast a controversy with thy people. Oh! gracious LORD GOD! And what do all thy controversies lead to, but to bring back thy people? Wherefore doth JESUS in his adorable grace, and love, and mercy, send forth his ambassadors, but that they should pray his

people, as though GOD did beseech them in CHRIST's stead, to be reconciled to GOD. Surely the Church hath reason to be humbled in the dust before thee, when she calls to remembrance, that the land mourns for the sins of it; and that the great and crying sins are the transgressions of the LORD's people. And if the LORD in the days of the Prophet, declared that his people were destroyed for lack of knowledge, what shall be said of the present hour, but that it is a CHRIST-despising generation, who know not the LORD. LORD, take to thyself thy great name, and come forth for thine own cause, and turn back the captivity of Jacob!

Oh! ye deluded sons and daughters of Adam! ye who take pleasure in the infirmities of GOD's people, and eat up their sin. JESUS will plead for his redeemed, when he seeth that their power is gone. He will revive his chosen; he will take up their cause; he will yet make them a name and a praise among the people of the earth, to whom they have been a reproach, in the day when he bindeth up their breach and healeth their wound: even in the day of his great power. *The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a very proper continuance to the subject in the former. The LORD had said that Ephraim should be let alone, having joined himself to idols; and here is related the sad consequences. The Chapter closes, however, with the prospect of mercy.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul dost thou behold in this Chapter, the false teachers here described? Ponder well the awfulness of such characters, who to please men, and find favor with the great, set their nets in the *Mizpahs*, and *Tabors*, of the present hour, to harass and afflict the people of GOD. Whatever *Hosea* knew of this in his day, he could not know more than the present time affords, of such deceivers and antichrists. Surely there never was a period of the Church, when in what is called the Church itself, so little is known, and so little proclaimed, of the person, work, office, and character, of the LORD

JESUS CHRIST. The LORD CHRIST, if at all spoken of, is for the most part spoken of by such men, not as He really is, the whole sum and substance of the Bible the whole of ordinances; and of means of grace; but seen only in the back ground of the subject, and cautiously mentioned, and as cautiously recommended to the people. Reader! observe the LORD's jealousy, I beseech you, in this chapter, and mark it well. Oh! for grace to make CHRIST what GOD the FATHER makes him: the whole, substantially so, of all the covenant; yea, the very covenant itself. JESUS is the first, and the last; the author and finisher; the object, means, and end, of everything that concerns salvation. If we seek for pardon, where shall we seek it, but in CHRIST? If for peace, He, and he alone is our peace, *when the Assyrian shall come up into our land*. Need we a promise? JESUS is the sum of all, yea, himself the promise. He is the whole of the law; the substance of all the types, and shadows; the body of all the prophecies: *to him give all the prophets witness*. My soul! see that thou draw improvement from every scripture, in discovering JESUS in that scripture: *for*,

until thou hast found Him, to whom all scriptures witness, and of whom all scriptures testify; thou knowest nothing yet, as thou oughtest to know. Blessed LORD! grant this, both to Writer and Reader, if it be thy blessed will, that we may know thee, *whom truly to know is life eternal!* Amen.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The opening of this Chapter is most blessed indeed, and carries with it evident tokens of grace. The other parts are somewhat like the preceding Chapters, the LORD's expostulations with his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is blessed amidst the general; yea, universal corruption of our poor fallen nature, to behold, even in a few instances here and there afforded, of the sovereignty of the LORD's grace. And when we hear the cry issuing from the heart, *come, and let us return unto the LORD*, we may well exclaim, *what hath GOD*

wrought! For surely nothing less than an Almighty power could effect the change; and the LORD's grace alone accomplish it.

But it is to thee, O blessed JESUS, as the glorious and efficient cause, the great event in every instance must be ascribed. It is from thy goings forth as the morning, when thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, the auspicious mercy is to be traced. LORD! help me to contemplate thee, under this endeared character! Be it my mercy, night and morning, to behold thee in this lovely, this gracious point of view. By the leadings of thine HOLY SPIRIT, guiding my soul through the sacred pages of thy word, I see thee coming forth as the morning, yea, as a morning without clouds, in the council of peace between the persons of the GODHEAD, when thou stoodest up, at the call of JEHOVAH, as the glorious Head, and Surety, of thy people. I see thee also coming in with the very first dawn of revelation, as the seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's head. I trace the wonderful subject, all pointing to thee, in every sacrifice, type, and shadow, of the law, during the whole Jewish dispensation; until at length, in the fulness of time, thou camest forth as the morning, in the open manifestation of thyself; in substance of our flesh! Hail! thou glorious, gracious, great Deliverer, of a lost world! And dost thou not now, even now, come forth as the morning, when to the heart of every individual believer, after the long night of the sin, and darkness, and ignorance, of a fallen state, thou manifestest thyself to them in a way of conversion, otherwise than thou dost to the world? Dost thou not, blessed JESUS, make every renewed love token of thy visits, like the morning when coming a-fresh, to revive, to comfort, to help, to maintain, and strengthen thy redeemed, in the dark state of their present pilgrimage? Oh! precious, precious JESUS! continue and increase those sweet visits, morning by morning, and be thou as the rain, both the latter and the former rain, upon the earth. Yea, LORD! come upon my dry and barren heart as showers of blessings! Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The subject of reproof is continued through this Chapter. But it is mingled with mercy. Here are many blessed marks to show that the LORD had mercy in reserve for his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let this Chapter, as many other Chapters of the same nature and doctrine are highly calculated for, lead your heart and mine, under the teachings and influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to take a double view, and in one and the same moment, behold the corrupt and fallen state of man, and the infinite grace and goodness of GOD. I do not say, that the LORD took occasion from man's misery to magnify the exceeding riches of his grace in providing salvation; for His love was before our misery; and his covenant grace in CHRIST existed before all worlds. But I may say, that in every instance of divine favor the LORD doth make the glory of his grace to shine towards his redeemed; and where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD!

Reader! when you and I look into ourselves, what do we see but evil, and that continually? When now the LORD hath healed us in JESUS, how is our iniquity discovered? Our hearts are always ready to the lust of evil, like the baker's oven! How have we, like Ephraim, mixed ourselves with the heathen, and learned their works? And though we return, yet how often is it deceitfully, and not to the Most High! is it not so? Think then, how gracious, long suffering, and slow to anger, the LORD is? Gracious LORD JESUS! how shall we ever rightly and fully value the infinitely precious and costly sacrifice of thy blood and righteousness? How indeed shall creatures such as we are, rightly value what our utmost conceptions cannot fathom, or comprehend? Oh! for grace, to have some glimpses of those infinite dimensions of Almighty love, in all its heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths, which passeth knowledge! Oh! to behold thee, thou blessed LAMB of GOD, in thy unceasing worthiness before the throne; and never, never to forget that thy blood speaketh more for

thy boughten ones, than all their sins speak against them. Yea, dearest LORD, do thou enable me to cherish the sweet thought in my soul day by day; that a sense of the remains of indwelling sin in my nature, may not overwhelm me in despair; that thou art still appearing as a LAMB that hath been slain, in the presence of GOD for thy people, and canst, and *wilt save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by thee, seeing that thou ever livest to make intercession for them.* Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here another Sermon of the Prophet, or perhaps it is but a continuation of the former, for the subject is the same. The LORD expostulates with his people, and threatens to correct them.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Was there ever a period in the Church of CHRIST, when those that are divinely inspired, and called to the office of ambassadors for JESUS, needed to set the trumpet more powerfully to the mouth, and to call upon the sinners in Zion to be afraid for the impending judgments of GOD? Surely the LORD hath a controversy with the people, and he will plead with Israel. But, blessed JESUS! how sweet and refreshing doth it become to thy faithful ones, however few in number, that the interests of thy redeemed are safe, neither shall hell's gates prevail against the Church of JESUS. The enemy may have a momentary triumph; the adversaries of GOD's people seem to rejoice. The Church languishes in all her borders. But there is a *set time to favour Zion*, and in due season the LORD will arise to manifest his sovereignty, and the lighting down of his glorious arm. In the sure expectation of this, let GOD's tried ones repose, looking unto JESUS, who is both the Author, and Finisher, of faith. Shortly he will come to take out of his kingdom all things that offend; and prove himself to be the whole of salvation to his redeemed. In that blessed day of GOD, may it be the felicity, both of him that writes, and him that reads, (if the LORD will,) to be found among the ransomed of Zion, that shall return with songs of

everlasting joy upon their heads, when sorrow and sighing, sin, sickness, and death, shall be known and felt no more.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have here the threatened visitations of the LORD upon Israel, on account of transgressions. And if we read those awful denunciations of GOD, and keep in remembrance their accomplishment in the Babylonish Captivity, the whole is explained to us.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED EMANUEL! how can I fail to behold thee, in this Chapter, under the endearing character of the Husband of thy Church; while hearing my LORD thus expostulating with his Israel of old, for their whoredoms and fornications! Indeed, indeed, precious JESUS! thou hast married our nature, in having taken that pure portion of it, which thy FATHER gave thee, into union with thyself. And thou hast thereby most plainly and fully proved, how great and unequalled the love thou hast fixed on thy spouse the Church. And didst thou not know, holy Redeemer, how unfaithful and unworthy thy wife would prove? Yea, LORD! thou didst not only know it, but didst declare it. I knew thou didst say, that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and be called a transgressor from the womb! Yet such was thy love, that this did not stop the graciousness of thine Almighty purposes; neither prevent thy union, or the manifestation of thy tender affection to thy people. In every age, to the worthlessness of thy chosen, thy grace hath been shown; neither hast thou kept back thy loving mercy from thy redeemed, even when like Israel here, thy Church hath gone a whoring, and set up the stumbling block of iniquity in the heart! Oh! LAMB of GOD! what patience but thine could have borne with the sins of thy people; yea, with the unceasing rebellions of the hand that now writes? From the first moment that thou didst pass by, and beheld our whole nature cast out to perish, and polluted in our blood, and didst bid us live to the present hour of thy Church; who shall recount most among all

the members of thy redeemed, the greatest recoveries by grace, amidst the greatest undeservings of nature? Whose song on earth, or whose note of salvation in heaven, shall be the loudest in praise of JESUS's love? Precious LORD JESUS! while I read Hosea's prophecy; behold the relation of Israel's sins, and thy mercy; while I call to mind how thy long suffering hath been exercised in the thousand and ten thousand instances of all thy people, from that period to the present; yea, from the garden of Eden, through all the ages of the Church; and to continue until the consummation of all things; I feel constrained to cry out in the language of thy servant the Prophet; who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. Thou retainest not thine anger forever; because thou delightest in mercy. Yes! precious JESUS; thou wilt turn again; thou wilt have compassion upon us; thou wilt subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The same subject of reproof and expostulation forms the burden of this Chapter. The LORD, by his servant the Prophet, is still speaking to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is very blessed, in reading these scriptures of the Old Testament, to behold how the figures made use of are explained under the New. Our emptiness as a vine, and the plowing of the heart in wickedness, are strong representations to what is really the case of every man by nature, when the fallow ground is not turned by GOD, and the whole man remains unregenerated and unrenewed by grace. But when the soul is made sensible of this, and under divine teaching is led to behold the infinite preciousness of JESUS; then the poor awakened sinner feels the whole three of the Prophet's words, and finds it to be high time indeed to sow in righteousness,

and to reap the rich mercy of GOD's free and sovereign grace in JESUS CHRIST! Reader! it will be no small improvement of this Chapter, if by GOD the HOLY GHOST's gracious influence, so much in Israel's emptiness and transgression we discover, as to be made sensible of our own; and from such a conviction of our nothingness, the all-sufficiency and suitableness of the LORD JESUS is discovered; for then we shall gladly flee from all creature dependencies, to take refuge in Creator strength; and feeling what we are in ourselves by nature, most earnestly rejoice in what we are made by grace. Such views will tend to endear CHRIST to the heart; and form him there *the only hope of glory.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have here a most gracious account of divine love; and a most melancholy account of human ingratitude. There is much of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and his gospel in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! beg with me for grace from GOD the HOLY GHOST, that we may both follow up his merciful design in giving the Church this precious Chapter, and behold the love of GOD the FATHER to his dear SON! See how GOD's own son, when appointed before all worlds, to be CHRIST, the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD, for salvation to his body the Church; was beloved in the divine mind in this gracious character! Hence he called him out of the Egypt of this world. Hence, in his divine counsels, he set him up, not in open flesh from the beginning, but subsisting secretly in the mediatorial settlements of eternity. And when the fulness of time was come, he came forth for the salvation of his people. And in all the events of his mysterious life, ministry, and death; we may say concerning him, as the Apostle did in his devout prayer; *of a truth LORD, against thine holy child JESUS, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people Israel, were gathered together; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* And may we not add from the same

authority, in all the works and sufferings of JESUS; *thine hand did lead him, and thy right arm did strengthen him.* Yea, LORD, the Mediator, in all his soul travail, did cast himself upon thee; and thou didst manifest that he was the very CHRIST, in making the pleasure of JEHOVAH *to prosper in his hand!*

And now, LORD, for his sake, look upon the whole Church, and love them as *thou hast loved him.* Teach them, LORD! to go, taking all thy little ones by their arms. And though they know not the LORD, as the LORD ROPHE, that healeth them, yet draw them with *the cords of a man*, yea, with *the bands of love*; and fulfil thy gracious promise to our glorious Head, in making all his people willing *in the day of thy power.* And though thy people are bent to backsliding, and their heart is prone to wander, yet, Holy FATHER! how canst thou give them up? How canst thou make them as *Admah*, or *Zeboim*; while the One, Holy Man, whose name is Wonderful, is in the Sodom of this our World, to save his people from their sins? Hath he not brought in an everlasting righteousness, with which thou hast declared thyself well pleased. And is not this the very righteousness in which thou beholdest thy People? Oh! most gracious GOD and FATHER! we would look up to thee, in, and through the blessed SON of thy love, and say in the language of thy Church: *behold, O GOD, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed! Hear LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people; for Judah yet ruleth with GOD and is faithful with the saints!*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The subject contained in this Chapter hath respect to Ephraim Judah and Jacob: in it there is a mixture of reproof and commendation.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and behold how GOD honored the Patriarch Jacob, a thousand years after his ashes had been mouldering in the dust! Behold what praise the LORD bestowed upon his servant's gallant faith; and learn from hence, how costly such sacrifices are

in his sight, when coming up before him in his dear SON'S name. Oh! that you and I may learn herefrom to wrestle with GOD in prayer; that like the Patriarch, we may have strength in the same source, and have power with GOD to prevail.

But, Reader! while looking at Jacob, let us not overlook Jacob's LORD. It is JESUS, that as a prince and a Saviour hath power with JEHOVAH, and hath prevailed. By his own righteousness, and by the incense of his merits and atoning blood, he comes off victorious, and must prevail FATHER! I will! is the language of our LORD. And while his pleadings are all for his redeemed, what is there then can be withheld, to the all powerful, all prevailing intercessions of his priesthood? Precious LORD JESUS! give me to see thee in thy daily office; now thou art entered into the presence of GOD for thy people. Thou hast indeed, like the Patriarch Jacob, thy type, served for thy wife, as he did for his; and dearly indeed purchased thy Church with thy blood. Oh! keep, LORD, thy redeemed, with thy power, and preserve them to thine eternal kingdom, and be thou, the LORD GOD of hosts, our everlasting memorial.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

Ephraim is still under reproof in this Chapter. But grace still triumphs in the LORD's victory for Ephraim, over death, hell, and the grave.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST numberless beauties which this Chapter furnisheth for the most blessed improvements under grace; methinks I would attend to what my LORD hath said concerning his ransom of his people from the power of the grave, as eminently important; and indeed as including all blessings in one. For if JESUS hath indeed in his own glorious person, conquered both sin, and death, and hell! (as that he hath most assuredly,) in that victory all his people are implicated, and interested in all his triumphs. And as under the HOLY GHOST's teachings, every believing soul is led to see the truth of what the LORD hath said in this Chapter; *O Israel, thou hast*

destroyed thyself; it must be blessed indeed to be equally convinced of what the LORD saith, in me is thine help. Look up then my soul, look up Reader, and hear thy Redeemer's well known voice, when he declares that he hath ransomed his people from the power of the grave, and redeemed them from death. And hath he not most completely and most effectually done it, by the assumption of our nature, and in that nature vanquished death by his own death, and subdued the dominion of the grave in arising from the grave in the triumphs of his cross? Hath he not done all this, as the head of his body the Church, and in our nature opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers? He hath paid our ransom with his blood. He hath answered the whole demands of divine justice by his righteousness. He hath shown the satisfaction wrought out, and made to all the FATHER'S perfections. And as it was impossible that the grave should detain such a prisoner; so is it impossible that any of his seed, for whom he hath purchased redemption, should remain in the prison of the grave; for he hath said, because I live, ye shall live also. Hail! thou glorious LORD! thou art indeed the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in thee shall never die. Well may every faithful child of GOD cry out in the triumphant voice of the Apostle, thanks be to GOD who giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the man of GOD closeth his prophecy, in the sweetest and tenderest expressions of the LORD's grace and mercy. Israel is shown his fall by nature; and the richest promises follow of grace.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD for the sweet and precious doctrines contained in this Chapter. May GOD the HOLY GHOST write their full import on the heart both of Writer and Reader. I would pray for grace to see my own state described in the first part of it. Indeed

every child of GOD may truly exclaim, I am the man that hath fallen by my iniquity. The LORD help me therefore to take with me words, even GOD's own words, and come to the throne of grace, in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and find grace, mercy, and peace from Him, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy.

And oh! thou blessed EMMANUEL! speak to my soul, yea, speak to every regenerated soul in those reviving words of thine, *I will heal thy backsliding; I will love thee freely; I will be as the dew unto Israel*

And do thou grant, oh! thou blessed SPIRIT of truth, in thy sweet office of glorifying the LORD JESUS, that through thy gracious influences I may be kept from any more going after my former idols. Yea, give me to see that JESUS is the source of all my strength, hope, and consolations; that in Him is my fruit found, and all my fresh springs are in Him.

Farewell *Hosea!* adieu thou faithful servant of the LORD! Well hast thou ministered to the Church by thy writings in all ages, from thy days to the present hour; and shown in what man's ruin is found, and in whom alone is salvation. And while I bless the Great Head of his Church for thy ministry: my soul desires to go forth in thanksgivings and praises to the LORD GOD, in whom alone thy ministry, or all the ministry of men or angels can be profitable; in that JESUS doth bless, and will bless his holy word by his servants the prophets. Praises be to JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for those blessed writings of inspiration! May the LORD go on to commission them to his glory, who in times past *spake to the Fathers by the Prophets*. But still more would we give praises to GOD, who hath in these last days *spoken to us by his SON*. Oh! thou LORD GOD of the Prophets! everlasting blessings be thine, to whom all the Prophets give witness, that *whosoever believeth in thee, shall have eternal life*. Amen.

JOEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE prophecy of *Joel* is but short; but if it were only from one passage in it, which hath respect to gospel days, and was interpreted by an Apostle with peculiar reference to the open descent of the HOLY GHOST, after the ascension of CHRIST, it would form a precious portion of the spirit of prophecy. *And the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy.*

The name *Joel* is significant; it appears to be a compound of Jah and El; that is, the LORD GOD. We have no account of this Prophet's descent or connection further back than his immediate father. Neither can it be determined with any exactness, the period in which he prophesied. Probably, somewhat about eight hundred years before the coming of CHRIST. But we are much more interested to trace the evident marks of inspiration in Joel's writings, than to be particular as to the time in which he delivered his commission. I only detain the Reader with my usual precaution on entering any and every inspired writing; namely, to be careful to implore that Almighty God that guided the Prophet's pen, to influence every Reader's heart, that since to JESUS *all the Prophets give witness*, we may receive the truth in the love of it, and *the truth may make us free*. May the LORD GOD of the Prophets thus graciously do both by Writer and Reader in the present record now opening before us, *to make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophecy begins with an account of a dreadful affliction to be accomplished on Judea. The Prophet exhorts the people to repentance, and appointeth a fast.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark in the instance of this Prophet to what all the other Prophets of GOD bear equal testimony; the process of grace in all ages is the same. Sin brings forth sorrow, and godly sorrow through grace leads to CHRIST for salvation. From the first transgressor in the garden of Eden, to the last fallen son or daughter of Adam to the end of the world, divine teachings invariably produce the same effect. The fathers to the children may therefore make known the LORD's truth, and the LORD's praise. Reader! it is most blessed to see, and yet more blessed to experience, our own personal interest in those divine teachings. *I the LORD teacheth thee to profit*, may be discerned and read by every enlightened eye as the title page of the whole of inspiration. And when, in the corrections and visitations of the LORD, by the LORD's great army, we plainly discover the LORD's hand; when in the locusts and palmer worms of the earth, we both hear the rod and who hath appointed it; when the fatherly reproofs of a gracious GOD in CHRIST are sanctified to bring the heart to CHRIST; oh! how blessed are the awakening judgments of our GOD, in rousing his people from the sottish stupidity and indolence in which the world and its pursuits have intoxicated the soul, and calling home the heart to JESUS and his salvation. LORD! I pray thee put a cry in every heart of thy redeemed! Especially stir up the ministers of my GOD in the present awful hour of Zion's languishing, to cry aloud and spare not, for the LORD's deliverance of his people. Oh! for the LORD to be very jealous for his Zion, and make her yet the praise and perfection of the whole earth. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The same subject is continued in this Chapter as in the former, the dreadful day of the LORD's judgments is solemnly described. But the close of the Chapter comes in with the sweetest promises of blessing in the out-pouring of the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over this most striking Chapter, and looking up for the fulfillment of the sweet promise at the close of it, in our own personal interest beg that we may indeed, and in truth, realize and enjoy the precious blessings there contained. Let us observe what is here said, then look to the Gospel, and mark the full confirmation of it; and then, as souls convinced of divine truth, ponder well the sacred contents, and see to it that we neither of us fail of this grace of GOD.

Behold how solemn and how sure the great day of GOD is proclaimed. There is, there must be a day coming, in which all these alarming judgments, which the former part of this Chapter relates in figure, will be manifested in reality! Oh! for grace to sanctify the solemn truths in our houses, and families! Ye ministers of my GOD! do ye not find cause, in the present awful hour, when the LORD's judgments are in the earth, to blow the trumpet in our British Zion, and to sound an alarm in GOD's holy mountain! Yea! do ye not weep between the porch and the altar, and bear testimony to the truths of your LORD in an holy jealousy and zeal for his honor; crying out with one of old; mine eyes run down with water because men keep not thy law! Ye fathers and mothers of the rising generation! will ye not gather your little ones, and present yourselves with the very infants that hang at the breast before the LORD, to implore the LORD's mercy in the present impending evils, that the LORD may be jealous for his land, and pity his people. And oh! ye humble followers of the LORD JESUS, on whom this spirit of grace hath been poured out, the sure token of JESUS love, and your interest in him! See to it, that ye manifest a spirit of grace and supplication, hath been given you, and is continually in your daily walk, by besieging the throne with earnest cries and prayers, that will take no denial for Zion in her

present alarming state of languishing. Go, my brethren, go into the very retirings of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, seeing that you have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS; and give him no rest nor peace, until he establish and make Jerusalem praise in the earth. Oh! for the HOLY GHOST, in his infinite mercy, to pour out of his sevenfold gifts, in a copious fulness, upon all the LORD's heritage, now JESUS is returned to glory, that all the redeemed may be earnest at the throne, until there shall be *a deliverance in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, as the LORD hath said, and in this remnant whom the LORD shall call.* Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this chapter, which closeth the prophecy of Joel, there is contained special blessings to the Church, in the latter day dispensation, and an account to be taken with the enemies of Zion.

REFLECTIONS

READER! every part of GOD's word comes in to support the blessed but solemn prophecies contained in this Chapter; *when the LORD shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe*, he will come no less to take out of his kingdom *all things that offend*. That day will burn as an oven, when all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly will be as stubble, and consumed both root and branch. But to the redeemed, JESUS will arise as *the sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings*.

My unawakened brother, in our common fallen nature (if peradventure this Commentary should come within your observation) will you suffer me to ask, have you ever duly pondered these things? Have you solemnly thought, equal to the importance of the subject, what you will do, or say, when the LORD shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem? If, in that dreadful day of GOD, the heavens and the earth shall shake, can the unregenerated, unpardoned sinner, hope to stand in confidence? Is it not important to ask after the way of safety, and to enquire how to escape the

wrath to come? *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

Ye people of the LORD! Ye that are followers of JESUS in the regeneration; take to yourselves the sweet promises and rich consolations of this most blessed scripture. Your JESUS is coming, and will come to save you. Hear what he saith, and take to yourselves the full comfort of it. *You shall know, JESUS saith, that I am the LORD your GOD, dwelling in Zion!* You shall enjoy his presence, hear his voice, sit with him on his throne. Jerusalem shall then be holy, and be so forever. Then no more strangers shall pass through. No more the Canaanite shall be in the land. No longer the remains of indwelling corruption shall vex the soul; nor the temptations of Satan, or the persecutors of the world afflict. JESUS will have taken away all the remains, and have cleansed all the blood of his people that had not been cleansed. And He will be their joy, their hope, their glory, their portion forever! Amen.

Farewell *Joel!* servant of our gracious GOD! farewell until that blessed day when thou, and all the LORD's heritage, come to enjoy the fulfillment of thy prophecies, and enjoy them forever. Thanks for thy ministry, in the short, but precious gospel truths thou hast from thy master, the LORD GOD of the Prophets, here given us. It is thine honor thus to have been employed, while it is the Church's happiness, to be thus ministered unto. But, blessed forever, blessed be the LORD who hath sent thee with his message! Precious JESUS! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, grace to improve by thy servant's labors; that that blessedness may be in the lot of both, who *hear and keep the words of our GOD*, as the time for the accomplishment draweth nearer. Amen.

AMOS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE Prophet *Amos* hath furnished the Church with a more copious prophecy than that of *Joel*, but the purport of his writings is much to the same amount.

The name *Amos*, which signifies *Burthen*; or as some render it, *loading* or *weighty*, from *Omas*; was not unsuitable to the importance of *Amos's* writings, which are certainly very weighty and powerful. It is supposed that he was of *Tekoah* in *Judah*, about four leagues from *Jerusalem*: but there is no certainty on this point. And it is supposed that his ministry was immediately after that of *Joel*. We have the reign indeed in which it took place; but unless we had the very period of the earthquake which he speaks of in the first opening of his prophecy, it is not very easy to ascertain the exact time. Neither is it essential in a work of this kind. The subject matter of his prophecy, and the evident marks of inspiration with which the Book itself is accompanied, become points of much greater importance to regard. The chief scope of *Amos*, in those Chapters, is directed to the reproof of the nations at large, and Israel in particular. He speaks directly of judgments that were hanging over the head of both, and from the solemn prospect calls upon them to turn to the Lord. But what I more earnestly desire the Reader to remark with me is, the sweet close of his prophecy, in the bright prospect of the coming of the LORD JESUS to his kingdom. Here *Amos* seems to rise to a greater degree of beauty and fulness in his prophecy; and as the other Prophets had done, under various figures; in representing the Mediator's advent and reign; so *Amos* assures Israel, that the Lord would plant them in their own land, and they should never more be plucked up or destroyed. The Lord the SPIRIT, be both with the Writer and Reader of this Commentary, through the whole of *Amos's* prophecy, that *we* may find him, like all his coteremporaries, bearing testimony to JESUS, and to the word of his grace, that to

him give all the Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. Amen.

Chapter 1

SUMMARY

In this first Chapter, Amos in the Lord's name is calling to account the several nations in the neighborhood of Israel, and rousing them to the apprehension of divine judgments.

Reflections

READER! we shall lose the beauty of this solemn scripture, and overlook the interests we ourselves have in it, if we do not behold the Lord of hosts thus calling the nations to account for their hatred to Christ and his people! It is all on Christ's account that their hatred began. In all ages of the Church, this bitterness of the carnal hath gone forth against the Lord's heritage and chosen. It began in the heart of *Cain*, against *Abel*, wholly on this account: *Ishmael* mocked *Isaac*; *Esau* hated *Jacob*: and thus the seed of the Serpent have shewn their deadly teeth against the seed of the Woman, and his offspring. What an awful consideration it is! And what very awful consequences are involved in it! Reader! in the absence of higher evidences, this is no small one, to bring comfort to a child of God; I mean his love to Zion. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem*, (said one of old) *let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Reader! can you adopt this language? Is Jesus and his Church; Jesus and his members, dear to you? If so, take with you the comfortable assurance of the beloved Apostle in his testimony of the divine life, and say with the same confidence as he said; *we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren!*

Chapter 2

SUMMARY

The same subject is continued here as occupied the former Chapter. Moab is first reckoned with, and then Judah, and Israel.

Reflections

Reader! think what a sad representation is made in this Chapter of human transgression. Not only the nations of the earth, but the Lord's people, are involved in the same rebellion against God. It is not *Moab* alone, but *Judah* and *Israel* also. *Had it been an open enemy* that had done the Lord such dishonor, *then it might have been borne*. But the expostulation is cutting indeed, when it is said, *it was even thou my companion, and mine own familiar friend!* Alas! who among the redeemed of the Lord, that can stand forth and plead not guilty to the charge.

Precious Lord Jesus! in every place, and in every view, how sweet and consolatory doth thy great and gracious undertaking come home to my heart! And dost thou, dearest Lord, say, behold! *lam pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves!* Oh! thou Lamb of God! thou hast indeed been pressed for thy people, when as the mighty burden-bearer of thy Church, thou didst bear all our sins in thine own body on the tree, when thou didst die, the just for the un-just, to bring us unto God! Oh! blessed Lord! still vouchsafe to bear our souls *up* above all sin and sorrow, trial and temptation; work in us true godly sorrow for those sins which brought thee to the cross; and do thou, gracious Lord, rescue us from the power and dominion of sin, and the guilt and punishment of it; and *sanctify our whole souls, and bodies, and spirits, to the day of tiny coming.* Amen.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

The subject is continued through this Chapter, which formed a part in the conclusion of the former. Israel is still before the judgment seat, and the Lord is expostulating with his people.

Reflections

READER! while you and I pause over a subject of so truly humbling a nature as this Chapter affords, in the contemplation of the Church's backsliding and rebellion against God; and while from a conscious sense of the part we all bear in the great aggregate of human transgression, we take to ourselves, as we justly ought to do, shame and confusion of face; let us learn to form a proper distinction between the fatherly corrections of the Lord over his children, and the tremendous judgments manifested to his enemies. What the Lord himself hath here said, is enough to lead our hearts to form a right estimate of all his corrections. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* The very scripture, in the moment of threatened correction, carries with it in its bosom a full testimony that that correction is not to destroy but to reform. Hence Reader! let us learn, that the Lord's design is to bring the heart home, not to harden, but to soften; to purge from sin, not to leave the soul in sin; to bring *to* Jesus, not to lead *front* Jesus. A gracious and a blessed end is in every dispensation. And most blessed it is when the poor sinner, led by grace, is brought back with the awakened cry of the soul; *Lord! take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.* Blessed Jesus! how unceasing our need of thee; and how precious thy salvation! Oh! for grace, to have our souls kept from sin, and our souls washed from sin, in thy blood!

Chapter 4

SUMMARY

The Lord is still pleading with Israel, and most solemn pleading it is. The Lord sheweth also, how ineffectual hitherto his punishments to reform had proved.

Reflections

READER! the continuance of the Lord's expostulations with his ancient Church, Chapter after Chapter, will not fail I hope, to operate both upon your heart and mine, to the same conclusion as it did in the Apostle's mind; that sin will then indeed appear to be sin, when by the holiness of the commandment it is discovered to be exceeding sinful. Depend upon it, until by the sovereign grace of God in the heart, the proper nature and malignity of sin is brought home in its proper colors, the children of God, as well as others, have but too slight views of sin. It is only when God the Holy Ghost *lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, that the sinner lays low in the dust before God, and never presumes to open his mouth any more in a way of justification, or in softening transgression. And the same solemn considerations will serve to teach, why it is among the Lord's redeemed that the nations of sin, from the remains of indwelling corruption, do sometimes rise up with such violence a-fresh, and distress so exceedingly the soul. It is to shew the believer, after all his attainments, what a poor creature he is in himself; and what lie would be if not kept by the Almighty rower of God, through faith unto salvation. And what can tend to endear Jesus equal to a daily, hourly sense of our need of him? What can so effectually operate, under the Lord's grace, to hide pride from our eyes, and to keep open a perpetual spring of humbleness, and faith, and godly sorrow for sin; as such motions from within, that we are still in the body? Precious Lord Jesus! be thou increasingly precious every hour, and then those workings of a corrupt nature, kept under and restrained by thee, will be overruled to thy glory, and our soul's welfare. Blessed be that glorious covenant, which shews the ruin, and brings the remedy! Though sin hath reigned, and doth reign, unto death; yet shall *grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

We have here the same subject continued, and in which the Lord is taking up a lamentation for the land of Israel. The close of the Chapter brings forward an additional charge against them for hypocritical worship.

Reflections

As we read this Chapter, and as we close it, we may cry out with the Psalmist, *I will sing of mercy and judgment*; and direct our song unto the Lord; *to thee, O Lord, will I sing*. It is truly blessed to observe, how in the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy; and even while the Lord is chastening his people for their sins, he is coming forth to their deliverance in his grace. And it is doubly blessed when the cause is discovered; namely, his own free, rich, and sovereign love, and his covenant engagements in Christ. And though he punisheth them for their sins, and as it is said in scripture, *takest vengeance of their inventions*, yet he regardeth their persons, and forgiveth their iniquities. And it is still more blessed, when the soul of a poor self-condemned sinner is enabled to follow up the precious truth in the heart-felt enjoyment of his own soul. It is founded in covenant love and faithfulness. It is secured in the relationship in which the Great Redeemer hath put himself to his people. It is confirmed in the ransom and full equivalent paid by their Almighty Surety for the sins of his people; and God the Spirit sets to his seat the firm and unquestionable truth. Thus bringing with it all the testimonies of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the poor sinner, when returning by grace unto the Lord, finds confidence ill conning, and *rejoices in hope of the glory of God*'

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

Here is a cry to the Church. The wanton state of professors described; and the Lord's determination to punish.

Reflections

I CANNOT pass away from this solemn Chapter, without first desiring the Reader to ponder well the sacred contents of it, and learn from it how to form a just estimate of what is still going on in life, in the different characters, *between him that feareth the Lord, and him that feareth him not.*

The carnal world, in this our *British Zion*, are, as Amos described the Zion of old, in the time of his ministry. A graceless mind, meeting with what *is* called the good things of life, have their whole hearts, and families, and houses, swallowed up in those sensual enjoyments. No prayer in their family; no grace in themselves; their children, if they have any, their servants all around them, breathe, and live, and move, in the same corrupt atmosphere. They put far away the evil day as a day of dread and horror. *They chant to the sound of the viol;* but know nothing of the melody of the gospel. *They invent to themselves instruments of music;* but are ignorant of the joy of the soul. *They send forth their little ones to the dance;* but teach them nothing of the afflictions of Jesus! But, oh! how sad the close of their account. *They spend their day* (saith Job,) *in wealth,* or (as the margin of the Bible hath it) *mirth and in a moment go down to the grave!* Reader! shall not you and I say, in the language of the dying Patriarch, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united!*

On the other hand, look at the people of Cod, and you will discover, that in proportion to the attainments under grace they have acquired in the school of Jesus, so are their exercises and conflicts. . *I think* (said Paul) *that God hat/n set forth us, the Apostles, last as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place.* And these were men of whom the world was not worthy. Reader! with whom is your choice? Can you with Moses, and from the same blessed principle of faith as he had, take up his resolution, and *choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?* Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of such a state even now: when like him, *we esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the*

treasures of Egypt. And oh! the blessedness that will follow, when mortality is swallowed up in glory!

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet is going on in this Chapter, in the Lord's name, to preach to the people of their sins, when he is interrupted by Amaziah the priest, who informs the king against him. Amos continues faithful and denounceth judgment upon Amaziah.

Reflections

I take occasion, from the noble conduct of the Prophet in this Chapter, in opposing the priest of Bethel, to remark to the Reader and mine own heart no less at the same time, how truly blessed it must be, thus to defend the truths of God, whenever or by whomsoever they are opposed. Cowardice in a minister of God is worse than in the soldier of an earthly prince; for the deserting the cause of this world is but for a day, but running from the Redeemer's standard affects a whole eternity. Had the Prophet been a time-serving man, no doubt the charge of *Amaziah* would have alarmed him, and soon bought him over. But as his study was to approve himself to God, he felt that holy indignation, which not only repelled the attack, but gave him an honest boldness to reprove in his Lord's name. And never was there a day in the Church of God, when a modest firmness became more necessary than the present. Lord! give thy servants, whom, like *Amos*, thou hast called to the work, grace, like *Amos*, earnestly *to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*. Let an holy zeal make them earnest to win souls, and to consider that faith worth contending for, which gives God all the glory of salvation, and exalts the Lord Jesus as the source and fountain of all spiritual life, in grace here and glory to all eternity. And do thou, Lord, carry on thy work in their heart, and the hearts of thy people, that both may be living under the rich anointings of God the Holy Ghost! Amen.

Chapter 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here again in this Chapter instructing by figure. By a basket of summer-fruit is shown the state of Israel. The Chapter closeth with the threatenings of famine.

Reflections

READER! while we read the awful threatenings of the Lord to Israel of old, of turning the songs of the temple into howlings, and inducing a famine of the word of the Lord, more to be dreaded than all the famine of bread and water; while we trace the cause in Israel's despising the Lord's sabbaths, is it possible but we must tremble, lest the crying sins of our *British* Israel should bring on the same judgments, and from the same causes? Was there ever a day like the present, when the Lord's days were so profaned, or the pure and holy religion of the Lord Jesus so little regarded? Blessed Lord! look in mercy upon our Zion, and take thine own cause into thine own Almighty hand! Pour out upon the remnant of thy people that are left, in the midst of the present adulterous and sinful generation, a *spirit of grace and a spirit of supplication* Enable them to Come with weeping, and with earnest cries for the Lord's graciousness to be preserved to our land. And do thou Lord as thou hast said, and let that sweet promise be now fulfilled, which is now so much needed. *Then will I turn to the people* (thou hast said) *a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent; and then will I take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain!*

Chapter 9

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with solemn threatenings and concludes with gracious promises. The reference to Gospel days is clearly proved

from the application made to this scripture in the Acts of the Apostles, under the Apostle's preaching.

Reflections

READER! now we have gone through the writings of this highly taught Prophet, let us pause, and gather into one view the whole purport and scope of his ministerial labours in this department, to which God the Holy Ghost commissioned him. We find him, like most of his brethren, in the college of the Prophets, opening his prophecy with marking the desolate state of the Church in the day of his ministry. With what earnestness and zeal do we behold him calling upon Israel to turn to the Lord! How strong and full the figures he makes use of, to set forth the alarming situation in which Zion lay before the Lord. He reproves indeed all the nations around, and fully shews the Lord's determination to arise to their punishment. But it is Israel and Judah more immediately, whom the Prophet mourns over for their transgressions and sins. Here the Prophet finds cause for the exercise of sorrow and affliction, while calling upon them to turn from their iniquities, and to seek the favour and loving-kindness of the Lord. But, Reader! do not forget to connect with the whole, and to gather into one point of view the close of *Amos*: sermons. His last Chapter in the end of it is all gospel. Jesus and his salvation, the spiritual David of his people, is here set forth, SG truly, lovely, gracious, and interesting, that it is impossible, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, not to see, that to this one object, and to this alone, the whole of the Prophet's ministry was directed. All that *Amos* said before, and all the alarms he rang to the sinners in Zion, all his labours were to introduce the glories of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give the Church the gracious promises, how the Lord would recover his people, and manifest his grace, notwithstanding all their undeservings. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader grace, to gather the many blessed instructions intended to the Church by this prophecy. Farewell! faithful servant of the Lord! may all that are called to the ministry of the word find equal strength to resist all the *Amaziah*s' which oppose them. Blessed Lord Jesus! raise up many an *Amos* in the present day, to hold forth to thy Church and people the truth; and never fail to publish *the whole counsel of God*. Amen.

OBADIAH

General observations.

Obadiah might be an eminent servant in the Church of the Lord in his sermons, and preaching, and ministry: but in his writings he is very short. But certainly, short as it is, for it contains only a single Chapter, it carries with it the mark of divine inspiration.

The name of *Obadiah* is not without meaning. It signifies a *laborer of the Lord*. There are several of this name in scripture. There is an *Obadiah* mentioned in 1 Chron. 3:21. and another the grandson of *Uzzi*, a chief man in his day with his brethren, 1 Chron. 7:3. One also, a valiant man in David's army. 1 Chron. 12:9. But neither of these was our Prophet. As he opens his prophecy without any account of himself, it is not very easy to determine, either his connection or the precise time of his labours. Some have thought that he was the same *Obadiah* that was a steward in *Ahab's* family, see 1 Kings xviii. 3. But if so, it is astonishing that the whole scope of his prophecy should have been directed about *Edom*, and not *Israel*.

It will be rendered profitable to the Writer of this Commentary, and to the Reader of it, if God the Holy Ghost shall be graciously pleased to lead the hearts of both to any discovery of the Lord Jesus in *Obadiah's* writings. For this will be a further confirmation of that blessed scripture, which saith, that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*. Rev. xix. 10. Reader let us beg the Lord God of the Prophets, so to bless our present attention to this man's labours, that they may be rendered profitable to our hearts, *through the faith that is in Christ Jesus*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet hath a vision concerning the children of Esau. As sworn foe to Christ, Esau's destruction must follow. Obadiah is here setting it forth. Towards the end of the Chapter there are many gracious promises to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! we have a very solemn subject in this short but striking prophecy. When we consider the nearness of natural alliance between Jacob and Esau, and behold the bitterness of Edom to his brother, and that from generation to generation; when we look at the source, and trace it to its end; when we call to mind that this is the enmity of nature to grace, the son of the bond-woman to the free; when we contemplate what scripture declares, that there never can, nor ever will be an union between them, in time or to all eternity; bow truly solemn, and how tremendously' awful doth the whole appear!

Reader! let us seek relief from a subject so abundantly distressing, tn the sweet assurances given to Israel, that *upon mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness*. Blessed Lord Jesus! thou art indeed the holiness, and thou art the salvation of thy people. We thank thee, O Lord, for this sweet morsel of scripture prophecy; pointing, as all prophecy doth, to thee, *to whom give all the Prophets witness*. And oh! Lord, let it be blessed to all thy Church, that all of thine who read it, may through thy Spirit's teaching, be enabled to set to their seal that *GOD is true*. Farewell, *Obadiah*, faithful hast thou been in thy testimony. Short as it is, it is sweet. May God the HOLY GHOST be adored for thy ministry, and the ministry of all his servants who have written to us the word of GOD. Give us grace, O Lord, *to follow their faith, considering the end of their conversation, JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Amen.*

JONAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE now enter upon the writings of Jonah, the *fifth* of the minor Prophets, so called from the lesser extent of their sermons. He is called *Jonah* the son of *Amittai*, both which names are significant, as most of the Hebrew names are: *Jonah* signifying a *dove*, and *Amittai*, *truth*. His writings have been called by some *sepher* Jonah, that is, the book of Jonah. And indeed the book itself is more historical than prophetical; for, excepting one fragment in it, in which Jonah cried and said, *yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown*, Chapter 3:4. there is nothing of prophecy in it. I rather venture to consider *Jonah* himself as an eminent type of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and therefore his writings became very sweet, as the record of his typical character.

The time of *Jonah's* ministry is not so accurately stated as to mark it with exact precision. Of himself we have a full account, when he lived and where he sprung from, 2 Kings 14:25. And this refutes the account of those in our LORD's days, who declared that no Prophet arose out of Galilee, for *Gath-hepher* is well known as a town in *Zebulun* of *Galilee*, John 7:52. It also makes *Jonah's* ministry to be more ancient than either of the Prophets; *Hosea*, *Isaiah*, *Joel*, or *Amos*, being during the reigns of *Joash* and *Jeroboam*. But his ministry being directed to *Nineveh*, and not to *Israel*, makes it in some measure unconnected with the general thread of the Church's history.

The authority of *Jonah* as a Prophet, and of those his writings, can need no other than what the LORD JESUS himself hath given of both, Matthew 12:39-41. And in respect to our improvement of this part of scripture, I should hope, that independent of the humbling lesson we here learn in *Jonah's* character, of attempting to flee from the presence of the LORD, as well as his infirmity of temper on the withering of the gourd; the views such things give us of poor fallen

nature in its highest characters, will be always profitable. And no less at the same time, the blessed representations here made of divine goodness, patience, and long-suffering towards his servant's frailties; I say, independent of these things; which are highly improving; if we read this book, as setting forth Jonah the type of the ever blessed JESUS, a large scope of the sweetest and richest improvements will, under the LORD's teaching, arise out of it. May that Almighty LORD of his Church and people, who hath given us this scripture, give both Writer and Reader grace also to the wise understanding of it, that as it is *given by inspiration, so it may be profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Jonah receives a call from the LORD to go to Nineveh. He fleeth to Tarshish. A storm overtakes the ship in which Jonah is embarked. At his request the mariners throw him into the sea, and he is swallowed by a fish.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! improving as the history of Jonah may be found in numberless instances, I cannot, I dare not for a moment lose sight of thee, while beholding thy type in the wonderful account here given, and which so strikingly sets forth thy glorious person, as three days and three nights *in the heart of the earth*. If Jonah was the only sign given in the days of thy flesh, to an evil and adulterous generation, let my, soul bless the LORD for the sweet testimony this brings with it, to thy sovereign grace and salvation. Yes!, dearest LORD! Jonah did resemble thee, when delivered to the raging sea for the salvation of the people. Thou didst indeed bear the overwhelming torrents of thy sufferings, when the vials of justice were poured out upon thy devoted head, and when thou didst tread the wine-presses, of thy FATHER's wrath alone. And although in thy holy nature there was no shadow of guile; and never wert thou

otherwise from one eternity to another than the unceasing object of thy FATHER'S love; yet, as the sinner's surety, like Jonah, thou didst stand the only cause of the dreadful storm; and all the cataracts of tempest came in upon thy soul, until thou wert *sorrowful even unto death, sore amazed, and very heavy*. And hence those cries of soul; *I sink in deep water where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me*. Blessed LORD JESUS! may my soul frequently meditate on thee in this endearment of character! And as often as I read of Jonah's being cast forth, and the tempest of the sea ceasing in consequence, may I feel my soul refreshed in the contemplation; JESUS I will say was made this and infinitely more for me, that I might be made *the righteousness of GOD in him!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here the prayer which Jonah offered up to the LORD in his dreadful distress. The LORD's gracious answer also in his deliverance.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over this wonderful subject, and behold the miracle here related with fixed attention and regard. Many are the blessed instructions, simply as an history of the LORD's dealings with his people, which it holds forth; and which, under the HOLY GHOST's teachings, may and will be profitable. Surely it is consolatory to a deserted soul, to behold in this instance, that his case is not singular. The LORD may, and the LORD will correct the backslidings of his Children. They may during the sharp exercises of correction, fear, that they are cast out of the LORD's sight. But in the midst of all they still possess precious testimonies, could they but see them, that the union with JESUS is still the same, and cannot be lost. Else how would they resolve still to look to the holy temple? Else how would they groan under a sense of sin, and earnestly pant for a deliverance from it. Evidently Jonah had the same views of GOD'S rich mercy in CHRIST as ever; and was alive to proclaim the LORD's honor while dishonoring himself. Reader! make application

of these things to your own case and circumstances, and those of the Church at large, and the improvement will be blessed.

But chiefly, dearest JESUS, and above all other considerations in the history of Jonah, may our souls be led to behold in him thy type. And oh for grace to bless thee, and adore thine holy name, that in an age so remote and distant, the great event of thy detention in the heart of the earth, for the salvation of thy people, should have been so wonderfully set forth! Cause the heart both of the Reader and Writer to be often meditating on Jonah's history, and there in figure behold by faith the wonderful mystery of thy humiliation, when for us and our salvation, thou didst condescend to lay in the grave until the morning of thy glorious resurrection! Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have here the LORD again calling Jonah to the service of preaching to the men of Nineveh. The Prophet executeth the commission. And this Chapter records the effect.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark with me the wonderful properties of grace, both in the heart of the Prophet and of the people. See the change in *Jonah!* behold the change in the *Ninevites*. What cannot GOD accomplish, when by the sovereign act of his love he inclines the sinner's heart, and turns the whole tide of the affections back again.

But here, Reader, as in all other instances, do not forget to behold the blessed cause in the provision made for Prophet, Priest, and People, in the person, and by the one all-sufficient sacrifice, of *the LAMB slain before the foundation of the world*. To this, and this alone, GOD hath respect in all his dispensations, both in providence and grace. It is for JESU'S sake sin is pardoned, and the sinner forgiven and received into favor. CHRIST is both the mercy seat, and propitiation; and we have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have here a sad view of the mind of Jonah; the LORD's grace to Nineveh excites the Prophet's displeasure. he is reproved by the LORD under the figure of a gourd.

REFLECTIONS

HERE, Reader, let us pause as we finish the history of Jonah, and gather together into one view the wonderful subject, as it relates to the LORD's servant, and as it relates to the LORD himself, in his abundant grace manifested to such a wayward and rebellious frame of mind. We shall read the account of Jonah's preaching to Nineveh, and his displeasure at the LORD's mercy to little purpose, if we do not learn from the whole to bring the subject home to our own hearts, and under divine teaching discover that the seeds of the same sins, as we find in the *Ninevites*, and the Prophet, are in our nature also. *What* (saith the Prophet) *are we better than they?* No! (saith he) *in no wise. For we have before concluded all under sin.* And to whom, or from what cause do we ascribe the whole of salvation, but to JESUS and his wonderful undertaking in our nature? Chiefly let the people of GOD from this history learn, what man in his highest attainments is, if for one moment left to himself. Though like *Jonah* we have cried from the deep of affliction, when the wormwood and the gall of sin hath been bitterly drank by us; and though from the very belly of hell we have been brought to know the LORD, yet the withering of a gourd will open a-fresh our rebellion, if that thwarting providence, be it what it may, is not sanctified. Precious LORD JESUS! cause both him that writes, and him that reads, to live under the unceasing teachings of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that a spring of humblings and sorrow may be constantly kept open in our souls. LORD, keep from us, as the most dangerous of all evils, every thought of anything and everything in ourselves as righteous; that a sense of the daily workings of corruption, however graciously restrained by thee from breaking out into actual commission, may cause us to go humbly and softly all our day. And above all, dearest LORD, let the daily consciousness of our need of thee, and of thy greatest salvation, make thee daily, yea hourly, more precious to our souls.

Farewell Jonah! I bless my GOD and Saviour for the profitableness I find under his blessed SPIRIT'S teaching of thy ministry. Even the frailties of my LORD's servants, so faithfully recorded in his holy scriptures, afford instruction to my soul. Men of like passions with ourselves, are better suited in my LORD's service than angels of light. But oh! gracious LORD JESUS! what shall I say, or what shall I offer of thankfulness in beholding thy wonderful condescension in causing a *Jonah*, amidst all his unworthiness, to be a lively type of thine own person, when accomplishing the purpose of redemption. Here surely LORD, as in a thousand other instances, *thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor thy ways our ways*. I bow, LORD, to the dust before thee, and thankfully acknowledge, that both in thine unequalled humiliation and exaltation, thou hast a name above every name, and all creation shall confess that thou art LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.

MICAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE Prophet *Micah* comes forward in the Church with no small eminency as a servant of the LORD, from several brilliant observations concerning his LORD and Master. None of the Prophets but *Micah* had the honor of telling the Church the very memorable and honoured spot where CHRIST should be born. Indeed we are highly indebted to him for many blessed testimonies concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which we find like the spangled stars of the firmament, shining here and there in several parts of his prophecy.

The name of this Prophet is striking. Micah signifies poor and humble. He is called the Morasthite; perhaps from a city in the tribe of Judah called Moresa, or as some render it, Mareshah. He was nearly a contemporary with Isaiah, and consequently lived in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings, of Judah. Some have determined the extent of his ministry as a Prophet, to have been near fifty years; but it is more probable that it did not exceed forty years.

The Reader of this Commentary will be much more interested to find in Micah's prophecy the testimony to his inspired office, from his predictions concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, than any circumstantial account of the place of his birth, the connections in his family, or the period when he lived or died. I beg the Reader, therefore, to join my spirit at the mercy-seat, that so much light from heaven may shine in upon the sacred page of the writings of Micah, while we go over it, that we may both find precious testimonies to the truth as it is in JESUS: and find cause also to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for this portion of his divine word, to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet opens his commission with a very sorrowful tale. Israel and Judah are under the LORD's displeasure, and therefore Micah speaks of nothing but desolation.

REFLECTIONS

SOME may not easily discover the LORD JESUS in this scripture. But in the poverty and misery of our fallen nature, GOD the HOLY GHOST is not unfrequently preaching CHRIST. For Reader! suffer me to ask, by what more persuasive and powerful means can the LORD JESUS be recommended to our hearts, than by showing us our misery and ruin out of CHRIST? When you and I are taught feelingly and experimentally what sin is; and that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing; surely it must endear CHRIST, and induce a sense of our want of him. Oh! how much will a soul long for JESUS, when led to see that without him we are lost forever. Hence the Prophet's vision is not confined to *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*; all people, yea, all the earth are called upon to the charge. The LORD grant, Reader, that you and I, in the Prophet's call, may feel interested, so as to impress the necessity and suitableness of the LORD JESUS, and that the HOLY GHOST may bring him home to our hearts, and form him there, *the hope of glory!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with the same melancholy relation as the former. But several sweet views of CHRIST arise here and there as we prosecute the contents; and in the close we have a lovely manifestation of the Redeemer under one of his divine offices.

REFLECTIONS

READER! from the perusal of this truly gospel Chapter, behold the gracious provision made for you, for me, for all that are of the house of Jacob, spiritually considered; the Spirit of the LORD is not straitened, neither the power of the Almighty Breaker diminished! Everything around us, in us, and about us, join the Prophet's cry; *arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest because it is polluted.* Surely then we must desire a better country, that is an heavenly. And blessed be our GOD, there is not only prepared for us a better country, but JESUS, our Almighty Breaker, hath broken up, and gone before, and taken possession of it in our name, that as he is there, we may be also. Precious LORD JESUS, we pray thee break through for thy people all that would oppose our following thee! Break for us all the chains of sin, all the devices of Satan, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And do thou, Almighty LORD, break in us all the remaining power of indwelling corruption, and open our prison frames, and prison doors, and bring us out into the glorious liberty wherewith thou makest thy people free. Then shall we, in thy strength, trample over all the power of the enemy, and be made more than conquerors through thy grace helping us. Yea, we shall then pass through the gate, and go out by it; JESUS *our King is before us, and our LORD on our head.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter is much in the strain of the general tenor of the Prophets, full of reproof mingled with gracious promises. Through the whole of the Chapter we find much of the love of GOD, even in the midst of threatened judgment.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! we thank thee, that amidst all our unworthiness and departures, like Israel, thou hast not withdrawn our sabbaths, nor made the sun to go down upon our Prophets. Still there is in our midst, the blessed word of thy Gospel, the means of

grace, and the cry proclaimed every returning LORD's day; *he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches!* And though in the present hour Zion is plowed as a field, and the mountain of the LORD's house lieth low; yet thou hast said that thou wilt visit thy people in the latter day, and gather them together as the sheep of *Bozrah*. Do, LORD, as thou hast said: and hasten the auspicious hour, when *a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*; for thou hast said, *I the LORD will hasten it in his time.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Here is a Chapter which looks into Gospel days, and is indeed full of blessed promises concerning the Messiah's kingdom, from beginning to end.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not dismiss this precious Chapter, until you have again and again pondered well the contents of it. Think at what distance this blessed prophecy was delivered. Behold the fulfillment of it in the coming of the LORD JESUS. See what positive assurances are given for its complete accomplishment. Then consider the days in which you live; upon whom the ends of the world are come; and then in fervent earnest prayer, get into the very retirings of the LORD, and give him no rest nor peace until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Oh! that the cause of JESUS was more generally and warmly taken up, by those who call themselves his people! Oh! that men were less selfish, and instead of seeking their own, would seek the things of JESUS CHRIST. Reader! let you and I beg of GOD to give us grace to prefer Jerusalem's interest above our chief joy. LORD! I would say, *Do good in this good pleasure unto Zion!* Hasten the blessed hour, when thou wilt establish thine house upon *the tops of the mountains, and cause all nations to flow unto it.* LORD! *cause the law of the glorious gospel to go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem!* Amen.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This is a most blessed Chapter, for the precious contents of which the Church of CHRIST hath found occasion in all ages since possessed of it, and will find occasion to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for it till time shall be no more. We have in it the memorable spot predicted where CHRIST should be born; with assurances of his spiritual government and kingdom, and the gracious marks by which his spiritual Israel should be known!

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! I would leave all other subjects, all other considerations, to follow thee thou LAMB of GOD, wherever I find thee in thy scriptures of truth. And as here in this Chapter thou didst commission thy servant *Micah* to tell the Church, ages before thine incarnation, where thou wouldest be born; at *Bethlehem Ephratah* would my soul meditate the mysterious birth of Him, whose name was, and is, and ever will be, Wonderful! Take wing, my soul, this morning, and fly to the honored spot. A greater light than the ministry of a star, which guided the wise men, will guide thee; for JESUS himself, by his blessed SPIRIT, will go before, and pointing to the place, will say, as in his own blessed words, *this man was born here!* But, oh! Almighty JESUS! even when in sweet meditation at *Bethlehem*, shall I not in devout thought run back into the contemplation of eternity, and call to mind that *thy goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*. Indeed, indeed, my honored LORD, it was before all worlds that thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for their salvation wert thou then the anointed. So that all thou hast done afterwards in time, and all that thou art unceasingly engaged in now in eternity, and will be forever and ever, is on the same blessed design, for the glory of thy FATHER, in the redemption of his and thy chosen. Hail! thou Almighty GOD! Hail! thou Wonderful Man. Thou art, and wilt be, the peace of all thy redeemed, when the whole troops of *Assyrians*, even the whole host of the Church's enemies, shall come into our land. Thou will stand and feed thy flock in the strength of JEHOVAH, in the presence of their foes, and make their cup run over! And thy remnant shall be in

the midst of many people, as a dew, so numerous, so beautiful, so refreshed and comely, from thy comeliness put upon them. And all this, yea, and more than eye, hath seen, or ear heard, or the mind can think, wholly from thyself, and to thyself, and thine own glory; not waiting their cry, or their deservings, but like the sweet influences of heaven in the falling showers, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. LORD! be thou thus according to thy promise, as the dew unto all thine Israel. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This is a beautiful Chapter, inasmuch as it sets forth the graciousness of the LORD in his expostulations with Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what are all the controversies the LORD hath with his people, but on account of their transgression and sin? And how gracious must it be in GOD, still to bear with his people, and not cast them off as their iniquities deserve! And may it not be said, as in this Chapter, so in all ages of the Church, was there ever mercy like that which the LORD hath manifested to his Church? How tenderly doth the LORD call upon the people to become witnesses against themselves, and to his grace and kindness towards them? How did the LORD then, and how doth the LORD now, guard and fence his redeemed from all the *Balaams* and *Balaks* that would destroy them. And what doth the LORD require in return? Surely nothing but what common policy and common honesty would direct, even if thankfulness to the LORD was out of the question. Can we show justice to men, if we keep back and withhold justice to GOD? Convinced as we must be, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, can be no acceptable service to the LORD; shall we not delight to offer that which is? And if infinite love, and infinite grace hath provided a full ransom for sin in the blood of CHRIST, shall we not in justice confess, that without it we are lost forever? If JEHOVAH hath set forth JESUS as the first born in the womb of mercy, yea, mercy itself in all the fulness of it, shall we not love JESUS for

his great salvation, and GOD the FATHER for giving it? And if all that is required of a poor sinner, that is so poor and insolvent that he hath nothing to bring, is, to do this justice, and love this JESUS, and to walk thus humbly with his GOD; can there be terms more gracious, more blessed, and condescending? LORD! give both to Reader and Writer this grace, that we may hear the LORD's voice thus crying to the city, and under divine wisdom, *see thy name*, and rejoice in thy salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet laments his solitary situation as a child of GOD. He takes comfort in the view of his rich consolation in the LORD. He closeth the Chapter in words of admiration at the free and gracious mercy of GOD, in Covenant love.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us beg for grace to follow the Prophet's example, and in times of general corruption, as the present, instead of lamenting that we are constrained to dwell with *Mesech*, and to have our habitation among the tents of *Kedar*; make these situations profitable by accepting them as they are really meant, to compel our hearts to leave the society of unfaithful and false men, for the sweet communion of our faithful and true GOD. Help me, thou dear EMMANUEL, to be looking unto thee, and waiting for thee, as the LORD GOD of my salvation! Take, my soul, the same assurance as the Prophet did, for sore thou hast equal cause, since now redemption work is finished, and complete; and say, as he did, *My GOD will hear me*. Yes! if thou canst really and truly call JESUS *thy GOD*; surely thou canst with confidence really and truly say, *my GOD will hear me*. And though the enemy may for the moment rejoice; though thou mayest for the hour walk in darkness; yet still, amidst all, thou knowest thy GOD is *Mine everlasting light, and thy GOD thy glory!* And, my soul! let not the Prophet exceed thee, either in admiration, or in love, at beholding the peerless grace of a covenant GOD in CHRIST. Hath not the LORD in thine instance, as in his, remembered

his faithfulness and truth to a thousand generations; and for JESUS sake pardoned thy sins, and cast them into the depths of the sea of JESUS blood! Hail thou blessed LORD! still shall that song swell in every note, and be the last on the trembling lips of time, and the first and last through all the periods of eternity; *to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us Kings and priests to GOD and his FATHER, be glory for ever. Amen.*

Farewell Micah! farewell faithful servant of thy GOD! I bless the LORD for having sent thee into his service, and having commissioned thee to the delivery of so many precious things as are contained in this prophecy; and if there were no other, for that blessed one concerning my LORD's place of nativity. Surely thy GOD meant that this part of thy prophetic writings should be peculiarly directed to counteract the dreadful heresy of the last days, concerning the GOD head of my LORD. For how could any Being, less than an eternal Being, have his goings forth from everlasting! Thanks be to GOD for the services of his Prophets! Blessed, blessed for ever be JEHOVAH for the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

NAHUM

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

NAHUM is placed as the *seventh* of the *twelve* minor Prophets, in his prophecy or vision, as his writings are called, and as it stands in the sacred canon. His name in the original signifies *consolation*; from *Nachah* to guide. He is called the *Elkoshite*; probably a native of *Elkoshai* in Galilee; though some have thought that his father's name was *Elkoshai*. The particular period of his ministry is not exactly ascertained; though in the margin of our Bibles the translators have made it about seven hundred and thirteen years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The burden of his prophecy seems to be principally directed to *Nineveh*; but in reality the great design of his labour was intended for the spiritual consolation of the Church. I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with an account gathered from early writers concerning this man. For the most part, these things are merely conjectural. And as GOD the HOLY GHOST, while condescending to make use of his ministry, hath thought proper to observe silence concerning the man, it should seem to be our wisdom to do the same. Many of the LORD'S faithful servants which are hidden from our knowledge, who have served the Church in their day and generation, will be brought forward at the great day of the LORD, in their sphere of glory in JESUS; *though while upon earth they flourished as the flower of the mountain, which shed its fragrancy, and is but little known or noticed of men.* Reader let us enter upon this sacred Book, as we have all the other inspired writings, with prayer and supplication; that all the blessings intended from it to the Church may be in our enjoyment, and that it may prove an *engrafted word*, which in and through the LORD JESUS, *is able to save our souls!*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The chief points in the opening of Nahum's prophecy, are to set forth the LORD's just judgment on his enemies, and his mercy over his Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think how gracious the LORD is in his attention to his people, even when their sins are calling forth his chastisement. The Church was now going into captivity, but still, though deserving correction, it is the correction of a father; and though the enemy be permitted to afflict, yet they shall not destroy; and in due time the LORD will reckon with them for it.

And what I beg the Reader more especially to regard in this delightful Chapter is, the method the LORD takes to comfort his people, with the tidings of salvation. It was at a period when many hundred years were to run out before the coming of JESUS. But notwithstanding this, as the glorious events of salvation, like the Almighty Author of it, was the same yesterday and to day, and forever; so the Church of GOD shall be comforted with the assurance of it in all, ages. Reader! do not overlook this! It was this that became the joy, the comfort, the consolation of the faithful through all periods of the Church. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, all alike lived in the enjoyment of it, and all died in the full assurance of it. The covenant of redemption was, and is the covenant of eternity. And consequently they are, and must be the same things with all the redeemed; in trouble or joy, in death or in life. Hence *Nahum*, hence *Isaiah*, hence *Paul*, yea all, both Prophets and Apostles, welcome CHRIST; and the very feet of the publishers of salvation are beautiful. Precious, precious JESUS! what unknown, unexplored, and ever to be admired and adored beauties, are centered in thy One glorious Person! *thou altogether lovely and fairest of ten thousand!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter a very awful account of the LORD's judgments. The excellency of Jacob and Israel is said to be turned away; and the Chapter is one continued account of solemn dispensations.

REFLECTIONS

I HAVE often thought that if the ungodly and carnal world could but consider, that all the opposition which they are making against the Church is overruled to the LORD'S glory and his people's furtherance; they would, even from motives of ill will, desist sometimes from the exercise of their unprovoked malice. And I have as often thought, if the people of GOD could but keep in view that the malice of their opposers is not only permitted, but even appointed of the LORD; and like the clouds, pregnant with refreshing showers, must at length break over their head in blessing; how would they bless GOD for raising up to them enemies, to thwart and call forth their graces into exercise. In the history of *Egypt*, the LORD himself so explains the persecutions *Israel* sustained. *He turned their heart (it is said) to hate his people.* Psalm 105:25. So that though *Pharaoh* stormed, and the *Egyptians* oppressed them, yet they were but the instruments, the hand was the LORD's. Reader! whatever tends to lead the heart *to* the LORD, must be *of* the LORD. And whether *Egypt*, *Assyria*, *Babylon*, or *Nineveh*; whether corruption within, or persecution without; whether our own deceitful hearts, or the world, or the powers of darkness, assault and harass, and afflict the people of GOD; wait but the issue, and listen to the voice of the LORD. To every adversary of his Church, the LORD speaks in those decisive words, *behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD!* Blessed LORD JESUS, I would say for myself and Reader, *if thou be for us*, what need we care *who* or what *is against us!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have the continuation of the same subject, as in the two preceding chapters. Under the character of Nineveh, the LORD is declaring the final destruction of the Church's enemies.

REFLECTIONS

HERE Reader! let us pause ere we dismiss this short but striking prophecy. See how attentive the LORD the HOLY GHOST hath been, in all ages, in watching over the concerns of his church! And wherefore is it think you, but because all the Persons of the GODHEAD are engaged in the great design, and each find their glory in the great salvation. Oh! that you and I, thus convinced of the LORD's love and care of his Church, and watchfulness over it, may be watchful also on our part of that love, and never, never lose sight of it in any of the most trying occasions. What shall interrupt, or what shall destroy this care of JESUS concerning his chosen. Sin shall not; for JESUS hath taken away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. The world shall not; for CHRIST hath overcome the world. Death and hell shall not; for JESUS hath vanquished both. Oh! then, hear JESUS'S voice, my brother, in every conflict, which he speaketh to your and his enemies, as in this scripture; *behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts*. Precious LORD JESUS! be thou our strength, our shield, and our exceeding great reward!

Farewell *Nahum*! farewell thou faithful *Elkoshite*! I beg for grace to remember thy blessed words. *Beautiful, indeed, upon the mountains are thy feet, and the feet of, all them that bring good tidings, and that publish peace!*

HABAKKUK

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE name of this Prophet, *Habakkuk*, which seems to be derived from *Chabak* to embrace, may be supposed to mean an *Embracer*: though some derive it from *Nebac*, to wrestle. It is well calculated that he delivered his prophecy much about the same time as *Jeremiah*, which was not long before the destruction of the kingdom. So that what is said in the Apocryphal writings of the history of Susanna, concerning *Habakkuk* carrying a dinner to *Daniel* in the lion's den at Babylon, is doubly proved to be fabulous, both on account of date, as well as truth. The opinion of those who conclude *Daniel's dinner* to have been *Habakkuk's* writings, is better founded. For as *Habakkuk* in those writings declared, that *the just should live by faith*, it is possible *Daniel* might call to mind in the den this blessed truth, and feel, refreshed from it.

The prophecy of *Habakkuk* is a most precious portion of scripture, and which hath received very ample testimony, both of its authenticity and inspiration. It is quoted more than once by the New Testament writers: Acts 13:41. compared with Habakkuk 1:5. and so again Habakkuk 2:4. with Romans 1:17. Galatians 3:11. and again the same blessed portion is a *third* time quoted by the same Apostle, Paul: Hebrews 10:33. And in what numberless instances the LORD the HOLY GHOST hath stamped his seal to its divine truth, in the hearts of the redeemed; who shall take upon him to say? We have many sweet glimpses given us of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in *Habakkuk's* prophecy, which I pray the Great and Almighty Author of it, who guided the Prophet's pen in writing, will guide us in reading of it, that here, as in all the other sacred records concerning JESUS, we may discover, that *to Him gave all the Prophets witness*; and that our faith in Him may be founded, not *in the wisdom of man*, but *in the power of GOD*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The title of the prophecy is said to be a burthen. In this Chapter we find the Prophet crying to the LORD, and calling also to the nations of the heathen concerning their sins, and the punishment to follow.

REFLECTIONS

READER! over and above the numberless precious things this Chapter holds forth to us in divine truths, we are here blessed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, with a sweet sample of an Old Testament Saint at his devotions; and the LORD'S gracious answer to his servant. When a child of GOD cries out, as *Habakkuk* here did, in contemplating the iniquity of the times, and feeling his own corruption also, see how gracious the LORD is? The Prophet no sooner calls to the LORD, but the LORD hears and makes answer. I cry out, because of violence, saith the Prophet; and wilt thou not hear? Yea, saith a gracious GOD, I will not only hear, but I will do such a work of grace in the gift of my dear son, as shall do away all the ruins of the fall. And yet, though I will work thus marvelously, there are thousands that will not believe. Reader! think what the LORD hath done in our day and generation, now redemption work is finished, and CHRIST returned to glory; and yet, may it not be asked in the Prophet's words, *who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* Oh! for grace, to cry out with the Prophet, *art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my GOD, mine Holy One?* LORD grant it never may be said, either to him that now writes, or him that reads, *behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet in the preceding Chapter having offered up his prayer; in this is represented as waiting for his answer. The LORD grants him a gracious one; the Chapter closeth with a solemn account of the LORD in his temple.

REFLECTIONS

I could dwell long, and with delight, in meditating the blessedness of what is here suggested, in the privilege of a gracious soul waiting constantly on GOD; and the LORD's grace, as manifested to those waitings. For certain it is, never did a child of GOD begin the sweet employment, and first call upon the LORD, before the LORD called upon his redeemed. For what the Apostle John saith, is founded in the unerring wisdom of JEHOVAH; *if we love him, it is because he first loved us*. I could dwell much on this blessed and precious point, and under GOD the HOLY GHOST gather many delightful improvements from it. But I must leave all these, and every other subject, to mark what is here said of the LORD JESUS, and to follow him wheresoever he goeth. Reader! what a sweet thought it is, and peculiarly so in the present awful times of degeneracy; that the promise is absolute; *the earth shall be filled, with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD*. JESUS shall see of *the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*. His glorious person shall be the one object of adoration, love, and praise, to all the Church, and to all the earth. *Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*. Who but must join in the earnest cry, LORD hasten thy kingdom, and cut short thy work in righteousness. Bring on that promised era, when the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet, and great voices shall be heard in heaven, and that glorious proclamation shall be made: *the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the Prophet still at his devotions; in which he celebrates the wonders of redemption, and yet more the glorious GOD of redemption.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou Almighty LORD JESUS! do I not behold thee in this precious scripture, set forth as the great Saviour and Redeemer of thy Church and people? Truly, LORD, thy goings forth have been, in this divine character, from everlasting. Before the earth was formed; yea, before thou hadst gone forth in any acts of creation, thou didst stand up at the call of thy FATHER, thy Church's glorious head and husband, from all eternity. And until the fulness of time appointed in the counsel of peace arrived, what were all the manifestations in the Old Testament Church, but tokens how ardently thou didst long openly to come and tabernacle in our nature, for the redemption of thy people. Didst thou reveal thyself to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob; didst thou call Moses at the bush, and go before thy Church, when bringing the Church out of Egypt; didst thou give the law at Sinai, and make the inhabitants of Palestina and Midian to tremble; what, dearest JESUS, what were all these, and numberless other revelations of thyself, but to testify how assuredly thou wert come forth for the salvation of thy people. And what is it now, O LORD, now thou hast finished redemption work, and art returned to glory, but every day, and all the day, renewed manifestations of the same, that JESUS will bring home his ransomed ones finally, fully, and completely; that where he is, there they shall be also. Hail then, thou glorious, gracious, great I AM; the visible JEHOVAH of thy Church and people! Oh! grant, that like thy servant the Prophet, whether fig-trees blossom or withhold their fruit; whether the olives fail, or fields yield their meat; JESUS lives and loves, and will live and love forever. He is a rock, his work his perfect: and He is the rock of my salvation. Farewell Habakkuk! thy GOD is my GOD; and He is the horn of his people. Blessed be the LORD for this sweet ministry of thine; and blessed be thy labours. Above all blessed, blessed for ever be the GOD of all mercies in JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

ZEPHANIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Prophet *Zephaniah*, whose writings we are now entering upon, was the last of all the Prophets before the captivity of the Church, when carried away into Babylon; consequently a cotemporary with *Jeremiah*. His name, which *is* compounded of *Saphon*, to hide, and *Jah* the Lord, signifies *the secret of the Lord*. His genealogy is enumerated in the first verse. If the Reader will consult *Jeremiah* 21:1 and 37:3 he will find *Zephaniah* sent by *Zedekiah* to consult *Jeremiah* on the subject of the Church's distress. The chief purport of his ministry seems to have been directed to proclaim to the Church the sure overthrow of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*; and as the other Prophets did, so did *Zephaniah*, point to the blessings in their recovery, by the promise of the coming of the Lord. I think it unnecessary to enlarge on those general observations, and therefore shall enter at once on the Book of *Zephaniah*; only first begging the Reader to join me in prayer before the throne, that our attention to this portion of the word of prophecy may not be in vain in the Lord.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains God's judgments for divers sins.

REFLECTIONS

THINK Reader! from all that you and I have seen and gone through, in reading of the sins and sorrows of poor fallen nature, what an awful state was that nature in by the fall, and what a blessed deliverance from the guilt, dominion, and endless punishment of it,

by the gracious undertaking and accomplishment of salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ! Oh! thou Great, thou Glorious, and Almighty Benefactor of thy people. It was thine, O Lord, to bring us out from a ruin which nothing could have delivered from but thou. It is thine now, O Lord, to keep us from. A ruin that would still cast us down, did not thy grace preserve us. And it is thine, O Lord, for ever to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before thy throne, in thy kingdom. Precious Lord Jesus! do thou who hast been our preserver, and the preserver of thy Church in all ages, keep us to the end, and bring us to thine eternal glory. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this chapter is making a very pressing exhortation to repentance, and to the seeking of the Lord. He afterwards speaks of judgments to the nations around.

Reflections

READER! behold the different aspect this scripture holds forth us, and pause in the view! May we not ask, and ask with trembling, on hearing those awful judgments of God; *if the righteous scarcely are saved*; if they cannot be saved but in a better righteousness than their own; *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear*? I have often thought what a mystery it is, that men of no religion can live so secure, and die so quiet, with such trembling judgments over their heads. They have no promise to flee to; no earthly comfort secure to them; and yet live on regardless. The Lord's anger; the alarms of their own consciences; the prospect of death; the alarms of eternity; these are always as specters in their view when troubles come, and haunt them night and day. How is it that they live in such a state? How is it that they die in such a state?

Look on the other hand at God's people; the Lord's *may be's* support and carry them through all. Afflictions may come; afflictions will come; but Jesus comes with them and in them; and the consciousness of an interest in Him, and redemption in his blood, softens every evil, and takes out the sting of sorrow, yea, death itself.

Reader! see to it, that we have this interest in Jesus, and we are then prepared for every event. Though *Gaza* be forsaken, and *Askelon* become a desolation, though the earth be moved, and mountains cast into the sea, Christ is *our hope, and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens in sharp reproofs to Jerusalem, but ends in blessed promises. It contains much of Gospel mercies, and sweetly points to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflections

BLESSED Lord! how delightful is it to trace the footsteps of thy grace by the ministry of thy servants, in teaching and leading thy Church in all ages! How truly condescending was it, O Lord, to comfort the Church before their captivity, in the prospect of thy coming! And how truly gracious to open to their view such sweet features of thy person, character, and offices, as might direct their minds to the knowledge of thee in that day, when thou wouldest come to bind up the breaches of thy people, and to heal their wounds. Hail, thou holy Lord! Thou hast indeed fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, this prophecy of thy servant, in thy coming. Thou hast taken away the judgments of thy people, and cast out the enemy. Thou hast prevented the sight of evil any more, by doing away sin, with all its dreadful consequences, by the sacrifice of thyself! Do thou then, O blessed Jesus, manifest the truth of this precious scripture, by thine indwelling residence in the midst of thy Church and people. Gather every poor follower of thine to thyself. Save her that halteth, and get praise and fame to thy glorious name, in every land where thy redeemed have been put to shame. Yea! blessed Lord, prove by these sovereign acts of grace, that thou takest part in all that concerns thy Church, and that thou art, and ever will be Jesus, for thou wilt save thy people from their sins. And let thy people, as this scripture hath promised, be so completely and fully gathered to thee, that their name, in and from thine, may be a praise

among all people of the earth, when thou hast turned back their captivity before their eyes, and thou hast put thy great name to the truth of it, as the Lord God ! Adieu *Zephaniah!* thou art indeed *Zephaniah*, or *Zeph-neth-paaneah!* for thou art a revealer of secrets, and hast faithfully revealed to the Church the wonders of redemption by Jesus. The Lord be adored for thy ministry, and the ministry of all his servants, and their faithfulness in Jesus! Amen.

HAGGAI

General Observations

The Prophet *Haggai* is the *tenth* in point of order, among what is called the minor Prophets. It is supposed that he was born in *Babylon* during the captivity. His prophecy is but short, and it should seem to have been but of short duration. According to *Ezra*, *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, prophesied much about the same period. See *Ezra* 5:1. And we may conclude from what is said, *Haggai* delivered all his prophecies from the sixth month of *Darius* to the ninth; which was of short duration indeed. His name is remarkable, and is derived from *Chagag*, to dance; meaning a season of joy. The chief purport of his prophecy is, to comfort the builders of the temple in their undertaking with an assurance from the Lord, that by the building, it should be rendered more glorious than all the splendour of Solomon's temple. I only beg the Reader to join me in prayer before we enter upon the book of this prophecy, that the reading of it may be accompanied with divine teaching, to our mutual improvement, and to the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Chapter 1

Summary

In this Chapter Haggai reproves the people's negligence, and incites them to the building of the Temple, and God promiseth his assistance therein.

REFLECTIONS

Who can call to remembrance the desolated state of the Church, in the ruins at the return of the people from the *Babylonish* captivity, but must feel concern at the sad and deplorable visitation! And who

that beholds the backwardness of the people to remove the ruins, and to erect a place of worship to the Lord, but must be astonished at a conduct so highly blameworthy? What can be more awful than to see the house of God in ruins, and men's houses built with cedar, and painted with vermillion? In how many instances is it so now?, Reader! Have you never seen the house of God desolate, and the houses of the priests like palaces? I have. Precious Lord Jesus! Happy is it for thy people, that in thee, whatever the *outer buildings* are, they have in thee a temple indeed! Thou art the foundation Jehovah laid in Zion; and all new covenant blessings rest upon thee. Lord! Cause my soul to be founded in this foundation, that I may be growing up to thee in all things, and be found in thee, and through thee, *for an habitation of God through the Spirit*. Amen.

Chapter 2

Summary

This is a most blessed Chapter, full of Gospel, and full of Christ. The Prophet speaking by the Spirit of the Lord, encourageth the people to the work of the Temple. There are gracious promises in the close of the prophecy to Zerubbabel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Pause, and consider, while going over this blessed prophecy, concerning the person, work, character, and offices of the Lord; whether He, who is here said by Jehovah himself, to be the desire of all nations, is the first, and last, and comprehensive object of all thy desire; for life and death, for time and eternity? Behold the Lord Jesus in this most blessed and delightful point of view. Sweetly was it prophesied of Him by another Prophet, that *He should sprinkle many nations*. And when we discover him as the One great and glorious ordinance of heaven for salvation, *neither is there salvation in any other*: When we look at him as Jehovah's gift, for the common, and only remedy, for the sins of a whole world: When we know the suitability, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus on the one hand, and the freeness, fulness, greatness, and everlasting nature of that rich grace of God the Father on the other; surely the Lord

Jesus doth appear so blessedly answering to this character, as the desire of all nations. And did all nations but know him, all nations would be in love with him. As one sun in the heavens answers for all the world; and one ocean supplies all the earth; so one Lord Jesus Christ is enough for all, and answers the wants of all. Reader! Bring home the point to your own person, and enquire whether He is so altogether lovely in *your* view, as to be the fairest and chiefest among ten thousand? It is indeed truly blessed, when a man's own experience bears a correspondence to the divine testimony; and Christ is formed in the heart, as the one desire of the heart, and the hope of glory. Precious Lord Jesus! Thou, who by thine appearance in our flesh, in thy temple didst fill the latter house with greater glory than the former; do thou fill thy Church now upon earth, as thou art filling thy Church in heaven, with thy presence. Surely, thou thyself, O Lord, art the temple, the altar, the mercy-seat, the propitiation, the High Priest, and the sacrifice! All, all is centered in thee, for all before thee were but types and shadows. Thou, thou art He, whom Jehovah hath chosen, the signet of the Lord of hosts, and the seal of the covenant of peace between heaven and earth! Oh! then precious Jesus, grant that on thee, as the foundation, thy whole Church being built, all thy redeemed upon earth may be growing up *unto an holy temple in the Lord, for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, until we join the Church above, when the last stone of the spiritual building is brought home *with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it*. Farewell Haggai! We thank thy Lord, and our Lord, for thy ministry and testimony concerning our Jesus. Once upon earth, thou didst witness the weeping of some, and the joy of others, in beholding the second temple. Ere long thou wilt behold the whole body of Christ, forming one temple, of his body the Church, in glory. And then, when the Lamb is on his throne, and encircled by the innumerable multitude of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and all the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, and clime, then will the hymn of salvation be sung amidst the vast host, where all tears are wiped away from all eyes, and the song of redemption to God and the Lamb, will be the everlasting song of heaven! Amen.

ZECHARIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of prophecy we are now entering upon, is not only recommended to our most diligent attention on account of its length, but on account of its great importance in the Church of Christ. The very many rich and precious things contained in it, which point to Jesus, and the blessed testimony it bears to Him, and his glorious character, as Mediator, are in themselves ample inducements to make every lover of the blessed Jesus prize this inspired book of God. Over and above the internal evidence it gives of its divine authority, the references made to it by the inspired writers of the New Testament, give it a peculiar claim upon our hearts. I think it is quoted no less than eight times by the Evangelists, and once by our Lord himself. Matthew 26:31. with Zechariah 13:7.

Zechariah's name (or Zachariah, as read by some,) is truly significant. Our pronunciation of it in English differs from the original, and thereby lessens to our recollection its power. It is *Zachar* and *Jah!* meaning *remembrance*, and the Lord. And is not this, when compounded, (I merely ask the question, not determine it,) as an office under the Holy Ghost, to bring to remembrance of the Lord? The period of Zechariah's prophecy was at the same time as Haggai ministered, and probably he was one of those that returned with the captivity from Babylon, somewhat about five hundred years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord the Holy Ghost give to him that now writes, and to him that reads the words of this prophecy, grace to understand what is herein contained concerning Him, to whom all bear testimony, that we may with thankfulness receive the things which are freely given to us of God.

Chapter 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet soon enters upon the account of his vision, after giving his name, and descent, and the date of his prophecy. The close of this Chapter is with gracious promises to Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us both pause over this first chapter of the Prophet:, and beg for grace to bless God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, for the grace manifested by each, and by all, in their office, character, and work, in the glorious covenant of redemption, as set forth most blessedly in this precious portion of prophecy.

Surely, Almighty Father, nothing can more fully show the tenderness of thine heart, and the soundings of thy bowels towards the Church, than in thy gracious answers, as contained in this Chapter, to the all prevailing merits and intercession of thy dear Son.

And surely thy Church, blessed Jesus, must be lost to all sense of love and affection, if such views as are here set forth of thee, in thine unequalled condescension, when coming down among the myrtle trees of this lower world for our salvation, do not call forth every faculty of the soul in adoration, attachment, and praise to thy glorious person, both as One with the Father, in the essence of the Godhead, and as one with us in our nature; *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.*

And no less do we find cause to look up in love and praise to thee, thou holy and eternal Spirit, who from thine own sovereign power and Godhead, and in thy covenant engagements, as the Comforter of the Lord's heritage, thou hast given such a precious testimony of the same superintending care over the present, and eternal interests of the redeemed, as is here displayed, by the appointment of the ministry of thy holy Word, in bringing the Church acquainted with such wonderful things of salvation.

Hail! holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! in thy threefold character of Person, while existing in the union of the Godhead! The whole Church, in heaven and earth, do praise thee! And blessed forever be that wisdom of God, in a mystery, whereby we can and do approach the Lord, in and through the glorious mediation of an

Almighty intercessor. Blessed, blessed forever be God, for Jesus Christ! Amen.

Chapter 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this Chapter is engaged in the opening of it in visions; but soon enters upon most blessed things without figures, in describing the great events of Christ's coming and dwelling with his people.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED Lord Jesus! do I not behold thee in many of the precious things spoken of in this Chapter? Truly, Lord, it was said by thee, that Jehovah thy Father possessed thee in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; and that then thou wast set up from everlasting! And was it not, dearest Lord, as the Covenant Head of thy Church and People? Were not thy delights then with the sons of men, in this gracious Character? And when *Zechariah* beheld a man, as is here described, with a line to measure Jerusalem, was it not thou, O Lord, showing to thy Church thereby, that thou knewest not only the dimensions of thy Church and Temple, but all the chosen polished stones of it, the members of thy mystical body, whose *names are written in the book of life*? And who but Jesus is a wall of fire to his people, and a glory in the midst of them? To whom is the Church dear, and like the tender apple of a man's eye; but to Him that hath died for his Church, bled for his Church, is everlastingly interceding for his Church, and will not consider himself fully glorious until the whole Church is brought around him in glory? Who can be said to dwell in the midst of his people, or who is the Lord's portion, but Israel the lot of his inheritance? Precious Lord Jesus! do I not behold thee, my risen, exalted, and glorified Saviour; do I not behold thee in all these, and a thousand other endearing instances, of thine unequalled love to thy redeemed, and thereby proving that thou art indeed our Lord, and that the Lord of hosts hath sent thee unto thy people? Almighty Jesus! carry on, and finish, in thine own time, all thy blessed purposes yet to be accomplished.

Cause many nations to come to thy rising! Bring home thy redeemed ones, thine ancient people the Jews, and let the fulness of the Gentiles be completed. And oh! thou sovereign Lord God! when that great day of thine shall come, and thy feet shall again stand on Mount Olivet; then will the whole earth be silent in one universal act of wonder, love, and praise! Amen.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

This blessed Chapter, like the former, contains much of Christ. Under the type of Joshua, the High Priest, the cleansing and glory of the Church are set forth.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! look up with thankfulness to God the Holy Ghost, for the blessed information given in this Chapter, of the state in which poor sinners, both ministers and people, as they are in themselves, appear before God. Thank the Lord the Spirit, that since we have such an accuser of the brethren before God, we are made acquainted with his devices, And oh! bless the Great and Almighty Glorifier of the Lord Jesus, for the blessed view he hath here afforded the Church of the everlasting and all-prevailing Advocacy of Jesus. Yes! thou glorious Intercessor, thou complete justifying righteousness of thy people! Thou hast rebuked Satan. Thou dost, thou wilt rebuke him. Neither shall he prevail against us. We are indeed clothed with filthy garments; for our best robes, our prayer robes, our sacramental robes, all are unclean, unless washed from their impurities in thy blood. Do thou, O Lord, say concerning all thy redeemed now, as of *Joshua*, the high priest of old; *behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, I will clothe thee with change of raiment!*

And oh, thou blessed Lord! Do I not behold in thee the Branch Jehovah hath brought forth, raised up, and made blessed to all thy people? How fragrant, how everlastingly filled with verdure! How fruitful in all redemption blessings to thy redeemed! Under thee, Lord, and thy shadow, would my soul for ever sit with delight, and *thy fruit will be sweet to my taste*. On thee, O Lord, as the Stone

Jehovah hath laid in Zion, would my soul for ever gaze, and feast my ravished eyes! Blessed, and Almighty Jehovah! On this signet, this High Priest of my soul, grave my poor name, and give me to see my soul's interest, and everlasting security in that unspeakable mercy, since thou hast removed the iniquity of that land in one day; so that; now if the iniquity of Israel be sought for, there shall be none; and the sons of Judah, and they shall not be found. Blessed! blessed for ever be God, for Jesus Christ! *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Amen.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still in the relation of the visions of God. A golden candlestick, and two olive trees, are made emblems of the Church. Zerubbabel is introduced as a type of the Lord Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

Hail! thou great, thou glorious Holy One, that art the true *Zerubbabel* of thy Church and people! Truly, in thee, Lord, and in thy strength, every mountain shall be made low, and the crooked strait, and the rough places plain. Thou, blessed Jesus, art the little stone, cut out without hands. But, by thine own sovereignty and power, thou hast broken in pieces every empire that opposed thy way, and art thyself become a great mountain, and art filling, and wilt fill the earth. Oh! Lord, give grace both to him that writes, and him that reads, to keep in view our nothingness, and thy all-sufficiency. To thee alone, may we both be continually looking, convinced that nothing is done, or can be done by our might, or by our power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. And do thou, blessed *Lord*, so reign in us, and over us, and guide and direct through all, that at length the head-stone may be brought forth *with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it.* Even so. Amen.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

The Lord is still instructing the Prophet by vision. In this Chapter we have the sad judgment threatened to thieves and swearers, under the image of a flying roll. And also by a talent of lead cast into the midst of an Ephah, the wickedness of the earth is described.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! we have presented to us in this Chapter under a double vision, the awfulness of sin, and the universal influence of it; for *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. Pause over the alarming subject. Think what circumstances of guilt, and an estrangement from God, our whole nature was involved in by the fall! And when you have duly pondered the solemn consideration, then look up for grace from God the Holy Ghost, to contemplate the glorious person, and the wonderful work he wrought in the accomplishment of it, by whom cometh salvation. Precious Lord Jesus! when thou sawest the state of our poor nature, oppressed, and bound with the talent of lead, unable to move, or even cry for help, our whole nature like the *Ephah*, filled with guilt; then the compassion of thine heart moved thee to fly to our rescue, and by a means so wonderful as the sacrifice of thyself, thou hast taken away our sins, and removed them into a land not inhabited. Hail! thou glorious Benefactor of mankind. May every knee bend before thee, and every tongue confess, that *Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*. Amen.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still favored with visions. Here are the vision of the four chariots; silver and gold crowns; and Christ represented under the well known character of the Branch.

REFLECTIONS

O Lord! help thy servants now with open face, as in a glass, to behold thy glory, and while reading these accounts of thy grace, manifested to the Prophet, give *to us a right understanding in all things*. Chariots, and horses, and mountains, and hills, all minister to the promotion of thy glory; and all go forth to execute the sacred purposes of thy will, when going forth before the Lord of all the earth.

And do thou no less Almighty Lord Jesus, give us to see thee, in thy type Joshua, crowned with silver and with golden crowns. Yea, Lord, since redemption now is finished, and thou art returned to thy glory, and thy kingdom, cause all hearts to bend to the sceptre of thy grace. Oh, thou wonderful man, whose name is the Branch! carry on thy blessed purposes in building the temple of Jehovah; for thou alone art capable of building it, and of bearing all the glory. And, oh! Lord, while thou sittest and rulest on thy throne, do thou, Lord, in both thy priestly and thy kingly glories, bless and govern all thy redeemed below, as thou art glorifying thy Church above. Give us by faith to behold thee, in those sweet exercises of manifesting grace to thy family upon earth, as thou art blessing thy redeemed in heaven. Amen.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The Lord is speaking to the Prophet in this Chapter, not by vision, but by revelation. The people of the Land come to ask questions of the Prophet, in the name of the Lord, and the Prophet is commanded to make answer for the Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

Reader! it is among the most important of all subjects to have a right apprehension of the method, whereby poor fallen man in every age of the Church, can rightly approach to God. Mankind have been always fond of commuting with God for sin, and when the Lord in grace saith return to me, and I will return to you, with the same

boldness as those of old, we are apt to cry out, *wherein shall we return?* And then fastings, and almsgivings, and a few forms of prayer are set up, by way of atonement for the sin of the soul. Alas, alas! here is more spiritual pride in all this, than any real repentance, or true fasting, or sorrow. Amidst a thousand plans of false reform, and a thousand substitutions, instead of the real return of the heart to *God*, there is but one the Holy Ghost teacheth, and that is indeed infallible, namely, with an eye to Christ. *Without faith* (saith the Lord the Spirit by his servant the Apostle) *it is impossible to please God*. There will be no real sense of sin, no true compunction of the heart towards God, but where the Holy Ghost hath given a spirit of grace and supplication, to look unto Him whom we have pierced, and mourn. In every heart, where God the Holy Ghost hath arraigned that heart with an indictment for sin, there sin is felt, and known, and acknowledged to be exceeding sinful. And in every case of this kind, repentance and fasting will be the *effect*, and not sought to as *a cause*, to come before God with. Hence the Apostle strongly and satisfactorily reasons; *if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin*. Reader! do you feel prompted to ask, with the *Sherezers* and *Regemmelechs* of the present hour, should I weep, should I fast in the fifth month as I have done these many years? hear the Lord's answer, and mark it well. Oh! for grace to eye Jesus *in all*, to go to Jesus *for all*, and to make him what God the Father hath made him, *the all in all* of the covenant. He, and He alone, in his glorious person, blood, and righteousness, is the only propitiatory, the only mercy seat, sacrifice, and sacrificer, for poor sinners to look to in all their approaches to God!

Chapter 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here commissioned by the Lord to give many rich and precious promises concerning Jerusalem. The Lord will restore her waste places.

REFLECTIONS

Who that reads a Chapter, full of such exceeding great and precious promises as this is, but must rejoice for the consolation. Precious Lord Jesus! I would pray for grace to be looking unto thee for all, and eyeing thee in all. For it is in thee, and for thee, and solely on thy account, all that is here said of the joy of Jerusalem is founded. Thou art the cause of all; the one source and fountain of all, and the sum and substance to every individual in the enjoyment of all. By thy great undertaking, in thy person, offices, and character, thou hast accomplished all the grand purposes of redemption. And hence thy Jerusalem, thine holy mountain, shall rejoice in thee. Young men and maidens, old men and children, all find their felicity in thee, and thou art not only the purchaser and giver of their mercies, but thou thyself art their portion for ever! Lord! hasten the many blessed promises here given, and yet to be fulfilled! All thy redeemed upon earth long to see the day of thy coming. And the souls of thy redeemed under the altar of heaven, are still sending forth the cry, Lord, how long! Oh! for our Jesus to come forth in the sovereignty of his grace and power, conquering and to conquer; subduing his people to the sceptre of his grace, and calling his redeemed out of all languages of the nations; that that wonderful event may soon be accomplished, when numbers in one and the same time shall *take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you of a truth.* Amen.

Chapter 9

SUMMARY

Here are more views, and very glorious ones, of Christ's love to, and rejoicing over his Church; and the Church is called upon to rejoice in her God and Saviour.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! was it said in the opening of this Chapter, that the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the

Lord; so let mine eyes fix themselves eternally on thee, and feast themselves in endless rapture on thee; a sight most lovely, and most completely satisfying! Like the Old Testament saints, who beheld thy day at a distance, and rejoiced and were glad; and like New Testament believers, who never cease beholding thee, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; so would mine eyes look unto the Lord my God, until he hath answered all my longings, and desires after him. And whilst thou art calling home thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth; and Zion is rejoicing greatly at the coming of her meek and lowly Saviour; do thou, blessed Lord, carry on and fulfil all those gracious promises concerning thy kingdom of grace in every heart. Almighty Father! do thou remember thine everlasting covenant, and send forth by the blood of it the prisoners of hope out of the pit wherein is no water. Oh! let all grace abound, and cause the travail of the Redeemer's soul, to be abundantly satisfied in the multitude of redeemed children, born to our God. Yea, let every heart be satisfied with his beauty, and every tongue sing praise to his goodness, until all the ransomed sons and daughters of *Zion*, shall return with songs of salvation to God and, the Lamb.

Chapter 10

SUMMARY

This Chapter is full of gospel promises, like the former, and particularly with an eye to the restoration of Judah; the close of the Chapter abounds with an assurance of many blessed things.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Jesus! thou hast promised to be as the dew to Israel, and here thou commandest thy people to ask those blessings of thee. Lord! when thou art coming forth in grace, thou inclinest thy redeemed to meet thee at the mercy seat, and then preventest them with thy goodness. We beseech thee, Lord, to fulfil thy promises to thy redeemed. Let the souls of thy people know thee, under all thy gracious characters. Thou art the Chief Corner Stone in thy spiritual building. On thee would I rest all my hopes, for life, for death, for

time, and for eternity. Thou art the nail in a sure place; for on thee is firmly fixed the whole hopes of the Church, not only in respect of the life that now is, but for that which is to come. Oh! do thou strengthen thy Judah, and bless thine Israel. Save the house of Joseph, as thou hast said; yea, save all thy redeemed, both of Jew and Gentile, and bring the whole as one fold into the land of spiritual *Gilead*; and into the everlasting mountain of *Lebanon*, thy glorious kingdom. To thee the whole Church are looking, and on thee, they are resting for those blessings. Do, Lord, as thou hast said. And, oh! that the Lord may hasten his blessed purpose for his people, when righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters do the channel of the great deep; and when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and incense shall be offered to the Lord, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same. Amen.

Chapter 11

SUMMARY

This Chapter in its opening, seems to contain a prophecy of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and which took place after our Lord's return to glory. Under the figures of two staves the Lord teacheth concerning his Church.

Reflections.

Reader! how awful this Chapter begins, and how awful it ends. The doors are to be opened, to burn the whole dwelling that rejects Christ; and the foolish shepherd, and the idle, that directs men from Christ, are to be set forth awful, and tremendous examples, of suffering vengeance from God, The sword is to be upon the arm, and upon the right eye; the one sinew shrank, and the other utterly darkened. Lord! in mercy, send pastors, faithful pastors, to thy people, after thine own heart, that shall instruct them with true understanding and knowledge!

Precious Lord Jesus! relieve my soul from such awful contemplations, as unfaithful, idle, and foolish shepherds raise up to the view of thine unequalled Pastorage, men after thine own heart,

for care over thy people! And was it so, dearest Lord, that a price so low and contemptible was given for thee, thou Great and Almighty Shepherd! A goodly price indeed, ye Jewish rulers, you gave for my Lord! Lamb of God! be thou to me the pearl of great price! All the riches of the earth are not to be compared to thee, thou Lord of life and glory. Lord! enable me by thy grace, as a goodly merchant-man seeking pearls and finding thee, to go and sell all I have, and purchase thee, *without money and without price*. And may I be enabled, thou blessed Lord, in beholding the staves of Beauty and of Bands, to value and prize thine everlasting Gospel, and no longer cleave to a covenant of works. Oh! for help to bless God, that I am not under the law, but under grace, and *alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Chapter 12

SUMMARY

The Prophet, still prosecuting the same blessed subject, of the auspicious events included in the coming of Christ, prophesieth of many singular blessings to be given to the Lord's people in that day.

REFLECTIONS

Almighty Lord! we desire to praise thee, for thy tender mercies to Jerusalem. Do, Lord, as thou hast said. May the Church of Jesus be a cup of trembling to all that dare oppose her great salvation in her Lord. Smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness that would trample on thy peaceable followers; and may all the inhabitants of thy Jerusalem, thine holy city, bare their strength in the Lord of hosts, their God!

Reader! see, I pray you, whether the Lord's strength is made perfect in your weakness; and as you know where, and in whom your confidence can alone be found, enquire whether the sweet promises in this Chapter be in your experience. If he that is feeble among the Lord's people, be as David; and the house of David as God; are these testimonies made personal with *you*? If it be among the gracious promises to the seed of Christ, that the Lord will pour out upon them both a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplications; do

you know that you are Christ's seed by these sure marks and characters? Doth the Holy Ghost lead you, teach you, guide you, and help you, in your approaches to the mercy seat? Doth He glorify to your view the Lord Jesus? Doth He take of the things of Christ, and shew to you? Doth He shew Christ's fulness to your soul, and your want of him, in such a way as to make it appear, that Christ is exactly suited to you, and you to Christ? This is to take of Christ, and shew to the people. And this is to glorify Christ, and comfort a poor believer. It is in this way the Holy Ghost confirms those sweet and blessed promises, in becoming, both a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplication; a spirit of truth, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader, daily testimonies both to this scripture, and to all the promises, which in Christ Jesus are yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us.

Chapter 13

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still looking by faith into the Gospel days, and describing under the spirit of prophecy, many blessed things to be accomplished in the days of Christ, and the after ages of his Church.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! here is a fountain indeed opened for sin and uncleanness; Jesus hath opened it, and supplied it with his heart's blood. The grand question is, are we washed in it? Have we found it to be peace-speaking blood, and heart-cleansing blood? Can we truly say of it, as David did of the whole covenant; *it is all my salvation, and all my desire!*

Precious Lord Jesus! the sword hath indeed awakened, at the command of Jehovah, against thee, when thou stoodest as the surety of thy people. But, oh! thou sin-bearing Lamb of God! what shall I offer thee of thanks and praise, since by thy stripes my soul is healed, and thou wert made sin for thy redeemed, that they might be made the righteousness of God in thee!

Lord! I thank thee, in all the exercises of my warfare, when bringing me through the fiery trials of sorrow and temptation; the

conflict is not to know, whether I am thine, for that is already proved, and the issue is not doubtful; but it is to prove me, and to show me what is in mine heart; that thy grace may have all the praise, and all the glory, from beginning to end. Oh! for unceasing grace while Jesus owns me to be his, to say with the Church of old, *my beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me.*

Chapter 14

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Prophet closeth his predictions; and a blessed close he makes of them. Great events are foretold in the Church of Jesus; in the coming of Christ, and the blessed effects thereof.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! take a short review of the wonders contained in this Chapter, with which the Prophet closeth those rich visions of God. Mark well the characters by which the great day of God is here spoken of. See, if the gracious visit of our Jesus, when at his incarnation he tabernacled among us, can be supposed to be the only thing implied in what is here said. It is true indeed, *Zechariah* delivered this scripture under the spirit of prophecy, somewhat more than five hundred years before the Lord Jesus came openly in substance of our flesh. And no doubt, that coming, laid the foundation of all our blessings in time and to all eternity. But, when we have considered what is here said, and connected the whole with the blessings, both of his first and second coming; it should seem, that many blessed things are here delivered, still to be accomplished. The Lord prepare both Writer and Reader for this great day of God! And the Lord bless every ministry of his servants, both Prophets and Apostles, to this end. Farewell *Zechariah*! We find abundant cause to praise our God for having raised thee up in his Church, to the blessed use of giving his Church this sweet portion of prophecy. But, while we give due honor to the servant, we would give all the glory to the Lord. Hail! thou glorious Lord Jesus, thou Almighty Prophet of thy people! Condescend, great God, by the ministry of these thy

servants, still to teach and instruct thy Church, until that great day here spoken of arrives, and thy feet shall again stand upon Mount Olives; and until all the great events of thy kingdom of grace be completed, and thy kingdom of glory be fully come. Then, O Lord, will the whole choir of angels cry aloud, the heavens, and all the powers therein. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets, Apostles, and all the ransomed sons of Zion, in one hymn of praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Israel's Jehovah ascribe praise for ever! Amen.

MALACHI

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are arrived to the last of the minor Prophet's writings, with which the Sacred Canon of the Old Testament closeth; and a very sweet portion of the inspired work this forms. *Malachi* signifies angel or messenger; and it should seem from that passage we have in the first Chapter, and 13th verse of *Haggai's* prophecy, that in that period of the Church, the servants and messengers of the LORD were called *Malachi-JEHOVAH*, Angels or Messengers of the LORD. We have not the smallest account in scripture concerning *Malachi*, who he was, or from what tribe he sprung; and hence some, have conjectured, that he was in reality what his name signifies, an angel. But this must be wholly conjectural, and very improbable. The time of his ministry appears to have been somewhat more than three hundred and fifty years before the coming of CHRIST. The scope of his prophecy is to prepare the Church for the LORD's appearing; and this is done in pointing expressly to the person and office of John the Baptist, as CHRIST's forerunner. And as GOD the HOLY GHOST was now with this servant's ministry, about to close the whole tenor of prophecy, and a long dark night was to take place, until that harbinger of day should come as CHRIST's herald; we have sketched some more striking features of the LORD JESUS ministry, in addition to what the other Prophets had been commissioned to give, concerning our LORD's person and character. And the several quotations made from this prophecy of *Malachi* in the New Testament, not only serves to confirm the authority of it, but to recommend it more strongly to the heart. See Matthew 11:10. Mark 1:2. Luke 1:17. Matthew 17:12. Mark 9:11, 12. Luke 7:27. Romans 9:13. I only add a prayer to GOD the HOLY GHOST, that both on our entrance on this blessed prophecy, progress through it, and in our closing of it, as the scripture with which the Almighty LORD hath sealed up the visions to his servants the Prophets, the minds both of

Writer and Reader of this Commentary, may be graciously guided by the SPIRIT of truth, into all truth, to his glory and our happiness in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The LORD is expostulating with Israel in this Chapter; on their ingratitude; and pointing out in his providences and grace, his distinguishing favor to Jacob, and his judgment on Esau.

REFLECTIONS

Almighty LORD! grant both to Writer and Reader grace, in receiving the message of this prophecy, from thy servant the Prophet, that we may indeed accept the whole of it as the burden of the LORD, bringing to us the great things of thy blessed word. We pray to mark the distinguishing grace of our GOD, in his choice of *Jacob*, and rejection of *Esau*. And we humbly beg the LORD to help our solemn meditations on this subject, with his divine teaching, that under the HOLY GHOST's influence, we may give diligence *to make our calling and election sure*. Oh! for grace, to know thee as our FATHER; yea, our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS; and to offer thee that honor, and to worship thee and love thee with that holy fear, as becometh the redeemed of the LORD!

And, oh! thou glorious LORD JESUS! hasten, we beseech thee, the auspicious hour, when from sun rise to sun set thy name shall be adored from shore to shore, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. We long to see the dawn of that blessed day, when all the world shall see the salvation of our GOD; and the knowledge of JESUS shall cover the earth, as the waters the channel of the great deep. Raise up to thyself, O LORD, faithful disinterested pastors, who will not snuff at thy service, nor count it a weariness and a burden. Oh! for an heart to receive what my LORD hath said, and bow with holy joy and reverence to the revelation. Thou art indeed, O blessed JESUS, a Great King, and thy name is dreadful among the heathen. Prove the greatness of thy sovereignty and power, by reigning in me,

and over me, and in all the affections of my heart, the LORD of life and glory. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter is not unlike the former in the opening of it; but the Prophet is soon led to speak in JEHOVAH's name of the LORD JESUS, under the character of Levi. The after part is in reproof for the people's infidelity.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! while we take part in the just reproaches of Israel, in their kingdom of priests, in beholding their transgression, and feeling our own; let us seek relief from the distressing contemplation, by directing our view unto the LORD JESUS, our covenant of peace, and our all-sufficient righteousness. Hear what JEHOVAH, in this blessed portion of the Chapter, saith of Him. *First*, the LORD GOD bears testimony to Him, that He is the LORD's covenant. *Secondly*, that the LORD gave the people, with all the blessings of the covenant to Him. *Thirdly*, observe the high testimony of JEHOVAH to his personal holiness and purity, *the law of truth was in his mouth*. And, *lastly*, the success of his undertaking; for he is said to have *turned away many from iniquity*. Pause, Reader! and think with holy rapture and joy, of those glorious credentials to thy precious Redeemer and Mediator. Then turn once more to thy JESUS, and behold Him as JEHOVAH hath presented him to thee, thy peace through the blood of his cross; and in his righteousness contemplate thy righteousness in Him. Yes! thou blessed, gracious, holy Redeemer! thou art indeed all this, and more to thy people! The covenant, in all its sum and substance, thou art. Thou wert present in its contrivance: the foundation, hope, and end of it, in its fulfillment; the Messenger of it to thy people in the delivery of it; the Administrator of all its blessings in its accomplishment; and the fountain and Keeper of all the grace of it here in this life, and the glory of the whole of it in the life to come.

Hail! thou glorious Covenant-Head of thy body the Church! *the fulness that filleth all in all.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here opening to the Church some precious views of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in description of his person, glory, majesty and grace; as he was to appear in the days of his flesh to his people. The sad events of his coming to his enemies are also described. The Chapter closeth in sweet and gracious promises to the Church.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! behold in this Chapter the gracious goodness of the LORD, in promising to send his Herald, to prepare the way of the LORD! And mark the corresponding event with the prediction, in the account the Evangelist gives of the coming of John the Baptist. And think how every heart must have been big with expectation, and every eye on the look out in *Judæa*, when the messenger came, announcing the approach of JESUS. And did not JESUS then come to his temple, at the time predicted? Did not the angel of the covenant appear, as had been foretold? Yes! but when he came to his own, we are told, his own received him not. Alas! what was there offensive in thy person, blessed JESUS, or in thy doctrine, that they rejected thee, O thou LORD of life and glory? Was it thy humble appearance, thou meek and lowly LAMB of GOD? Did they indeed despise thee for that, which above all things ought to have endeared thee to thy people? Reader! is the offence of the cross ceased? Is not JESUS still *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*? Oh! for the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to make known among the people the glories of CHRIST!

But, Reader! whatever others do, may it be your happiness and mine, to welcome the LORD CHRIST to his temple. Come, thou Almighty Refiner and Purifier! come and melt down all the dross and spots of our corrupt nature. Do thou as with fuller's sope, by the

gracious influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, take out the uncleanness within, and purify all thy kingdom of priests, as the sons of Levi. Keep my poor heart, dearest JESUS, by thy restraining and preventing grace, from going away from thine ordinances, that in thee, and thy perfect righteousness, my offering may go up, and find acceptance in the beloved. And, oh! thou blessed bountiful LORD of all, and Giver of all; open the windows of heaven upon thy Churches, thy Ministers, and thy People; and pour out such a plentiful effusion of blessings in grace, that every heart may be made glad, and refreshed in thine house of prayer. Let the public ministration of thy word be accompanied with such a visible display of thy presence, that all nations may know, that where thy Church is, there is a delightful land, and all shall call it blessed. And let the private communions of they that fear thee, be so sanctified with the holy conversation concerning Him that is always in their midst, that nothing but the name and sweet savor of JESUS may be known or heard among them. And do thou, dearest LORD, who art now hearkening, and hearing, and knowing all that passeth among thy people, and dost regard with peculiar tokens of thy favor, the affection of thy chosen; do thou remember all in that day, when thou comest to make up thy jewels; yea, Almighty JESUS! manifest then in full open display, as thou dost now in private testify by thy SPIRIT, whose are thine, and how dear they are to thee. Say of every one, in that solemn hour, when thou drawest the everlasting distinction between the righteous and the wicked, *these are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto them a kingdom, as my FATHER hath appointed unto me. They shall eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Prophet in closing up his predictions to the Church, delivers a solemn message to the ungodly, and a gracious promise to the righteous. He declares the coming of Elijah before the last day of the LORD's coming.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! pause over the solemn, the very solemn and awful account here given of the great and dreadful day of GOD, so often spoken of in scripture, and so certain and sure. Think how tremendous the judgments which will then overtake the ungodly. *For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear.* Oh! what paleness, horror, and everlasting dismay, will then seize every Christless sinner, when appearing before the Judge of all the earth without an Advocate to plead his cause, and void of all righteousness to justify his person.

Reader! what can I ask for you, or for myself, as a boon from a bountiful GOD in CHRIST, but that now, even now, while the day of grace continue, JESUS may arise as the sun of righteousness on our benighted souls, with healing in his wings. Be thou, dearest LORD, our light, our life, our righteousness, now, and forever. Oh! be thou the one great source of our peace, who hast been the confidence and hope of thine Israel; and as thou hast been made a curse for thy people, so may they be made the righteousness of GOD in thee. Farewell *Malachi!* farewell till meeting together at this great day of GOD. May it be the portion of both Writer and Reader to meet all the *Malachis'* and *Elijahs'* of our covenant GOD in that day, when JESUS shall come to make up his jewels, and amidst the host of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, to praise GOD and the LAMB forever and ever.

And now, Reader, as with this Part of my *Commentary*, I close the sacred volume of the Old Testament scripture, I beg once for all, and finally, and fully, that you will bend the knee in prayer as the author hath done before you, that the LORD will bless all that it contains, as far as it is agreeable to his holy and eternal truths, and pardon all that is amiss, which human weakness, ignorance, and infirmity, have given birth to, in this feeble endeavour to be helpful to the LORD's household. May that sin-bearing LAMB of GOD, that taketh away the iniquities of our most holy things, cleanse all that is here unholy and unclean. It is my intention, if the LORD favors such a design, to prosecute in the same plain and humble manner, the several Books of the New Testament, by way of Commentary. But this I leave, as I do all other events, bounded as they are within the limits of a life hastening now fast to a close, to Him who fixeth both

the time and place of His people's habitation. In the mean season, I here set up my *Ebenezer* afresh. *Hitherto hath the LORD helped!* And concerning my further wishes to write the Commentary for the *New Testament*, as the LORD hath permitted me to finish one on the *Old*; if the gracious Master should say concerning this, as David remarked upon another occasion, *I have no delight in it*; with him I would submissively say, *Behold! here I am, let him do to me as seemeth him good* Amen.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,

On my birth-day, making 59 years of sin and vanity! *April 13,*
1812

MATTHEW

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ONE general observation will meet the Reader, at his entrance, on all the four Books of the Evangelists: namely, that they are directed to one and the same interesting subject. They form a corresponding harmony and agreement, in giving the history of the blessed JESUS. And they form therefore, when taken together, the whole of those inspired records, which God the Holy GHOST hath thought proper to give to the Church, concerning the Person, Life, Ministry, Miracles, Discourses, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and unchanging Priesthood of the Almighty Savior of the world, *whom truly to know is life eternal.*

The word Gospel is borrowed from the Saxons, the early inhabitants of this island. They were accustomed to call our holy faith by this name. And hence, it is probable, that it hath been ever since distinguished by this title But perhaps it was not always pronounced, as we are now accustomed to do, by the name *Gospel*; but rather *God's-spell*, meaning *God's blessing*. And surely, it is in the highest and fullest sense of the word, the greatest blessing which ever the LORD JEHOVAH bestowed upon mankind, in the gospel of salvation, by God's dear SON.

In the present acceptation of the word Gospel, is meant *glad tidings; great joy to all people*. And in this sense also it must be allowed, that Christ and his salvation is the most joyful tidings which were ever proclaimed to sinful, dying men. So much so, that one of the Prophets declared the very feet of them who were sent to preach it, were beautiful. Isaiah 52:7. Nay, angels themselves, as if earnest to become the first heralds of such blissful tidings to a lost world, hastened to come down upon the earth the moment the news brake out in heaven, and in a multitude together sung the song of redemption: *Glory (said they) to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will toward men.* Luke 2:10-14.

The Gospel, according to St. *Matthew*, opens with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the time of *Joseph* his reputed father; as that of the Evangelist *Luke*, traces the pedigree in the line of the Virgin *Mary*. And *Matthew*, carries on the history of CHRIST through the whole of our LORD'S continuance upon earth; including a period of about *three and thirty years and half*. But the exercise of CHRIST'S ministry did not exceed *three years and half*. Luke 3:23.

The name of *Matthew*, or *Matthai*, signifies a *gift*, or a thing *given*. And this was not an unsuitable name for this Evangelist, for he might be truly said to be given to CHRIST. And thus the LORD Jesus speaks of his people, to whom he manifested his FATHER'S name, that they were the men whom he had *given* him out of the world. Of such, JESUS said, that all whom the FATHER had *given* him, must *come to him*; and *him that came, he would in no wise cast out*. John 17:6, 9, compared with John 6:37. But besides this name of *Matthew*, he was also called *Levi*. Luke 5:27. And this double name seems to decide, that though a *publican* by office, yet was *Matthew* a *Jew* by birth. For it was common with the children of Israel to give two names to their children; but not so generally with other nations. The history of *Matthew*, and his wonderful conversion, will meet the Reader in its proper place. I only here detain him in those general observations, to remark, that as a Son of *Abraham*, his engaging in the odious calling of a tax-gatherer for the *Romans*, which they called a *Publican*, and which the children of Israel considered as oppressive, must have been the more intolerable to them when performed by any of the seed of *Abraham*.

The Gospel of *Matthew* is supposed by *some*, to have been written as early as within *eight* years after our LORD'S ascension. But *others* place it at a later period, even to *fifteen* years. However, in either case, supposing the latest of the *two*, it may serve to teach us how graciously GOD the HOLY GHOST watched over the Church, that before that generation was passed away; among whom the wonderful actions of the LORD JESUS had been wrought; the records were made for the benefit of all succeeding ages of the Church, to the consummation of all things.

I shall make no further observations in a way of preliminary to the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, but proceed with the Reader to, the perusal of the Gospel itself: praying only, that the gracious LORD

who called *Matthew* from the receipt of Custom, may, by the ministry of his writings, call many *from darkness to light, and from tire power of Sin and Satan to tire living GOD*. And, if the LORD will condescend to make this *Poor Man's Commentary* upon it useful to the blessed purpose, that both Reader and Writer may find the unction of the HOLY GHOST upon it, as they prosecute the delightful subject: may they be enabled to invite the LORD JESUS to their houses and hearts, as this Evangelist did; and call many Publicans and Sinners to sit down to the holy feast with JESUS and his disciples; that many, many may be the partakers of *this glorious Gospel of the ever blessed God*.

CHAPTER 1.

SUMMARY

The Gospel opens with the relation of the genealogy of Christ after the flesh. We have an account of the miraculous conception: CHRIST'S birth and name.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! at this opening of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the SON of GOD; and while beholding the relation of the pedigree of CHRIST, after the flesh, who was made *not after time genealogy of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*; well may we both cry out, with the astonishment of the Prophet, *Who shall declare his generation?* Oh! for grace to discover the wonderful relationship between Christ and his people; and to exult with the Church, in the glorious truth: *Unto us a child is born: unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and he shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor; the Mighty GOD; time Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!*

And, Reader! as we have both such abundant cause, so let us seek from the Lord all suited grace, to bless him for the discovery here made; how the human nature of Christ was produced, by the body which GOD the FATHER prepared him; and by the overshadowing power of GOD the Holy Ghost, by which. he was conceived in the womb of the virgin. Let us both bless God for the

gracious revelations of this stupendous event; whereby the necessity of atonement, and the infinite importance of it, is most fully shown. And oh! thou dear Lord Jesus; never, never, may any of the children lose sight of thine infinite condescension, who, though in the form of God, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with GOD : yet didst thou make thyself of no reputation, and took upon thee the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, and didst humble thyself even to the death of the cross!

Lord Jesus! give us to know thee, to love thee, to delight in thee, by every endearing name, and office, and character, in which thou standest revealed to thy people. Thou art indeed Emmanuel; GOD with us; God in us; GOD for us! Thou art JEHOVAH our righteousness. Thou art indeed JESUS, for in that sweet name is comprehended every other. And what endears it yet more to our hearts, thou hast commanded us to call thee so; For in this blessed scripture it is said, *Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for lie shall save his people from their sins.* Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here related to us the birth of Christ; the visit of the Wise Men from the East, led by a star to worship him; the consternation induced in the minds of Herod, and the whole city of Jerusalem, at the event of Christ's birth; the ministry of an angel to Joseph, and the flight of Joseph, with his family, into Egypt.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I ponder well the sweet and interesting record here given of the birth of CHRIST. If angels, who needed no redemption, praised *God* at his birth, with what holy rapture and joy ought our songs to go forth in thanksgivings for the same. Behold! with what unequalled humbleness the SON of GOD, as man, when he came and tabernacled in our flesh, manifested himself to the church. But behold! how GOD the FATHER honoured his nativity, in not only sending wise men from the east to worship him, but in causing a star to point to the SAVIOUR. Was not this indeed sweetly

fulfilling that blessed scripture; *the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.* But did the Lord God, in order that his blessed SON should be known, grant such a starry influence to the wise men ; and will he withhold the light of his grace from the hearts of his people? Will he not reveal CHRIST in all his glory, and suitableness, and all sufficiency, that, like them, we may fall down and worship him, and present him more than gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, even those graces of his Holy Spirit which are his own?

And was it needful that the Lord of life and glory should go down into *Egypt*, that what the Prophet had said of calling God's dear SON out of Egypt might be fulfilled? Surely then, LORD, it must be needful to call all thy sons from the Egypt of this world; for all by nature are in that house of bondage, before that an act of sovereign grace hath called them out. Was JESUS, the holy, harmless, undefiled Lord Jesus, here also, as in a thousand other instances, the forerunner and glorious Head of his redeemed? Oh for grace to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth

But Oh! thou true and only real Nazarite of GOD! Precious Jesus, thou art indeed the Branch, the Plant of Renown, the Spiritual Joseph of thy people, whose branches ran over the wall. Blessings be on the Head of Him, and on the Crown of the Head of Him that was the *Netzar*, the Separate, from thy brethren! Methinks I hear my LORD again say, as he did once in the days of his flesh: *for their sakes I sanctify myself!* Ever precious; and dear name, JESUS CHRIST *of Nazareth!* Thou art thy church's *Nazarene!*

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of the ministry of John the Baptist. The description of his office and ministry. The Chapter closeth with an account of his baptizing the Lord Jesus CHRIST, and the glorious manifestations on the occasion.

REFLECTIONS

WELCOME, John the Baptist, thou faithful herald of thy LORD! As the star of the morning becomes the sure pledge of day; so thy coming plainly foretold the LORD of his temple was at hand. But thrice welcome, yea, everlastingly and eternally welcome, thou glorious Sun of Righteousness, precious LORD JESUS, art thou in thy arising, with healing in thy wings, to all thy people. Oh! do thou, LORD, thou great Baptizer with the HOLY GHOST, bring my soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, under the continual and unceasing baptisms of thy Spirit: fill our hearts, fill our houses, fill thy church, thy whole people, with grace!

And from this blessed unction given to the souls of thy people, grant, LORD, to every one, grace, *according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST*; that we may bless and adore the HOLY THREE IN ONE, who bear record in heaven; for the record given in this chapter, to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, on his entering upon his public ministry, at his holy baptism. And may the LORD mercifully grant, that the whole church of GOD, through divine teaching, may be enabled to keep in unceasing remembrance, the FATHER'S testimony to his dear Son. And while my soul, and the souls of all his redeemed, are thus continually hearing, and receiving, the precious assurance of GOD's being well pleased with his dear SON, for his redeeming love to his church, and his finished salvation for his people; oh, for grace to love Him, whom JEHOVAH, in all the persons of the GODHEAD, loves; and to delight in Him, in whom JEHOVAH delighteth. Precious LORD Jesus! I would say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth my soul desireth but thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

CHRIST's temptations. The call of his Apostles. His Preaching and Miracles.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Let you and I pause over the view of CHRIST'S temptations, and ponder well the wonderful subject. And was it needful that CHRIST should be thus exercised? Yes! The HOLY GHOST has said; *that in all things it behoveth him to be made like unto his brethren. For as much as the Children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.* The destruction of the devil was folded up in this. And the deliverance of his people from the power of hell was accomplished in the same. Hence therefore, in the victory of CHRIST in his seasons of temptations, the children of CHRIST discover their victory in their seasons and temptations in and by Him. And during the exercise, they know how JESUS, from fellow-feeling can, and will, minister to them every suited relief. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* The issue therefore is never doubtful. The children may be tempted, as Jesus was, to unbelief, to a distrust of GOD, yea, to self-murder. Perhaps there never was a child of GoD but what, more or less, bath been so tempted. Yea, it should seem to be a sweet testimony of our fellowship with Jesus, as members with the Head. *Blesscd is the man,* saith the HOLY GHOST by *James, That endureih temptation.* But the issue is never doubtful. As CHRIsT overcame every assault of Satan, so Christ's redeemed must also in him. Reader let you and I carry all our trials and temptations to Jesus. He knows them all before. But by our taking them to Him, we testify that we are looking wholly for strength from Him, and engaging CHRIST on our behalf. And, oh! the blessedness having JESUS for our strength. The devil will leave us as he did Him, and the LORD of angels himself will come and minister every suited relief to our necessity!

Behold Reader! on the close of this chapter, how He, who in the opening of it, is said to have been assaulted by hell, is here manifesting, forth his sovereignty as God. Oh! That that dear LORD, who thus in the days of his flesh, went about preaching his gospel, and healing the bodies of the diseased, would now, in the day of his Almighty power, come forth in a preached gospel, and heal the souls of his redeemed. Precious LORD JESUS! behold the diseased state of thy church, and in compassion to Zion take the glorious cause into thine own Almighty hand. And as then, so now,

LORD, cause the multitudes of thy people to come to thy standard, until thou shalt have brought all thy blood-bought children home to thy church, and all the blessed purposes of thy temptations and ministry be abundantly answered in the salvation of thy chosen. Amen.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter, and the two which follow, our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. A great variety of beauties is contained in it.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou Almighty Prophet of thy people, blessed Lord Jesus! We praise thee for thy gracious proclamation in the Mount. Oh! grant thy people to be poor in spirit, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Holy mourners we shall be when the Lord hath convinced us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And Oh! for that meekness in Jesus, that hungering and thirsting for Jesus and his righteousness, as those who are conscious that they have neither in themselves, and seek all in the Lord. Defer not, O our God, to induce all those graces of thy Spirit in the hearts of all thy redeemed, that *mercy* they may learn from thee, *purity of heart* find in thee, and as children of God, may walk in peace and love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. And to all the persecutions and revilings of life, be looking stedfastly to Jesus, *who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high!* And grant dearest Lord, while learning under the influences of thy Holy Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body that we may live. Oh! for grace to be living out of our selves upon thee and thy fulness, and never to lose sight for a moment that thou art in our stead and law-room all that is here enjoined, and hast both magnified the law and made it honorable, and fulfilled the whole for us and our salvation. Yea! blessed Jesus! thou art the Lord our Righteousness, and all thy people are righteous in thee. Amen.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the former. Most blessedly the LORD JESUS prosecutes the subject of his Sermon through the whole of it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Pause over this part of our REDEEMER's sermon, as over the preceding portion of it, and let us both look up for grace in the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHosT, to gather the many precious instructions it contains. Jesus presupposeth that his redeemed give alms according to the ability he hath given them. And if you and I have received of the *upper* springs of the Lord's grace, shall we not be ready to give, and glad to distribute of the *nether* springs of the LORD'S bounty? Not dear LORD to be seen of men, no! nor with the most distant view to recommend ourselves to thee, All we have is thine, and of thine own do we give thee, in imparting of what we have to refresh the bowels of our poorer brethren. Oh ! for grace that all may be done from thee, and for thee, and from love *to* thee.

And in our approaches to thy throne in prayer, oh! grant that all may be in and through the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. For if Lord we have found peace in the blood of thy cross, our access to the Father will be by one Spirit through thee. Not to be seen of men, but graciously accepted of GOD in CHRIST, *through* CHRIST, and both in the words and works of CHRIST.

In the abstinence of the body, and in the humblings of the soul, in dying daily to the world, and crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, oh! for grace from CHRIST to be walking daily *with* CHRIST, casting all our care upon him who careth for us. And while seeking, above all things, the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness, may we be for ever on the look-out for *the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our SAVIOR* Jesus CHRIST. Even so Lord prepare us for *thy* coming! Amen.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus in this Chapter concludes his Sermon on the Mount, and a very blessed close he makes of it, in comparing the wise hearers of it to those who build on the Rock, and the foolish to those who build on the Sand.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! having gone over the whole of this blessed Sermon of Christ, let us sum up the contents, and beg of God the Holy Ghost to write all the gracious truths contained in it in our hearts. And while we hear the Lord giving to his Church the Whole Gospel of Salvation, oh! what a blessed consideration is it, that Jesus himself hath fulfilled all, and is all to his redeemed. Never may, the Church of Jesus forget this, but receive Christ as the Father's gift, and the complete salvation of Jehovah to the end, or the earth!

Precious, blessed Lord Jesus! so may my soul hear these sayings. of thine, and embrace them, that building upon thee as the foundation, the superstructure, and the whole, both of Law and the Prophets, when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth, I may be found firm on the rock, *against which the gates of hell shall never prevail*. Despised as thou hast been, and still art, by Jews and false

Christians, and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence; yet to me be thou more precious than the mountains of spices. In thy person, work and offices; in thy character and relations; in thy complete righteousness and salvation; be thou my Lord, my hope, and everlasting portion. Lord grant that I may never build on the sandy performance of any thing of my own, or mix up with thy complete work the hay and the stubble of any legal righteousness, which can stand no wind of the day of God's wrath; but be thou the all in all, of all grace here, and of glory for ever. Amen.

Chapter 8

SUMMARY

We have here the Lord Jesus confirming his word by miracle. Jesus cleanseth a Leper, healeth the Centurion's servant, the mother-in-law of Peter, with many others; stilleth the waves of the sea, casteth out devils from two poor creatures; and permitteth them to enter into the swine.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I look on, and behold the wonders of our wonder-working God. See the leprous man cleansed; the paralytic healed; the raging fever subdued; yea, the winds, sea, and devils, in a moment brought under the word of our Jesus. But let us not stop here. He that cleansed the poor leper in his body, can and wilt cleanse all the leprosy of soul in his people. He that gave strength to the palsy of nature, can and will make the crippled in soul to leap as an hart; and all the feverish lusts of his redeemed, Jesus will subdue! Oh! thou gracious God of our salvation! no storms of hell, nor storms of indwelling corruption, nor storms of the world, shall drown thy people! Jesus, though for a while may appear to our impatient minds as inattentive, but he hath said, *For the sighing of the poor, and the oppression of the needy, now will I arise, saith God!* And oh! with what tenderness and fellow-feeling, the Lord Jesus enters into all the concerns of his redeemed. Truly Lord, it may be said of thee, thou dost thyself take our infirmities, and bare our-sicknesses! Oh! vouchsafe thy continual presence with us! and never, never Lord, do thou depart out of our coasts!

Chapter 9

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here represented in the exercise of his ministry; working miracles, and going about through all the cities and villages, preaching his gospel, and healing every disease of the people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold your God and Savior in this Chapter. See how he manifests who he is by what he wrought. As God! he pardons sin, as in the instance of the Paralytic! He reads the thoughts and reasonings of men's hearts, as in the case of the Scribes. He cures the souls, gives health to the bodies, raiseth the dead, casts out devils, and as man, yea the God-Man Christ Jesus, he is moved with coma passion, and his bowels yearn over the lost estate and misery of our poor, ruined; and diseased nature. Oh! who that had seen his grace to Matthew; to the woman with the bloody issue; to the ruler of the synagogue, and his dead child; to the blind and the dumb; but must have said with the Prophet, *behold your God is come to save you!* And who that had seen him, at the table of *Matthew*, encircled with Publicans anti Sinners, but must have said, was ever grace like this, in the unequalled condescension of the Son of God!

Oh! blessed Lord Jesus! do thou now still regard thy people, still behold them in all the miseries and sorrows of a state of nature and sin, in their palsied, blind, dumb, dead, and dying circumstances. Oh! thou Great Shepherd of thy blood-bought flock! Exalted as thou now art, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, send forth thine under pastors in thy fold, and let thine heritage be no longer scattered. Yea! dearest Lord Jesus! come thyself and visit them as thou hast said with thy great salvation, and bring them home to thy fold in heaven, from all places whither they are now scattered *in the dark and cloudy day!* Amen.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have the call of the Apostles, and Christ's mission given to them, to work miracles, and preach the Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

Let all the followers of the Lord Jesus, and especially his Ministers, behold in the commission here given by him to his Apostles, the love of his heart, and the interest he takes in all that

concerns them. And let not our view of the unfaithfulness of hirelings in any age of the Church, give the smallest distress to true Pastors. Jesus chose a *Judas* to mingle with his faithful Apostles, though he knew that he was a devil when he chose him. But though he went in and out with the disciples, yet had he no part nor lot in the matter; and when he died, he went, as it is said, *to his own place*. Tares with the wheat, goats with the sheep, are nevertheless as distinguishable and separate as though they had never come together. *The Lord knoweth them that are his*. In the end, an everlasting separation will take place.

In the mean time, the persecution, hatred, and frowns of every enemy, shall minister rather to the Redeemer's glory, than to the smallest injury of the Redeemer's cause. And it never should be forgotten, that Jesus is *with his people always to the end of the world*. Jesus, therefore, looks on, knows all, sanctifies all, and blesseth all to his people's good! And Jesus speaks as in this chapter, to drive away all fear from the heart of his redeemed. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne*.

Chapter 11

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the Message of John the Baptist to Christ, and the Lord's answer. Towards the close of it, Jesus upbraids the cities around him for their hardness of heart, and unbelief, and thanks his Father for revealing his truths to his people.

REFLECTIONS

Will any send my soul to question, whether Jesus be indeed He that should come: or can there be a possibility of cause to look for another? Oh! no. He is the altogether lovely: and the chiefest and the fairest among ten thousand. Now, even now, as well as in the days of his flesh, the spiritually blind, are receiving from him their sight: the lame in soul, Jesus makes to leap as an hart; leprous sinners are cleansed in the fountain of his blood; the deaf hear the words of the book; the dead in trespasses and sins are raised; and the poor in

spirit, hear and know the joyful sound, and through grace walk in the light of God's countenance. And can there be another Jesus: another Gospel which we have not received? Oh! thou dear Lord! blessed for ever blessed be thou for having said, *blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me!*

Lord! grant if it be thy blessed will, that it never may be the condemnation of our land like *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida!* Great Gospel privileges we have indeed; but what must follow if we neglect, or reject *such great salvation?*

Reader! let you and I listen to the sweet and gracious invitation, which Jesus gives to the weary in sin, and to the heavy laden under the burthen of it, Oh! for grace to learn of thee, thou meek and lovely Savior! Thou art indeed, both a rest and resting place, for thy people. In thee, my soul would rest from sin, and rest to God. Thou art both a shelter from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. Thou art my hiding place, thou will preserve me from trouble. Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Haste, haste my soul, to thy rest, thy Jesus for the Lord *hath dealt bountifully by thee!*

Chapter 12

SUMMARY

We have our Lord represented to us in this Chapter going on with his ministry. The sin against the Holy Ghost is here spoken of.

REFLECTIONS

Hail thou glorious Lord of the Sabbath! Do thou blessed Jesus, manifest to my soul, and in my soul, that thou art both Lord of the Sabbath and of my heart; by reigning there, and ruling there, and giving me to eat of the show-bread of thy body, which is the bread of life, that I may have eternal life abiding in me. And do thou by me, O Lord, as thou didst to the poor man in the Synagogue, to all the withered affections of my poor nature; both bid me, and enable me, to stretch forth the hand of faith, and lay hold of eternal life in thee!

And oh! Almighty Father! in thy gracious office-work in covenant mercies, give me to hear thy sweet proclamation of thy servant whom thou hast chosen, and in whom, as the Church's }lead and Surety, thou art well pleased, and hast delighted. Oh! for the teachings of God the Holy Ghost, to know Jehovah's chosen and Jehovah's beloved, as my beloved, a meek Savior, a tender hearted Savior, a well qualified and powerful Savior; who though so gentle as not to break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, yet so mighty as to send forth judgment unto victory, and in whose name the Gentiles shall trust.

And no less Almighty Spirit, do thou so teach, and guide me into all truth, that out of the good treasure by regeneration, and the daily renewings of thy grace which thou hast put into my heart, I may bring forth good things, while the generation of vipers, by their evil things, manifest the seed from whence they spring, yea! Lord give me to see and know, by heartfelt experience, from thy sovereign work there wrought, that I am of the mystical relationship of Christ, and among the number whom Jesus will own as his brother, and sister, and mother.

Chapter 13

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here instructing his disciples in Parables. Towards the close of the Chapter, the Lord assigns his reasons for this mode of teaching.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I pause over this sweet Chapter, and mark the condescending love of Jesus, in thus adopting his discourse, under the imagery of parables, surely it serves to teach us the tenderness of his heart towards his redeemed, as if to come down to the humblest capacities of his people; and that none might err in the apprehension, he varies his subject by illustrating under various similitudes the important truths relating to his kingdom. But that all might be impressed of the everlasting line of distinction between his children, and the children of the wicked One, under whatever figure,

or parable, he states the subject Jesus never loseth sight of this. The good *seed*, or the *leaven*, the *treasure* hid in the field, or the *good* gathered into vessels, all are made to represent the very reverse of the *way-side* hearers, the *stony ground*, the *thorns*, and the *tares*; which uniformly set forth the state of the reprobate and the seed of the devil. In every part of this blessed Chapter, the Lord Jesus hath drawn, as with a sun-beam, the striking difference, and shown that characters, springing from such different stocks, never can coalesce; so that the good seed may become tares, or the tares good seed. Lord Jesus! give thy people grace to discover, that amidst all their complaints of unprofitableness, and the like, still thy redeemed are thine, and the Lord. will own them. Oh! for grace, to have all our fruit in Jesus, and the end everlasting life.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of Herod's having murdered John the Baptist. In the after part we have the relation of some of the miracles of Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us gather a short lesson from the history of John the Baptist. To look at John, when falling a sacrifice at the instigation of a worthless woman, and to overlook the Lord in the appointment, is to consider second causes, and not the first; and very sure will it be, that we shall then make wrong conclusions. Here is a faithful servant of the Lord, borne down by oppression; and here is an incestuous woman triumphing in the godly man's death. But what follows? Aye, there's the grand concern. *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him. Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him.* Oh, for grace, to eye the Lord's sovereignty in all: for this alone will give energy to the lively actings of faith, and keep the soul in peace.

But let me turn from the servant to contemplate the Master! Oh, for grace to eye Christ, in the several blessed views here given of him; in feeding and supporting his people, and healing all their diseases, Precious Lord Jesus! do thou manifest thyself to my poor

soul under that endearing character, as, Jehovah Rophe, the Lord that healeth the people. And oh! for grace and faith in lively exercises upon his person, blood, and righteousness; that while Jesus is coming forth to bless, my soul through the Holy Ghost, may be going forth to meet him; and like the people in this Chapter, may my faith be so strong in the Lord, that I may be convinced even the hem of Christ's garment, touched by faith, will make me perfectly whole. Amen.

Chapter 15

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have Christ's discourses with the scribes. The woman of Canaan, seeking to Jesus for her daughter: and the Lord feeding the multitude in the wilderness.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read in the opening of this Chapter, the pitiful substitution of outward acts of religion for the defect of inward purity, but with painful mortification, when we consider in such proofs to what a sad state of ruin, our whole nature is reduced by the fall? Alas! what are these Scribes and Pharisees, but representatives of all men in the Adam race, until a work of mercy in salvation hath passed upon the soul?

Do we not all draw nigh to God with our mouth, and honor him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him; until God the Holy Ghost, hath revealed Christ to us, in his person, offices, and character, and *we are brought nigh by the blood of his cross?*

What a beautiful relief, from such a universal corruption of nature is the subject this Chapter introduceth us to, of the woman of *Canaan*. Oh! ye parents of perverse children, and children under the dominion of Satan; oh! may ye learn for them, for yourselves, yea, for the whole Church of Christ, how to come to Jesus. Who shall say what mercies Jesus is continually manifesting of the same kind? And if we feel interested, as that we cannot but feel interested, for our own, and their everlasting welfare, that neither we nor our offspring should remain under the worst of all distresses, even soul-distresses

in Satan's influence; oh! let us come out of all the coasts of the *Tyre* and *Sidon* of this world, and look unto Jesus: and beholding his mercy here, let us hope for mercy for all Israel: for with him is plenteous *redemption*.

Jesus! do thou have compassion, Lord, as thou hadst in the days of thy flesh, and beholding the multitudes in the wilderness, send us not empty away, but feed us with thyself; and command a blessing upon thy bounty for thou Lord art the bread of life, of which *whosoever eateth shall live for ever!*

Chapter 16

SUMMARY

The sign of Jonas, the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees guarded against; Peter's profession of Christ, and the Lord foretelling his death, are the several subjects of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Lord, I pray thee! keep my soul from every leaven, which, mingled with the complete justifying righteousness of my Lord Jesus Christ, would rob my God of his glory, and my soul of happiness. And doth my God and Savior demand of my poor soul who Jesus is, amidst the varieties of creeds and professions of the present day? Oh! for the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, the revelation of God my Father, and the blessed manifestation of the Son of God to my heart, that I may bear a fixed, unalterable, and decided testimony, before Angels and Men, that thou art the Christ of God, the Lord, my righteousness. Oh! yes! thou Holy One of Israel! thou art indeed the Christ of God, the Word of God, the Lamb of God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for salvation to every One that believeth. And oh; my honoured Lord, as thou hast said, flesh and blood cannot reveal it, and none but God the Father can give a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, hath the Lord given to me this spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of my Lord; then let me take to myself the blessedness of the discovery, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. Oh! for grace to savour the things which are of God, and not

those which are of men. Give me, blessed Jesus, grace to follow thy cross, and learn all the necessary exercises of self denial, that being conformed to thy image here; *I may be satisfied When I awake up after thy likeness hereafter!*

Chapter 17

SUMMARY

We have here an account of Christ's Transfiguration. A Lunatic is healed by Jesus. The Lord again foretels, his approaching death. The Tribute Money.

REFLECTIONS

What a lovely chapter is this to read to us the interesting events in the life of Christ, when God the Holy Ghost is here leading the Church by the hand, to contemplate Christ in his glory, and Christ in his humiliation. We follow him, by faith to the Mount of Transfiguration, and we hear him informing his disciples, soon after, of his sufferings which were shortly to follow at Jerusalem! Precious Lord Jesus! cause both views to have their gracious influences upon the hearts of thy redeemed! Oh! may it be my portion to follow thee often, by faith, both to the Mount of *Tabor*; and to the Garden of *Gethsemane*. Surely every meditation will tend, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, to strengthen my soul in the belief of Jesus. What, though the privileges of thy people now, are not like those highly favoured disciples, to behold Moses and *Elias* ministering to my Lord, yet in Jesus himself I have all. In the sweet communion with the Master, I shall miss not the absence of all his servants, Yea! I shall rejoice to be alone with Jesus, having to communicate to my Lord, and to receive from him those precious soul-transactions, in a joy with which no lookers-on can meddle. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, my honored Lord, to behold the inability of thy disciples, that my God and Savior's power and grace may be more fully known. And whatever fears, from the weakness of faith in my poor heart, and nature's feelings by reason of the remains of indwelling sin, may arise on entering the cloud, yet will my soul receive an holy joy, unspeakable, and full of glory, when I hear my God and Father's

gracious voice proclaiming the divine approbation; *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

Chapter 18

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here teaching his disciples humbleness, He speaks of his own, and his Father's good pleasure, for the salvation of every one of his little ones. The Chapter is closed in a parable.

REFLECTIONS

How truly blessed is it to have our hearts brought under divine teaching, and made like the simplicity of a weaned child. See my soul in the instance of these disciples of Jesus, how much our minds are wedded to the concerns of this world. Oh! for grace to be converted, and become as little children, that we may be truly great in the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed Lord Jesus! may I never lose sight of this promise that thy presence is eminently manifested in the assemblies of thy people: for sure I am, that all the beauty and glory; all the power and efficacy; all the success and blessing, which can be derived from ordinances, can only be derived, because Jesus hath assured his Church, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is in the midst of them, and that to bless them.

Thanks to my dear Lord for this beautiful and instructive Parable, Yea, Lord! my debt was so great, in ten thousand talents as made me insolvent for ever. In vain were it for me to say, Lord have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Never to all eternity, could I have done it. Oh! then add a grace more to the merciful forgiveness of all; and incline my heart to be merciful, even as my father which is in heaven is merciful! Precious Jesus! help me to imitate thee in all things!

Chapter 19

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus *is here prosecuting his ministry; healing the sick; conversing with the Pharisees; receiving little children; discoursing with his disciples.*

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou glorious and gracious bridegroom of thy Church! Everlasting praises to thy name, it is not lawful for Jesus to put away his wife, whatever the world may do, for every cause. The Lord God of Israel hath said, that he hateth putting away. And while Jesus himself hath said by his Apostle, Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them; will Jesus be bitter against his? What! though she hath, since from everlasting he betrothed himself to her, fallen away, and sunk into misery and sin; will not Jesus recover her from this state? Yea, will it not be to his glory so to do? Yes! thou dear Lord! it will be to thy greater glory to recover her, than though she had never fallen. And the whole inhabitants of heaven will praise thee, and love thee the more also when thou shalt bring her home, cleansed from all her sins, in thy blood, and shalt present her to thyself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but shall be without blame before thee in love!

Blessed Master I would humbly enquire of thee concerning eternal life, as this youth; but not what good thing that I must do to attain it. For alas! if the possession of heaven could be obtained with only a single act of goodness; never to all eternity should I find it. Where I should do good, evil is present with me. Oh! then for grace to know thee, to love thee, to follow thee, as my only good; my hope, my righteousness, my portion for ever! Amen.

Chapter 20

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains, the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard: Jesus' discourse with the mother of Zebedee's children: and the cure of two blind men.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read in this Chapter, the striking Parable of the householder hiring laborers into his Vineyard, and not feel conviction at the free, sovereign, purposing, appointing, carrying on, and completing grace of God? Is not the Vineyard of the Lord of hosts, his Church: and every plant in it of the Lord's right hand planting? What! if Jesus sends his under servants his ministers to labor in his service; or calls his people to sit down under his shadow, do either lessen the right and property of the Almighty owner? Is not the whole his, by gift, by purchase, by right, by conquest, and by power? And is it not separated by redeeming grace from the world's wide wilderness, and fenced in with love? Ye ministers of my God! esteem it the highest honor, to labor within the sacred inclosure, and be more anxious to win souls than to win kingdoms. Ye children of the Lord! whether in the early, mid-day, or later calls of his grace; bless God for the distinguishing mercy. Soon will the evening of life come; and the Lord of the Vineyard will call ye home, from his courts below to his heaven above.

Precious Lord Jesus! I behold thee by the eye of faith in thine ascent to Jerusalem! Yes! truly there thou wast delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification! Grant me dearest Lord to be more anxious to be brought under the continual baptisms of thy spirit, than to arrive at the highest temporal honors. A door-keeper in thy house, far exceeds the golden tents of the ungodly.

In the review of my Lord's mercy to those poor blind men, and the grace imparted to them to be so earnest with Jesus for bodily sight; teach me, thou gracious giver of eyes to the blind, to imitate their cries for spiritual apprehension of my Lord's person, work, and righteousness. Oh! for grace to see the king in his beauty, and to have my soul so awakened to desires after Christ, that I may follow

my God and Savior by faith here, till in open vision I *shall see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever!*

Chapter 21

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here described as riding into Jerusalem. He casteth the buyers and sellers out of the temple. We have also the account of the withered Fig-tree, and the parable of the husbandman.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, my soul, over this view of thy Redeemer! Did the Prophet, ages before Christ was born, call upon Zion to rejoice greatly, and Jerusalem to shout aloud, because her king was coming to her, meek and lowly, and having salvation; and did the Son of God, in his character as King of Zion, actually make his entry in the very manner the Prophet described; and did all those effects follow in confirmation of the glorious truth? And wilt not thou, my soul, join the heavenly Hosannas, and sing aloud, *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest!*

And is it one and the same person who is here described as hungry, and needing the common sustenance to support nature, yea looking to a fig-tree to supply a pressing occasion? Oh! precious Jesus! how sweetly accommodating is thy lovely example, to the wants and indeed *behoove* exercises of thy people? Yes! thou dear Lord, it, did *thee to be made like unto thy brethren, that thou mightest be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.* And having suffered being tempted, thou, knowest *how to succor them that are tempted.*

Lord! give thy people grace to see, that, while unawakened, unregenerate sinners, like those husbandmen in the parable, though living in thy Church, and outwardly feasting upon the good things of thy vineyard, have no inward joy or communion with the Lord of his vineyard, there are those redeemed of the Lord whose right it is in Christ, and who will finally be brought home to the joy of their Lord; while those miserable men will ultimately be destroyed, and

have their portion with hypocrites in outer darkness, *where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Chapter 22

SUMMARY

We have, in this Chapter, the Parable of the Marriage-feast, and Christ's discourses with the Scribes and Pharisees.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! Was there ever condescension like thine, to marry our nature? To pass by the nature of angels, and to take on thee the seed of Abraham! And didst thou, Lord, so fix thy love upon thy Church, that though thou knowest from the beginning that our whole nature would deal very treacherously, yet this did not prevent thy gracious design, but thou didst determine to pay our dreadful debt, to rescue us out of the hand of every enemy, to disannul our agreement with sin, and to call back thy spouse, the Church; who, as a treacherous wife, had departed from her first husband? Did Jesus indeed, in the prosecution of this great design, send forth his servants in all ages of the Church; Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, to call home his own, and to bring all his redeemed to the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven? Oh! peerless, unequalled love! Oh! matchless sovereign mercy! Lord Jesus! grant that when thou comest in at the last day to see thy guests at thy table, my poor soul may not be found like the man without a wedding garment, and from being Christless now, I should be speechless then. But oh! thou dear Lord! may my soul be found of thee in that all-decisive hour, so adorned in thy spotless righteousness, that both now, and then, my soul may sing the holy triumphs of the Church, and find the blessedness of it. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

Dearest Lord Jesus! while Pharisees, and Herodians, and Sadducees, all confederate against thee; Oh! do thou cause my poor

soul to be attached to thee more and more. Give me to enter into a proper apprehension of all the mysteries of faith, and the doctrine of the resurrection; that, convinced of an interest in the covenant of redemption made with *Abraham*, and the heirs with him of the promise, I may make the study of Christ, and the knowledge of Christ, the great essentials of everlasting life? and esteem Christ, and him crucified, the *one thing needful*, beyond all the knowledge of the earth. Oh! the blessedness of this living to Christ, and rejoicing in Christ, and making him, what God hath made him, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of salvation; convinced that *there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Chapter 23

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Lord Jesus is engaged in exhorting his disciples, and the multitude, against the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Chapter closeth with Christ's pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, as a City given up to destruction.

REFLECTIONS

Pause Reader! pause my soul, over the contents of this Chapter. Surely nothing can be more solemn, nothing more affecting. Behold the Son of God, who came to seek and save that which was lost; pronouncing sure and certain destruction upon a class of men, whom every age have stood up with pretensions for greater holiness than others, and like one of them in the Parable, all of them more or less ready to exclaim: God! *I thank thee that I am not as other men are!* Hear the Lord calling them serpents; a generation of vipers, which cannot escape the damnation of hell. And what were they considered in their department among men? How were they distinguished *then*? How are they known *now*?

The Lord calls them Pharisees. Men unhumbled in their minds. Who never felt the plague of their own heart. Uncircumcised in heart and ears. They never tasted the wormwood and the gall of a fallen state. They never were pricked to the heart under the deep

conviction of a fallen state. And not feeling the want of Christ; they utterly despised him.

Lord Jesus! keep my soul humble at the foot of thy cross. Every day, and all the day, may I learn the infinitely precious consolations of salvation as alone in thee, and more and more from a deep sense of the want of thee, be led to see and enjoy my complete interest in thee. And oh for grace like Paul, to count *all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: and to count all things but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God but faith.* Oh! the blessedness that Christ is made of God to all his redeemed; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he shall glorieth may glory in the Lord!*

Chapter 24

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the Lord Jesus instructing his disciples, and in particular he foretells the destruction of the temple: and with it is blended the promise of his future coming.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! be thou everlastingly loved and adored, in that thou earnest forth from the bosom of the Father, to make known the sacred purposes of his holy will and which were all purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. And blessed be thy name for that love and grace in thine heart, in having taught thy people their safety amidst all the judgments going on in the world; and amidst all the deceptions of devils and men lying in wait to deceive. Yes! yes! thou dearest Lord, in this blessed Chapter we learn, that it is impossible so to deceive thine elect, or that any real injury can follow. Oh! Lord! give thy people grace to trace their mercies to the fountain head; and to know that their safety as well as their happiness, ariseth from their being chosen in thee, and not from any thing in themselves. And my soul, in a day like the present, let no reports of false christs, or false prophets at all move thee. Jesus will

keep; Jesus will preserve; Jesus will secure his own. And the day is hastening, when *he will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in fill them that believe*. In that, all-decisive hour, Lord grant that I may be found in thee, waiting thy approach, and *not be ashamed before: thee at thy coming!* Amen

Chapter 25

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and of the Talents, together with an account of the proceedings of the last day.

REFLECTIONS

Let both Writer and Reader, ponder well the weighty contents of this Chapter, before they c[lose the book, looking up to the great Author of his holy word, to commission it to their hearts, and to make it a savour of life unto life, that the name of Jesus, may be *as ointment poureth forth!*

And oh! for grace, to be as the wise virgins, not going forth with the lamp of a mere profession; which from not being fed, nor kept alive by the Lord, cannot but go out in the midnight-hour. Neither may my soul be as the unprofitable servant, whose end could be no other but to be cast into outer darkness, *where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!* Oh! precious Lord Jesus! what a relief is it to my soul that when thou shalt come in thy glory, and all thy holy angels with thee, thy redeemed shalt be set on thy right hand; and their introduction into everlasting happiness, will then be proclaimed before a congregated world, to be the result of thy grace, not their merit. Yes! thou glorious Head of thy Church and people, it will be then seen that thou art the sole *cause or* all their salvation and joy, their everlasting portion and happiness, in time and to all eternity. Lord! grant in my heart all the blessed effects of thy love, that I may love thee and thy members, as streams from the fountain of thy love, and manifest whose I am and whom I serve, in the gospel of *God's* dear Son: and seeing that all thy redeemed have received *a kingdom*

which cannot be moved, we may have grace whereby as we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear!

Chapter 26

SUMMARY

We here enter upon the concluding scenes of Christ's life. The Rulers conspire against Jesus. He celebrates his Passover. Judas betrayeth him; Peter denieth him; and all the disciples forsake him and flee.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! in looking back upon the many wonderful events related in this Chapter, let us admire as well we may, the boundless love of the Lord Jesus, in the tender institution of his holy supper. For as the type and shadow of the Jewish Passover, was now for ever to cease, when He the true Christian Passover to which that service ministered, was sacrificed for us; it was an act of the highest love and mercy, in our dear Redeemer, to set up this precious ordinance in his Church, as a standing memorial of his death, until his coming again. And surely Jesus hath endeared it and recommended it by every affecting circumstance, when we consider the *time* when he instituted it; the *manner* in which he observed it himself, and commanded *its perpetual* observance by his people: with all the blessed effects he hath promised in it, from his gracious presence, in those holy seasons of communion: and the sure mercies, which shall accompany the faithful use of it. Oh! for grace, frequently thus to *set forth the Lord's death till he come!*

And oh! thou dearest Redeemer! grant both the Writer and Reader the blessed unction of thine Holy Spirit, as often as we follow thy steps by faith, to the garden of Gethsemane. Here may we oft resort in spirit, as Jesus in the days of his flesh oft resorted with his disciples.

And Lord grant, that we enter into thy retirings, and by watchfulness and prayer, go over in review again and again, the soul-agonies and soul-travails of Jesus: taking interest in all that we behold, of his sorrows for us and our salvation. Oh! for grace thus to

read and thus to meditate on the person, work, offices, characters, and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ! To behold him, and to know him, who was made *sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Chapter 27

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with the relation of hurrying away the Lord Jesus to Pilate; from thence to Herod. Christ is examined; Barabbas, a robber and murderer, is preferred before him. He is led away to be crucified. The awful signs attending his death, He is laid in the Sepulchre.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! if there be an interesting moment in the life of Jesus while upon earth, to call forth the tenderest sympathy of his redeemed, in one instance more than another, surely it is here. Who indeed can, dry eyed, or without a weeping heart, follow the Redeemer from the hall of Pilate, to the Mount of Calvary, and behold the Lamb of God in those unequalled hours of suffering, offering his soul an offering for sin? Yea, who that from being enabled by the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, to enter into the suitable apprehension of the mysterious subject, and stands convinced, that all which Jesus suffered, was the sinner's due, and must have been his sufferings to all eternity but for Jesus's interposition, can, unmoved, behold such scenes of sorrow? Reader! let you and I behold the Lamb of God, in this light! Let us listen to the declaration of Jehovah on this point, and while we look up at the cross of Christ, behold what but for his sufferings must have been our own; and then we shall rightly prize the voice of God, when he saith, speaking of Christ; *He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken!*

Under these impressions, let us behold the Lord Jesus, the sinner's surety, taken from prison and from judgment. I see him bearing my sins, and my curse due to them; and hurried away to execution. An armed band seizing upon him; he is bound hand and

foot as the sacrifice to the altar, The Scribes and Pharisees, like the bulls of *Bashan*, beset him around. He is made naked to his shame, publicly scourged, and his body torn with thorns, until the blood streamed in every direction. While the shouts of the unfeeling rabble, and the blows of the cruel soldiers, worry the Lamb of God to death. His cries on the cross loudly manifest what were the feelings of his soul; and above all, the frowns of Heaven when he hung upon the accursed tree, made the cup of trembling bitter indeed. Who that hears the words of Jesus, can enter into their full extent of sorrow. *Reproach hath broken my heart: I am full of heaviness. I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none!*

And must all this have been my case, had not Jesus been my surety? Yes! all, and every portion of it, and that for ever. For if the holy, and harmless, and undefiled Lamb of God, was made both sin and a curse for his people; certainly but for his taking both upon him, the sinner of every description must have borne the whole for himself And when at death, the unregenerated sinner had received the awful sentence and is hurried away to punishment, that curse will light upon him, and remain upon him undone away to all eternity. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being found in Christ, and having him as our surety, both now, in this day of grace, and thereafter in the day of judgment. Reader! may the Lord give us the faith of thus looking to the cross of Christ, and there behold Jesus as our surety! *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*

Chapter 28

SUMMARY

In this close of the Gospel according to Matthew, we have the wonderful Relation of Christ's Resurrection. The Lord's several Appearances to the Women and his Disciples: Christ's Commission to his Disciples, to preach his Gospel and baptize.

RELECTIONS

OH! for grace to receive and believe the record God hath given of his dear Son. Surely, the Lord hath furnished for his people, every evidence that God can give or man receive, to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. By signs in heaven from above; and wonders in the earth beneath, was my Lord's triumph over death, hell, and the grave manifested. Every witness calls upon me, like the Angels to the women at the sepulchre; *Come! see the place where the Lord lay.* Yes! I would answer. My soul desires to take the wing of faith, and light down at the memorable sepulcher, and see the sacred spot! Yes! I would flee there, but, not stay there, but hasten to look upwards after a risen and ascended Savior! Yea! I would seek grace to pursue my researches after Jesus, until I beheld him in that bosom of Jehovah, where he hath lain from all eternity!

And now my honored Lord! my soul would lay low at thy footstool, and hail thee Lord of heaven and earth! Glorious, gracious, Almighty Head of thy Church and People! It is for thee to send forth thy servants, to call *thy sons from far and thy daughters from the ends of the earth!* Thy kingdom of grace shall be established until thou hast brought home all thy ransomed to thy kingdom of glory. Not one shall be left behind: but shall be brought under the baptisms of thy Spirit to the joint praise and honor of the holy Three in One, Father Son, and Holy Ghost. Lord! hasten thy gracious purposes; and confirm the sacred promises of thy will.

Farewell *Matthew*, faithful recorder of my Lord's history! Thanks to God the Holy Ghost, for thy services in his Church in those written memorials of the conception, incarnation, birth, baptism, fastings, temptations, ministry, miracles, parables, prophecies, agonies, conflicts, sufferings, death, resurrection, and return to glory, of our Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed be my God and Saviour, in calling thee from the receipt of custom to be an Evangelist! Oh! may the ministry of thy word be made blessed to my soul, and to the souls of thousands. And then as thou broughtest home the Lord Jesus to thine house, and then madest him a feast with publicans and sinners; so ere long Jesus will take thee and me, and all his redeemed home, to *the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven;* and feast our ravished souls, with the enjoyment of himself;

and in him and through him, the whole persons of the Godhead in one unceasing banquet of holy joy for evermore. Amen and Amen.

MARK

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

WE would enter upon this blessed Gospel, written by Mark, as we did that of Matthew, both, evidently, having been indicated by the SPIRIT of the living GOD, and with the same earnest waitings upon GOD the HOLY GHOST, to make it blessed, both to the Writer and to the Reader of this Poor Man's Commentary. And when we call to mind what are the blessed contents of it, every feeling of the soul is called forth, in beholding the interesting records of the LORD of life and glory. Oh! who can go over the wonderful relation unmoved, which sets before us the life, ministry, miracles, discourses, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Oh! LORD the SPIRIT, be mercifully pleased to write the blessed contents in my heart!

Concerning Mark, the penman of this Gospel, we have but little account. It is probable that he was one of the seventy disciples, but it is not certain. He is spoken of by Paul and Peter. And some have thought that Peter was engaged with Mark in forming the work. But one thing is certain; the HOLY GHOST gave the record. And it will be our mercy, if the same Almighty LORD makes it a sweet savor to our souls, that the name of JESUS may be as ointment poured forth!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Evangelist enters upon his records of the LORD JESUS with an account of John the Baptist. To this follow the Baptism of CHRIST, his temptation, preaching, the call of his Apostles; and the performing miracles.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us, while opening this precious record of the beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the SON of GOD, look up for grace from the SPIRIT of GOD, that the outward ministry of the word may be accompanied with inward instructions in our souls, to make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS. May the Holy Three, which bear record in heaven, grant to us such sweet testimonies in our hearts and consciences of the truth as it is in JESUS, that we may enjoy that life eternal, to know the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, to be the only true GOD and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent. Precious beginning of the Gospel, I would say; beginning, as it did, before all worlds, when hid in GOD, who created all things by JESUS CHRIST, and now made manifest by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of GOD!

Here LORD I behold thy herald, the Baptist, preparing thy way. before thee! Come, LORD, and bring my soul under the baptism of thy HOLY SPIRIT. Prepare me, by His enlightnings, to stand against the temptations of the devil Oh! for the distinguishing calls of my LORD, as to his disciples. LORD! dispossess every unclean affection from my heart; and do thou reign there, and rule there, the LORD of life and glory! So will my soul, by thy grace, be made clean, though, in myself, polluted as the leper; and JESUS will be my LORD and my GOD, my portion forever!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The HOLY GHOST is pleased to record, in this chapter, the cure which the LORD JESUS wrought on the Man sick of the Palsy; CHRIST'S call of Matthew; his sitting at meat with Publicans; and his divine Discourses at the Table. The chapter closeth with an account of his passing through the corn-field on the Sabbath-day.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL thou glorious LORD JESUS! Thou hast indeed, fully manifested thy power on earth to forgive sins; and as in this instance of the man with the palsy, thou hast healed the body, in confirmation of having saved the soul. Speak LORD but the word to my soul also, and sure I am of salvation. And oh! thou dear LORD, hast thou not taught, by thy freeness of thy call of *Levi*, that all thy calls on sinners, are the result of thy free sovereign grace, and not their deserts? Had *Levi* done anything to merit thy favor? Yea, had he not done everything to merit thy displeasure? And notwithstanding all his undeservings, was he called; and JESUS found of him, who sought him not? And is not JESUS as much now, in this day of his power, as then, in the days of his flesh, passing by, in ordinances, and in providences, and calling his redeemed from this world's custom, to follow him in the regeneration? And is it not JESUS who calls, and JESUS, who by his HOLY SPIRIT inclines, the hearts of them he calls to follow, and to take JESUS home, as this poor publican did, to their hearts and to their houses; and make JESUS a feast of his own bounties of the grace, JESUS gives them? Yea, is it not the wish and desire of every poor sinner, whom the LORD makes willing in the day of his power, to invite all poor sinners made sensible of sin, to come and sit down with JESUS and his disciples? What, though proud, unhumbled, self-righteous Pharisees, murmur at the grace of JESUS; let those who never felt the want of redemption, proudly reject it: but let every poor broken hearted sinner rejoice, in what the SON of GOD hath said: *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

And let it please thee, my gracious GOD, to bless all thou receivest with thy favor as thou didst *Levi*. Never, never, may any poor sinner fast, while JESUS is with them, and in his fulness they have enough for the supply of all their poverty. Never take a part of JESUS' robe of righteousness, to mend their tattered rags, but receive whole CHRIST as suited for a wholly ruined sinner; and be completely covered with CHRIST'S garment of salvation. Never receive the new wine of the Gospel, into the old skin of a withered nature: but may the LORD, who sitteth on the throne, making all things new, give the new heart, and the new nature together, and make all his redeemed new creatures in CHRIST JESUS! And be thou,

dearest LORD, both the corn and the wine, and the oil, yea, the very sabbath of all thy people, till thou shalt bring them all home, to thyself, in glory!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have here the case of the Man with the withered hand: the call of the Apostles: the Scribe's Blasphemy: and the LORD JESUS speaking of his relations.

Reflections

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! do thou come by thy blessed SPIRIT into thy Church, and among thy people, now in the day of thy power, as thou didst in the days of thy flesh, into the synagogue; and there manifest, that thou art LORD of the Sabbath, by thine acts of grace and mercy, to the souls of thy redeemed. Many a withered hand and an unawakened heart, is there, of thy people for JESUS to heal. Oh! do thou speak, in the word, and by the word; and very sure will it be at thy bidding, the withered and the halt, yea the dead in trespasses and sins will come forth to life and health, and new creatures. And oh! blessed LORD! what read we here in this chapter? Do the very devils and unclean spirits proclaim thy power and GODHEAD? Oh then for grace, that all thy redeemed may know thee, from the least to the greatest. And do thou, dearest, and most compassionate LORD JESUS, give thy poor, fearful, and deeply exercised trembling ones, grace to see, that thou hast undertaken to keep them, from the unpardonable sin, in their union with thyself. Thy beloved Apostle hath said, under the authority of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that *whosoever is born of GOD, sinneth not*, but he that is begotten of GOD *keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not*. Oh! let the sweet consolation of this, be made blessed to thy people; that while the malice of hell, is breaking out, in the minds of the children of darkness; all thy dear redeemed ones may know and rejoice, in the assurance, that they are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation. Oh! the precious thought! CHRIST is not ashamed to call his people brethren. And as he condescends to own

his poor relations in this life; so will he own them in the world to come. Never may my soul forget those sweet words of my LORD. *Whosoever* (saith JESUS) *shall do the will of GOD*, (and this is the will and work of GOD, to believe on him whom he hath sent,) *the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter, the Parable of the Sower; of the Seed in its secret growth: and JESUS, on the Lake in a Storm.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I pass over numberless other considerations, which arise out of this Chapter, in order to attend to what is always, and ever must be, the first and last, and comprehensive object, and subject of every Chapter; the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself and our salvation in him. He is both the Seed and Sower; that corn of pure wheat, cast into the ground of our hearts, which soil, when renewed by grace, brings forth, in all his redeemed, sure fruit; *some thirty fold, some sixty fold, some an hundredfold.* And he it is; to sow the pure seed in his Churches. And none sown by CHRIST can fall to the ground. What though his servants, and those who minister in the word and doctrine, too often find their labors in the wayside, and in thorny ground and stony places, unproductive; yet, wheresoever JESUS sends his word, he saith himself, *it shall not return void, but it shall prosper in the heart to which he sends it.* To thee, then, LORD! let thy people look, both for direction, where to sow the seed, and from whom alone to expect a blessing. Sent and commissioned by thy sovereign power, *in due season, they shall reap if they faint not.*

Precious LORD JESUS! however to the unawakened and unregenerated all thy truths appear as parables, do thou speak thy sweet word to all thy redeemed, as they are able to bear it. And oh! do thou make it doubly sweet and blessed, when we are alone with thee, by expounding to us all things concerning thyself. And if we are called upon to enter upon the water, or pass through the fire with

JESUS; oh! let the consciousness that JESUS is with us, hush all our fears, and make us more than conquerors, through thy grace helping us. LORD! do thou speak peace to our troubled souls, as thou didst to the troubled sea, by speaking pardon to our sins. Both winds and storms, and guilt and fear, must all be still at thy command.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS healeth the Man possessed with a Legion: he cures the Woman with the Bloody Issue, and raiseth the Daughter of Jairus.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! to what a desperate state is our whole nature reduced by the fall! Where Satan reigns, unrestrained by grace; see my soul, see in this man, (and while beholding look up and wonder at thy mercies) to what a length the human frame is capable of going in madness, while governed by devils! And what makes the subject yet more truly awful is, the consideration, that Satan's empire over our nature is a lawful empire: for as Scripture truly saith, *of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage.*

But oh! the mercy of that promise: *Thus saith the LORD: ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money.* Hear, my soul, hear what is said. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty; or the lawful captive delivered?* But thus saith the LORD: *even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.* And see, as in this instance, one of CHRIST's little ones though long held captive by Satan, yet gloriously delivered by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And where is he now, who when recovered by grace on earth, sat at the feet of JESUS; but sitting with JESUS on his throne and kingdom of glory in heaven? Oh! my soul, go tell all thy friends of this wonder-working Savior!

Behold also the power and sovereignty of thy LORD, over unclean spirits, and unclean beasts. See what efficacy flows from

JESUS, to the touch of faith in his divine person; yea, behold, how even the dead JESUS raiseth. Never then call in question his power over all the uncleanness thy nature, nor his grace to answer the desire of that faith, which he himself hath created. Thy deadness, and dying frames, JESUS can take away, and his command to arise must always be attended with power. He saith to thee, my soul, as to the ruler of the synagogue, be not afraid, only believe. LORD, *I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS is here spoken of with contempt by his countrymen. He sends forth his Disciples. Herod hears of CHRIST, and is alarmed. JESUS feeds the Multitude. He is seen walking on the Sea. He heals the sick.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou who was in the form of GOD, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with GOD! give me to see the blessedness of thy humiliation, in condescending to labor for thy daily bread, in order to remove the whole curse of the fall, in becoming a curse for thy people. Do thou, dearest LORD, give grace to all thy poor and toilsome family to learn the blessedness of being conformed to thy lovely image in all things. Let all thy sent servants learn by thy Apostles how to return to JESUS, and lay before him the account of their ministry. In the awful history of *Herod*, give all thy people grace, to know how to value a peace of mind in JESUS, which nothing of this world's greatness can procure. And while thy redeemed behold their GOD and Savior feeding the thousands to the full with a scanty provision, and healing all the diseased with a word speaking; oh! let neither poverty nor sickness induce a moment's fear in the heart of thy people. Precious LORD! do thou realize, day by day, thy gracious and refreshing presence to our wants. And oh! for grace to have such views of GOD'S CHRIST, and GOD'S chosen, as GOD the FATHER hath set him forth by, in the word of his grace; and then will all the blessed effects of salvation be enjoyed by his

redeemed, in villages, and cities, and countries upon earth; as the redeemed now enjoy in the city of our GOD in heaven.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Pharisees assemble to contend with CHRIST. JESUS reproves them. He heals a poor child and cures one that was deaf and dumb.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! Let us pause over the awful view of the deceitfulness of the human heart, as read to us in those Scribes and Pharisees! While full of uncleanness, and all manner of hypocrisy, see how they prided themselves on outside appearances!

But while such striking facts may serve to teach us, as they ought to teach us, the deepest humility, let a sense of it lead us to all-precious JESUS! Oh! how ought the consciousness of it to endear CHRIST to the heart. Gracious, and compassionate Redeemer! dispossess every evil, every unclean affection, from our souls. LORD! to thee belongs the curing, both of the spiritually deaf, and dumb. Oh do thou pronounce the soul-renewing word, *Ephphatha!* and every faculty will obey thee. Thy people now will be astonished at the riches of thy grace, as they of old were at thy power, Thou hast indeed done all things well in time, and to all eternity. My poor deaf and dumb soul thou hast made to hear and speak; yea, thou hast raised it to a new life, when dead in trespasses and sins!

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

CHRIST is here described in feeding the people by a miracle. He giveth Sight to a blind man, and sweetly discourseth with his disciples.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! see to it, that the frequent notice, the Gospel takes of those Scribes and Pharisees, the sworn foes to CHRIST, that thou do not overlook the important lesson to be drawn, from what is said of them. They were zealous in their profession, of what they called godliness; but it was a godliness only of nature, unawakened by grace. It consisted in outside appearance, honoring GOD with the lips, while their hearts were far from him. My soul! see to it, that an union with CHRIST forms the basis of all thy worship. It is with the heart, man *believeth unto* righteousness; and *with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation*.

Precious LORD JESUS! do thou keep me, by thine Almighty power, through faith unto salvation. Give me to see, that from an everlasting union with thee, in a covenant which cannot be broken; here lies the security of grace, to suit the wants and circumstances of all thy people. JESUS will say, *Ephphatha!* to the unopened eyes and ears of all his children, born in the Adam-nature of blindness, deafness, yea, *dead in trespasses and sins*. Thine LORD, is the work to accomplish, and thine all the glory. Cause me daily to see thy glory, to hear thy voice, and my whole heart and soul to speak thy praise!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have here the glorious Scene of CHRIST'S Transfiguration. The LORD begins to prepare the minds of his Disciples for his Death. The miracle of the Child healed of a dumb spirit. Our LORD'S discourse with his Disciples.

REFLECTIONS

LORD JESUS! While I read thy gracious promise, at the opening of this Chapter, to some of thy faithful ones; who, according to what was then said, did not taste death till they had seen this kingdom come with power; I bless thee that though not present at thy Transfiguration; yet seeing thee by faith and knowing thee as the

LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, all thy redeemed of the present day can say as holy Simeon of old, *mine eyes have seen thy salvation!*

Beholding thy rich mercy to the Child of the Poor Man, who, though his faith was so slender, yet thy grace was so great; help me LORD; yea, help all thy redeemed ones, to join in the same prayer, and may we experience the same mercy: LORD, *I believe! help thou mine unbelief.*

Oh! for a spirit of humility among thy Church and People, that each may esteem other better than themselves: yea, may we all be content to be nothing; yea, less than nothing, that JESUS, our adorable JESUS, may be all in all! In the awful view of the unregenerate, in their worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched oh! give thy people grace to mark, and rightly prize their distinguishing mercies. LORD! *How is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto us and not unto the world?* Oh! For the salt of the Covenant of my GOD! Oh! For the grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST, salting with the salt of his regenerating, cleansing, illuminating, strengthening, and confirming influence, my soul unto the day of eternal redemption!

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

Our LORD is here discoursing on the subject of divorcement. Little children are brought to CHRIST. The LORD again speaks of his approaching Sufferings. JESUS passeth through Jericho.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Bridegroom of thy Church! how sweetly hast thou answered all the cavils of the *Pharisees*, and silenced all the fears of thy people, in teaching thy Church in the opening of this Chapter, that JESUS hath not put away his wife, notwithstanding all her shameful departures. Oh! for grace to cry out with the spouse, *my beloved is mine, and I am his!*

Praises to the condescending grace of the SON of GOD, who receiveth now, as he received then, in the days of his flesh, little children. So LORD must it be indeed thy grace to receive me, for I

am but a child in understanding, and therefore I pray thee, thou tender LORD, to give me grace to sit at thy feet, and hear the blessed words which proceed out of thy mouth! And as thou hast taught me in the solemn example of this apparently promising youth, who for the love of this world's gain, could so readily give up CHRIST. Oh! for grace, to be kept from *the love of money, which is the root of all evil*. Bring my soul under the continual baptisms of the HOLY GHOST; and let my whole rejoicings be in the consciousness of an interest in that ransom, which my GOD and Savior hath given for many.

Oh! thou glorious covenant of thy people! Thou has indeed proved thyself to be JEHOVAH's Covenant in all thy words and works: LORD! I beseech thee give me grace to follow thee as *Bartimeus* did; let me cast away, and cast off everything of mine; for all must be, as I am myself, unclean. LORD, be thou all my salvation and all my desire; give me spiritual sight, and enable me to follow thee in the way.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS entereth Jerusalem in triumph. The barren Fig Tree. CHRIST'S Conversation with the Chief Priests.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! I would call upon you, as I would call upon myself; And may GOD the HOLY GHOST mercifully call upon both, to behold the LORD JESUS, in the opening of this chapter, as manifesting his double nature in his one glorious person, the GOD-Man Mediator; both in his unequalled humility when entering Jerusalem, in *having salvation, and yet lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass*. And who less than GOD could have exercised the knowledge of Omniscience so as to direct his disciples where to find the colt; and the power of inclining the minds of those the disciples were to meet, to fulfil CHRIST'S wishes in the loan of the colt? Who less than GOD could have taught the children in the temple of CHRIST'S person and character? And what power less than divine, could have constrained those babes to shout *Hosannah* to the glory

of JESUS; when the elders, and many of them very probably the parents of those little ones, were doing all their malice could contrive to stop their hymns of praise?

Reader! behold the barren fig tree! Observe its fruitless verdure. Figure to yourself the state of a church, a people, a family; yea, an individual, thus! And calculate if you can the awful state of appearing flourishing to the eye of man, while under the blighting curse of GOD. Oh! the tremendous sentence, could it be heard, concerning the unauthorized, uncalled, unsent minister, or graceless people: *No man eat fruit of thee for ever!*

LORD JESUS! Increase our faith! Let mountains of sin and unbelief be removed through faith in thy person blood, and righteousness! And oh! let the malice of thy foes, and the opposition made by men to thee and thy Gospel, endear both to our heart. And grant such rich supplies of grace in the knowledge of thy person and work, that our faith may never be founded in *the wisdom of man, but in the power of GOD.*

Chapter 12

Summary

The LORD is here teaching in Parables. The Pharisees and Herodians try to catch JESUS in his words. The LORD blessedly discourseth on the Resurrection, and with a Scribe: he cautions against the Scribes. The Chapter closeth with the LORD's Commendation of the Widow's Offering to the Treasury.

Reflections

Pause my soul over the many precious contents in this blessed chapter! Both the Jewish nation, and the Jewish church, have been as the LORD's vineyard. Oh! the boundless grace of JEHOVAH in setting apart that people with whom he deposited his Ordinances; *whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST came, who is over all GOD blessed for ever, Amen.* But oh! the wonderful provocations of Israel, in slighting the LORD's servants rising early and speaking, but regarding them not; till at length they killed the LORD of life and glory! But, Reader! are we then by nature

or by practice better than they? Oh! no, in no wise. The LORD hath concluded all under sin, that the righteousness of GOD, which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST, might be given to them that believe. *Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!*

My soul! behold thy LORD attacked in every way, by men calling him *Rabbi*; and professing great regard to his person, for his teaching the way of GOD in truth; and by *Pharisee* and *Sadducee*, by *Herodians* and by *Scribes*, aiming to catch him in his words! Oh! thou divine and Almighty Teacher, cause thy blessed truths in this chapter to sink deep into my heart! LORD! be thou everlastingly blessed for thy gracious discoveries concerning the glorious truths of thy resurrection. LORD! be thou my resurrection, and my life! Give me to know Israel's GOD in covenant as one LORD! And oh! give me grace to love Him in his threefold character of Person, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, *with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength*. And in the love of GOD may my affections find sweet directions,, to the love of my neighbor. So will David's LORD be my LORD, and his CHRIST my CHRIST. And like the poor widow, the LORD's treasury will have my whole living; since all I have, and all I am, are the LORD's, and of His own only do I give him.

CHAPTER 13

Summary

The LORD foretells the Destruction of the Temple; and the sad Calamities of the Jews. His solemn Cautions to his Disciples in the Expectation of those woeful Events.

REFLECTIONS

How little was it apprehended, either by the disciples or the multitude, that when JESUS went out of the temple, as is here represented in the opening of this chapter; he went out to return to it no more! Reader! so ought you, and I, to esteem ordinances, and our attendance on the house of prayer, each time as though it were our last. How differently would they be valued even by those who

valued them most, if this thought were always uppermost in our minds?

Reader! vvhile perusing the many awful events foretold by our LORD, in this chapter; how precious the thought! CHRIST's people were *safe in the midst of danger. It is wonderful until explained by GOD the HOLY GHOST, how the LORD's people in all ages live, and are carried on, and carried through, a thousand perils which apparently, seem to threaten destruction to them as well as the ungodly; and yet Noah-like they live out the storm, secured in the Ark* CHRIST JESUS. *How may every child of GOD; yea; how ought every child of GOD to take to himself the comfort of the LORD's assurance; I know the thoughts I think towards you; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Precious LORD JESUS! thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance!*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

We enter here upon the History of CHRIST's Passion. The Chief Priests conspire against him. A woman anoints the LORD. Judas selleth CHRIST, and betrayeth him. Peter denieth him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us look up for the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, while in the perusal of this sacred chapter, that all the blessed contents of it may be engrafted in our hearts. Who can read of the Jewish Passover, and here contemplate CHRIST our Passover sacrificed for us, and not earnestly desire to keep the feast. LORD JESUS! give to all thy redeemed which attend thy table, a portion of the same grace as filled the heart of this woman. Oh! for the Spikenard of the HOLY SPIRIT, to anoint the feet of JESUS at his table!

LORD! let thy sweet teaching be upon us, while reading the denial of *Peter*, and the desertion of all the Apostles, still to mark the essential difference between backsliding, and the total want of grace, as in the instance of the traitor *Judas*. LORD! give us grace to praise the great Author of his discriminating mercy! Dearest JESUS! let

Gethsemane be ever dear to the remembrance of thy people. Here in faith would the souls of thy redeemed delight to roam and meditate thy soul-agony and conflicts and temptations. And LORD when we see thee, taken from thence, to prison and to judgment! oh! for grace to behold thee; *as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace as upon thee, and by thy stripes we are healed.* Oh! the wonders of redemption, that He *who knew no sin, should be made sin for us; that we, who knew no righteousness, should be made the righteousness of GOD in Him.*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here led away to Pilate. He is Condemned, and delivered to be Crucified. His Death and Burial.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not hastily pass away from this most solemn and interesting chapter. It is profitable to follow the footsteps of the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. And while from the High Priest's palace, to the palace of Pilate, we attend the lowly Redeemer, marking his footsteps with his blood, oh! for grace to ponder well the cause of all his sufferings. The HOLY GHOST in one line of his blessed word, hath explained the whole. CHRIST hath once suffered for sins; the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to GOD.

Reader! do not overlook that every hand, both Jew and Gentile, were embued in his blood; yea, above all, behold the hand of JEHOVAH engaged in the vast design. Look at the cross, and hear the voice of the LORD, calling to the sword to awake. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of HOSTS! Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered!*

Reader! let us both, as lovers of JESUS, attend the funeral. This is the office of near and dear friends. Remember, he is still the same, and the covenant in his blood cannot be dissolved by death. And in the contemplation of our own death, and our sure resurrection in JESUS, let us say with *Job, oh! that thou wouldst hide me in the*

grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until the wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

CHRIST'S *Resurrection, and his Appearance to Mary Magdalene and to others. The LORD giveth his Commission to his Apostles; and returned unto Glory.*

REFLECTIONS

READER while you and I hasten, with the ardent love of those godly women, to the Sepulcher of JESUS, and hear with the ear of faith, as they heard in sense, the invitation of the Angel; *Come see the place where the LORD lay.* Oh! for the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to follow JESUS from the cross to the throne, and behold where the LORD lay from all eternity, in the bosom of the FATHER.

Send down, thou risen and exalted SAVIOUR, all those precious gifts thou art returned on purpose to impart! And as in the case of *Mary, Magdalene*, such grace was manifested; so in the instance of all thy redeemed ones, prove, thou dearest LORD, that thou *art exalted as a Prince and a SAVIOUR, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* Oh! the blessedness of receiving the power of CHRIST'S resurrection, in the heart and conscience, when the LORD works with his holy word, and *confirms that word with signs following.* May the souls of all the LORD'S redeemed family, thus find the sweet testimonies to the truth of our LORD'S resurrection; when *first GOD our FATHER having raised up his SON JESUS, hath sent him to bless us in turning away every one of us from our iniquities.*

And now FAREWELL *Mark!* thou faithful Evangelist; surely thou hast well done the work of one, and *made full proof of thy Ministry.* For the testimony of thy Gospel is in the hearts of thousands, *to the truth as it is in JESUS, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.* Precious is the *written Word*, when confirmed as an *engrafted Word*, by the SPIRIT'S grace in the heart; and when that Almighty LORD, sets to his seal, in the heart, that *GOD is true.* All the

faithful will thank thee, *Mark*, for thy labour of love, as they daily read the wonders recorded by thee of JESUS. And all will find cause, who are taught of GOD, to say as *Paul* did concerning thee, though not called to the service of the sanctuary, as he was; for *he is profitable to me in his ministry!*

Precious LORD JESUS! while we thank the servant, we bow down with unspeakable thanksgiving to the MASTER! Be thou everlastingly loved, and praised, and adored, in thy Person, Work, Offices, Characters, and Relations. *Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.* Praised be the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all Covenant love, in JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

LUKE

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In entering upon this blessed Book of GOD, which carries with it, through every Chapter and verse, proofs of divine inspiration, I would beg the Reader to look up with me to the Almighty LORD, WHICH both directed and guided *Luke's* pen, for grace to attend to it, with that reverence and godly fear, as is suitable and becoming to such precious Memoirs of our LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. Surely, Reader, the HOLY GHOST would not have raised up the several Evangelists to this sacred service, neither have added the Gospel of *Luke* to those of *Matthew*, and *Mark*, but for the most blessed purposes. Oh! that they may all be unitedly made *a sweet savor; to make manifest his knowledge to his people in every place.*

Some have thought that *Luke* was one of the seventy disciples. It is possible he might have been so. And others have supposed, that he is the same person whom *Paul* calls *the beloved Physician*. Colossians 4:10. But there is no certainty whether either be right; the whole is conjecture.

Neither is it determinable, with any greater assurance, at what time *Luke* wrote this Gospel. Some make it as early as within *fifteen* years after our LORD's ascension: So *Beza* saith in his Manuscript Copy: while others date it as late as *twenty-seven*. *Eusebius*, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates, that the Apostle *John* read it when finished, and gave his sanction to it. But GOD's people have a yet higher authority of its truth, when the HOLY GHOST, in his divine teaching, gives to his regenerated children the testimony of its holy doctrines in their own hearts and consciences. I cannot upon this occasion help making an earnest request to my Reader, that he will make this the grand standard of decision, concerning the whole scriptures of GOD; namely, that when the HOLY GHOST teacheth *in* them, and *by* them, this forms of itself the truest test of their divine authority. May the Lord the SPIRIT do this, by this precious portion

of his Holy word, we are now entering upon, and render it in his Almighty Hand, the blessed instrument of good to his people. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

We have an Introduction by the Evangelist, in the opening of this Gospel. To which follows the Account of *John the Baptist*, as the Harbinger of Christ. An Angel appears to *Zacharias*, and to the Virgin *Mary*: the Hymn of *Mary* on the Occasion: the Birth of *John the Baptist*, and the Prophecy thereon of *Zacharias*.

REFLECTIONS

REAPER! let, you, and I, at the very portal of this precious Gospel, stand and pause, before we hastily enter into the perusal of its blessed contents, and look up, and praise the Almighty Author, of His holy word, for such a profusion of mercies, as are here made known unto us; while we entreat the same glorious LORD to be our teacher, into a right understanding of those mysteries of godliness, to make us *wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. Was it not enough to have given the Church the inspired records, concerning our LORD, in the precious relation by *Matthew* and *Mark*; but would our bountiful LORD add the Gospel, according to *Luke*, and *John* also? Oh then! do thou, blessed LORD the HOLY GHOST, accompany the whole with thy divine teaching, that we may know the things, which are so freely given us of GOD; *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.

Behold, Reader, in this chapter, the unbelief of *Zacharias*. Behold the faith of *Mary* and *Elizabeth*! To what, or to whom, shall we ascribe these things, but to distinguishing grace? Oh! may it be our happiness, *to believe the record, which GOD hath given of his dear SON*. And while we have faith, to this testimony of GOD; may we never lose sight of what the HOLY GHOST hath taught by his servant, the Apostle; when he saith, *Unto you it is given to believe in his name*.

Reader! let us ponder over, again and again, the wonderful subject here recorded, of the miraculous conception. Let us view the

distant prophecies, so many ages before, declaring the unheard of, unthought of, event: and then behold, as related in this Chapter, the accomplishment; until our souls are warmed with the contemplation, and we feel constrained to cry out with the Apostle, *Great is the mystery of godliness, GOD was manifest in our flesh!* And oh! for grace to join in those hymns, both of *Mary and Zacharias*, from a personal interest in the same subject. Surely our souls may well rejoice in GOD our SAVIOR, when *through the mercy of our GOD the day-spring from on high hath visited us.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The birth of *CHRIST*. His Circumcision. Simeon's Prophecy of *CHRIST*, and the declaration of *Anna* concerning him. *JESUS* teaching in the Temple, at the age of twelve years.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how little did the Roman Emperor *Augustus*, or his deputy *Cyrenius*, conceive, that the over-ruling power of GOD so arranged the taxation, that the chief object to which it should minister, should be to bring the Virgin *Mary* to *Bethlehem*, and mark the precise period of the birth of *CHRIST*! How unconscious were the Jewish shepherds, when keeping watch over their flocks by night, until the message from heaven informed them of the wonderful event of the arrival of the SAVIOR! And oh! the astonishing mystery, when GOD, who hath recorded from all eternity the names of his redeemed in the book of life, brings them acquainted with the unspeakable mercy, and manifests himself to them otherwise than he doeth to the world. Reader! can You and I mark down our personal knowledge of these things, so as with *Simeon* or *Anna* declare, our eyes have seen *CHRIST*'s salvation; and speak of the LORD *JESUS* to all them *that look for redemption in Jerusalem?*

Precious LORD *JESUS*! when I behold thy obscure birth, thy low circumstances and mean accommodation, a manger only to receive thee in thine entrance into this our world, and no room for thee in the inn; oh, what a lively representation was there in this, of all the

future circumstances of thy life. Truly didst thou say, and the truth holds equally good in all ages; *Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in thee!* My soul! delight thou more and more in the sweet testimonies of thy LORD'S humanity, while beholding him at the same time possessing all the proofs of GODHEAD. For by both only could JESUS be suited for thee as thy Surety, Husband, and SAVIOR. Oh! the preciousness of that mystery, which without controversy is great, *GOD was manifest in the flesh.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Introduction of *John the Baptist*, with the Time of his Entrance on his Ministry. His Testimony of *CHRIST*. Our *LORD'S* Baptism and Genealogy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! where are all those proud monarchs, in the *Cesars*, and *Pilates*, and *Herods*, of the day; whose looks frowned men for the moment into fear; and whose words, and actions, made men tremble throughout the earth? The flood of time hath gone over them, and they are no more! But He, who as a *little stone cut out without hands*, hath broken them all in pieces, and, as foretold, is become a mountain, and hath filled and is filling the earth. Behold the humbleness and austerity of his herald the Baptist. Then see the low estate of the SON of GOD. And in the midst of all that debasement, poverty, and meekness of character, hear the voice from heaven attesting to the glories of his person, while the HOLY GHOST bore testimony to the same; *Thou art my beloved Son! In thee I am well pleased.* Oh! for grace to be well pleased also with his person, work, offices, character, and relations! Precious LORD JESUS! truly thou art the seed of the woman; and in thee *shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Christ's Temptations. His Preaching in the Synagogue. He casteth out a Devil, and cureth many that were sick.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let it be our wisdom, in all our meditations on the sufferings and exercises of CHRIST, to connect with them the cause. *He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed!* And while we think of those things, let us in all our lesser exercises bless GOD, when at any time called to the fellowship in suffering of his SON JESUS CHRIST. *My brethren* (saith James) *count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations.* And, no doubt, when the strength of CHRIST is made perfect in our weakness, there is great cause of joy, to glory even in our infirmities, when the power of CHRIST doth rest upon us.

Reader! think what a sermon CHRIST'S first sermon was, as recorded here, which he preached after his ordination by the unction of the HOLY GHOST, in the Jewish synagogue? Oh! that all preachers of the word of GOD were to follow CHRIST'S example, and thereby prove that the spirit of the LORD, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST, was upon them. Might we not hope, that from the same blessed cause, as by the master, so by his servants, gracious effects would follow; and the LORD'S cause would be glorified in the earth. But let all such not fail to do as CHRIST did. However offensive to carnal reason, and to the free will of men, let the sovereignty of GOD be proclaimed. Many widows, and many *lepers* there may be in Israel now, as of old; but until GOD sends his word, there will be no commission to heal. Oh! do thou, blessed JESUS, who in the days of thy flesh didst heal all the diseases of thy people, now in the day of thy power manifest the sovereignty of thy grace and salvation, and preach by thy blessed spirit, as then in the synagogues of Galilee. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the *LORD JESUS* teaching the People: the miraculous Draught of Fishes; the Leper cleansed; a Man with a Palsy healed; and the Call of *Matthew*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think what privileges the men of that generation possessed, which had CHRIST himself for their preacher! He, who was himself the whole of the covenant, to be the messenger, and administrator of it also! Well might the people press upon him to hear the word of GOD! And, Reader! see how immediately after the sermon was finished, he kindly rewarded the attendance of his disciples with the supply of fishes. What a testimony at the same time of his being LORD and proprietor, both of earth and sea. LORD! let such a display of thy sovereignty have the same effect on my heart, as on that of *Peter*; not to say LORD! depart from me, but to impress my mind as his was, that I may say, *Thou art my LORD and my GOD!*

Oh! for grace, when I read of this *leper*, and hear of the mercy shewn to the *paralytic*, to have faith in my GOD! Yes! blessed JESUS, all power is thine to cleanse both the leprosy of soul and body; and to remove the crippled state of all thy redeemed, until *the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing*. Like *Levi*, LORD! I would take thee home to my house, to my heart, and invite other poor sinners to the banquet of my GOD. No Pharisaical fastings would I set up, by way of recommending myself to the LORD; but rejoice in this, CHRIST came not to call the self-righteous, but sinners to repentance. No patched up garments, no new wine of the Gospel to receive in the old skin of nature; but pray that He who sits upon the throne, making all things new, while He himself remains eternally and unchangeably the same, would make my heart new, and renew a right spirit within me. LORD JESUS! do thou all this, and more; and cause thou me to drink of the old wine of thine everlasting love, *which goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak!*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

JESUS passing through the Corn Fields on the Sabbath, and his Disciples eating the ears of Corn, called forth the anger of the Pharisees. *JESUS'S* Answer. He healeth the withered Hand: calleth the Disciples: performeth miracles, and preacheth.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! as oft as I pass through the corn fields, whether on the Sabbath day or any other, may the recollection of thine unequalled tenderness and condescension, in those seasons here represented, lead me to the contemplation of thy grace and love to thy disciples. And while I behold thy followers rubbing the ears of corn and eating them, I would call to mind how *JESUS* was broken and bruised for our sins, and his body given as the bread of life for all his redeemed. Oh! for grace to feed on thee by faith, until I come to see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever! And do thou, LORD, to all my withered and dying circumstances, do by me as this poor man in the synagogue; let *JESUS* speak but the word, and sure I am of being healed. And let thine effectual calling on my poor heart, cause me to follow thee, as did thy faithful disciples: surely, LORD, if virtue went out of thee, when upon earth, and healed them all, the efficacy is not lessened in the day of thy power! Oh! for that distinguishing grace which *JESUS* pronounceth to be blessed, which though found by them that are poor in themselves, and among the hungry and the mourners, are found rich in faith before GOD, and heirs of the kingdom. Standing firm on the rock *CHRIST JESUS*, they shall ride out every storm, and find *CHRIST* a sure sanctuary in the day of wrath.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

We have here the Cure of the Centurion's Servant: the raising of the *Widow's Son*; *CHRIST'S* Answer to the Messengers of *John the Baptist*; and *Mary* anointing *CHRIST'S* Feet.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! behold thy LORD, in the many sweet views of Him presented in this chapter. See him in his mercy, hastening to the relief of the centurion's servant. Behold him manifesting what the HOLY GHOST had marked of his character, when exercising his sovereign authority as GOD, blended with the tenderness of his manhood, at the gate of the city *Nain*. Oh! who that beheld my GOD and SAVIOR, in that moment, of turning the widow's tears into joy, and raising her son from the dead, but would have cried out with the Prophet, and echoed to his blessed words, *behold! your GOD is come to save you!* And who that beheld the poor penitent in the house of the proud Pharisee, and the gracious mercy and condescension of JESUS to her sorrows, but would have hailed the happy hour of GOD's faithful promise confirmed; *I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins.*

And is it not the same in the present hour? Is the LORD's arm shortened that he cannot save? Is his ear grown heavy, that he cannot hear? Precious, precious LORD JESUS! how sweet to my soul the assurance, that as thy person, so thy purpose admits of no change. JESUS CHRIST! the same yesterday and to day, and for ever.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here an Account of some Women who ministered unto CHRIST. The Parable of the Sower. JESUS on the Water. The Man dispossessed of the Legion: the Daughter of Jairus raised from the dead; and the Woman healed of the bloody Issue.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! ye poor and afflicted of the LORD's tried ones, how JESUS, the SON of GOD, when he humbled himself to be made man, condescended to have his wants supplied by the bounty of his people. Oh! how hath he dignified the path of honest poverty by his bright example! Never, then, forget what *Paul* was commanded to tell the church: *Ye know*, said he, *the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,*

*that ye, through his poverty, might be made rich. Blessed LORD! while I read thy sweet parable of the sower, oh for grace to discover that the pure seed of thy Gospel is sown in my heart, by thy sovereign power: and, from the fallow ground of my poor heart being turned up, and planted with thy grace, the fruit of thy righteousness may, in thee, and through thee, be brought forth an hundred fold. Enable me to embark with thee, thou dearest LORD, in the roughest sea, never being alarmed as long as GOD-incarnate is with me in the storm; who guides the helm of all my affairs, and will rebuke both wind and tide. And blessed be my GOD, my SAVIOUR, my HOLY ONE! JESUS, the SON of GOD, hath dispossessed the enemy from my heart; and now let me, as this poor *Gadarene*, sit at the feet of JESUS, cloathed in my LORD's robe of righteousness, and in my right mind. Yea, LORD, if, like the poor woman, deeply and long diseased, or even as the ruler's daughter, dead, JESUS can and will recover. He saith himself, *I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Amen,**

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* is here sending forth his Apostles. An Account of Herod. *JESUS* feedeth the Multitude in the Wilderness. *Peter's* blessed Confession of *CHRIST*. The Transfiguration. The Lunatic healed. *JESUS* going through Samaria.

REFLECTIONS

THINK, my soul, of the vast honour, the high privilege, the distinguished dignity of the apostles of thy GOD and SAVIOR! Sent forth, as his ambassadors, to call his redeemed Israel to the blessings of reconciliation and peace! Oh! ye servants of the LORD, what an honour was your's to cast out devils, to heal the sick, and preach the Gospel! But what an awful contrast in the character of *Herod*! And yet who that had seen the poverty of the poor fishermen of *Galilee*, and beheld the purpled luxuries of the *Tetrarch*, but would have connected every thing blessed with the latter, and misery with the former? See, Reader, how JESUS instantly supplied a wilderness with

food: and think, then, how soon the wilderness frames of his people he can make to blossom as the rose! Oh! my soul, what a view was that which the disciples *Peter, John, and James*, had of JESUS in the Mount of Transfiguration! But what was this, in point of glory, to that which all the church of GOD will see, and thou among the number, when he shall come in the mount Zion, *to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe?* Behold CHRIST'S power in healing the lunatic. Behold how JESUS predicted his sufferings when he should be crucified in weakness. Oh! for grace, that all the precious sayings of JESUS may sink down into my ears! And grant, dearest LORD, that while Samaritans refuse to receive thee; and the dead, in trespasses and sins, are too busily employed in burying their dead, to find time or inclination to follow thee, I may be found with having put my hand to the gospel plough; and never to look back, but follow my LORD in the regeneration, and enter with him into his kingdom.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The LORD appoints other Seventy also to go before him. CHRIST pronounceth a woe upon *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*. JESUS in sweet Communion with his FATHER. The Parable of the Samaritan. *Martha* reproved.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in pondering the several weighty and important things contained in this chapter, let us both look again and again to the Almighty Author of his holy word, to accompany our reading of it with his gracious teaching. JESUS, when he sent forth the seventy disciples here spoken of, to the work to which he called them, sent them forth only to the city, or place, whither he himself would come. And without the LORD'S presence with us, what can we hope to enjoy of the LORD'S grace and blessing? We see in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* the awful event of Gospel Ordinances, unaccompanied with the divine favour. LORD! in mercy grant the doom of *Capernaum* may never fall on our *British* Israel!

Amidst this awful view, help me, thou dear LORD JESUS, help every truly regenerated Reader to rejoice in what thou hast said of *Satan's* fall, as lightning from Heaven. Oh! for a heart renewed by grace to sing that song which *John* once heard in vision: *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our GOD, and the power of his CHRIST; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our GOD day and night.* And oh! the greater joy still, than that of treading on serpents and scorpions, to know our names are written in Heaven. Secured by this in GOD the FATHER's everlasting love, we are One with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us; and sealed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, unto the day of eternal redemption. Oh! HOLY FATHER! taught by thy dear SON, let every renewed soul praise thee, that though these things be hidden, from men who are worldly wise, and prudent in their own eyes, yet hast thou revealed them unto babes. All which we humbly and thankfully refer unto thine own sovereign will and pleasure. *Even so, FATHER, for so it seemed good in thy sight!*

Precious LORD JESUS! give us grace to hail thee, thou great Samaritan! Surely it is thou, and thou alone, which fully answereth to the character, thou thyself hast drawn, when from heaven thou camest down to this our world, to seek and save that which was lost. LORD! thou wilt bring thy whole redeemed home, though wounded by Satan, and dead in trespasses and sins! And oh! for grace, that until that hour comes for thy return, thy people may not be found like *Martha* cumbered with the many things of this unsatisfying, dying, sinful state; but through thy grace giving the power, like *Mary*, we may chuse that good part which *cannot be taken away.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter our *LORD* teaching his Disciples to pray. He works a Miracle in casting out a Devil. He preacheth to the People; and pronounceth a Woe upon the Scribes and Pharisees.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST LORD JESUS! I would say for myself, and all thy redeemed family, teach us to pray, and with what words to come before the LORD, in all our soul exercises, and wants, and conflicts, and trials. Do thou, dear LORD! by the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT, both spread thy fullness, cause us to feel our need, excite a spiritual appetite, and open a constant source of communion, *that, from thy fullness, we may all receive and grace for grace!* And oh! for a fervor in prayer, awakened by the HOLY GHOST! that, like the friend at midnight, and *Jacob at Bethel*, never may we go to the mercy-seat, and come away empty; but, like the great father of the praying seed, in the same spirit of faith to tell our GOD, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* And, oh LORD! grant that neither the *Queen of the South*, nor the *Ninevites*, may bring reproach upon thy people! No Solomon like our Solomon—no preaching of *Jonah* like the preaching of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Precious MASTER! let neither the awful state of *Pharisee* blindness, nor the wretched delusion of *Jewish* ignorance, be in the lot of thy redeemed, in all generations of thy Church. Oh! for grace to sit at thy feet, to hear thy word! that through the blessed illumination of GOD the HOLY GHOST, *our whole body*, as thou hast said, *being full of light, and having no part dark, the whole may be full of light!* JESUS, the sun of righteousness, shining *as when the bright shining of a candle doth give the people light.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

JESUS is here preaching to the People. A Man from the throng complains to him of his Brother. The *LORD* takes occasion therefrom to reprove Covetousness, and discourseth on several Subjects.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the HOLY GHOST is blessedly teaching the Church, in this chapter, sweet lessons of grace and of providence. In the view of the multitude pressing upon JESUS to hear the word of GOD, we are taught how precious ordinances are, where the LORD is present to

bless them. And in the discourse of JESUS on the LORD's care over the birds of the air, and his glory displayed in the lilies of the field, we learn how everlastingly secure and provided for must be his redeemed ones. And in the contemplation of the foolish worldling, how strikingly doth JESUS shew the little value of riches, unsanctified by the blessing of the LORD. And should these reflections meet the eye of one of the LORD's timid fold, oh! for GOD the SPIRIT, to make that sweet Scripture blessed. *Fear not, little flock, it is your FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Hail! thou blessed Master of thine household, which promiseth such rich rewards to thy waiting servants! But wilt thou indeed condescend to such acts of humbleness as to gird thyself, and serve them? Was it ever heard of in the annals of mankind that ever a Lord did so? *Solomon* was struck with astonishment, that he, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, should visit the house he had built with his presence. But what would this eastern prince have said, had he beheld JESUS the SON of God washing the feet of poor fishermen? Oh! for grace *to know that love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God!*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The *LORD* is here discoursing to the People. He speaks of the Galileans, and of the Barren Fig-Tree. He cureth a Woman of her Infirmary. Makes a circuit through the Villages; and laments over Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both, as we contemplate the LORD's visitations on those *Galileans* and men of *Siloam*, gather improvement from what JESUS hath said, and solemnly remember, that without faith and repentance, which are both the gifts of GOD, and arising from the LORD'S regenerating the heart, we shall all likewise perish. And, Reader! in the barren fig-tree, growing without fruit within the pale of God's vineyard, the Church, let us behold the awful state of all those who have a name to live, but yet are virtually dead before

GOD. Oh! the blessedness of being found trees of the LORD's planting, made fat and fruitful by his blessing!

Precious LORD JESUS! do thou graciously come into our synagogues, thy Churches, on thine own day, and every day in thine ordinances! Oh! how many of thine, like this daughter of *Abraham*, are bound in the *Adam*-nature of sin by *Satan*! And wilt thou not, dear LORD! call them all to thee? lay thine Almighty hand upon them, and make them whole? All thy redeemed will glorify thee for all the gracious manifestations of thy love. And do thou, dearest LORD! give thy people to see thy unremitting watchfulness and care over them. All the tenderness and solicitude of the hen cannot describe the boundless love of JESUS, in gathering his little ones to him, and covering them with his wings, while thy faithfulness and truth become their shield and buckler. And oh! thou gracious GOD of our salvation, cause us to note down, in the strongest characters, thy distinguishing grace! While nations and individuals, like *Jerusalem* of old, become Gospel despisers, and perish, and refuse to have thee to reign over them, do thou, LORD! strongly impress the wonderous truth upon the hearts of all thy redeemed, that it is all of grace wherein they differ, and that to thy grace they may cheerfully ascribe all the glory.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* dineth with a Pharisee. He healeth a Man of the Dropsy. He puts forth a Parable. Describes his Gospel under the Similitude of a great Supper; and adds a blessed Discourse.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not turn away too hastily from this beautiful chapter, and those soul-teaching, and soul-refreshing discourses of CHRIST, While the *Pharisees* watched JESUS, to find somewhat offensive, as according to their corrupt hearts they would have made it, let you and I listen to his heavenly doctrine, and behold, with delight and joy, his mercies to the body in healing the man with the dropsy, while mingling sweet words for consolation to the soul, and

oh! for grace in contemplating CHRIST thus discoursing at the *Pharisee's* table! to be earnest to discourse of JESUS at our own! What can be more suited, more grateful, more blessed than, while partaking of the LORD'S bounties, to speak of the Lord's love? and while sitting with our family at *our* supper, to mingle with our food gracious conversation of the LORD'S?

Reader! do not overlook the very wonderful condescension of JESUS in the various methods the LORD was pleased to adopt in setting forth the plentiful provisions of his Gospel. What a feast indeed of fat things it is! What bowels of mercy and grace in the Great Provider! And what company are the guests invited? such as the great ones of the earth would not look at, much less consort with. Oh! how utterly lost, how utterly inexcusable must those be who refuse such great salvation! Hasten, my soul! hasten, Reader! for it is the poor and the maimed, the most sensibly wretched and miserable, that are most welcome.

And doth my LORD say that his followers must be self-haters, must bear a cross, must hate all which would stop the way? Oh! for grace to be of that happy number! LORD! help me to pluck out an eye, cut off an arm, leave all for JESUS and his great salvation, so that I may be found the true disciple of the LORD! Amen.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The *LORD* is here teaching by Parables. Here are three contained in this Chapter; namely, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not hastily pass away from the review of this most blessed chapter, but ponder over again and again the sweet and gracious contents. And as from divine teaching in the Scriptures of eternal truth, we discover that the whole three persons in the GODHEAD have mercifully concurred in the salvation of the Church, let us delight upon any and every occasion, to behold an illustration

of their joint grace and favor, whenever the word sets forth their office-work, as manifested to the souls of the Lord's people.

Precious LORD JESUS! do we not behold thee in that lovely and endearing representation thou hast here drawn of the tender and affectionate shepherd? Surely the fold, the Church, is thine, both by the FATHER'S gift, thine own purchase, and the conquest of thine HOLY SPIRIT. And when one of thy little ones wander from thee, wilt thou not seek it on the mountains, until thou shalt find it? and. when thou hast found it, wilt thou not bring it home, as here described, on thy shoulders, rejoicing? Is it not JESUS'S joy, as well as the happiness of his redeemed, when this is done? Blessed be my LORD, my Shepherd, who, when in the *Adam*-nature of my fallen state, I had wandered on the dark mountains, JESUS sought me out, and found me; and hath not only brought me home, but now watches over me for good, and feeds me, and sustains me, and causeth me to lie down in green pastures.

And no less, thou HOLY and eternal SPIRIT, GOD the HOLY GHOST, do I pray for grace from thee, to look up to thee, and bless thy Almighty Name, that when, like a piece of lost money, I was fallen in the nature of sin, thou didst, by thy sweeping judgments and enlightening grace, find me, and restore me to the image of GOD in CHRIST. *Spirit of Truth! do thou lead me into all truth!*

And oh! thou FATHER *of mercies*, and GOD *of all comfort!* receive me, LORD, as the father in the parable did his returning prodigal. *I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost.* But thou, in thy rich mercy, hast received me; and by thy grace in me, caused me to return. Thy bowels of love yearned over me in my lost estate, *for thy mercy endureth for ever*; And now, LORD! through thy grace, I shall go out no more. Thou hast killed for me indeed the fatted calf, and clothed me with the robe of CHRIST'S righteousness. Oh! for grace to live to thy glory, daily crying out with the Apostle, *Now thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter our *LORD'S* account of an unjust Steward; and *CHRIST'S* Observation upon the History. The Relation, also, of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in beholding the character of this unjust steward, let us learn to seek from GOD grace, that we may be found faithful. And let us, in putting the question to our own hearts, which he put to every one of his Lord's debtors, do the reverse of what he recommended, and instead of lessening our account, learn to discover that they far exceed our own views of them. Oh! thou blessed LORD! I owe thee more in nature, providence, and grace, than any calculation can number. So much so, O LORD! that I am insolvent for ever. But, LORD! let thy grace still exceed even my unworthiness. Oh! grant that I may be received into thine everlasting habitations!

Blessed Jesus! cause me to learn, in the history of this rich glutton, how short-lived all pamperings of the flesh are; and what an awful close terminates the career of all who live without GOD, and without CHRIST, in the world. And let me be content to be as *Lazarus*, poor, if need be, here below, if *rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom*. Be thou, dear LORD! my portion, and then all is well. Every state sanctified in CHRIST is, and must be, blessed. LORD! grant that I may exercise an holy jealousy in all; and by making thee what GOD the FATHER hath made thee, both *Alpha* and *Omega*; my LORD may be the first in all my desires, and the close of all my joys; for then in life and death, both here and hereafter, JESUS will be my everlasting portion.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Some very blessed Discourses of CHRIST are contained in this Chapter. The History of the Ten Lepers. Some of *CHRIST'S* Prophecies.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou blessed LORD JESUS! well is it said by thee, that offences will come. Yes! thou, dear LORD! art thyself, to every carnal, unawakened sinner, *a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence*. Thy humble birth, thy meek deportment, thy cross, thy despised followers, to those who looked for temporal prosperity, was indeed an offence that nothing but sovereign grace could overcome. Blessed be that distinguishing grace of my GOD bestowed upon my poor heart, that I am no longer offended in thee!

Oh! for grace to every sensible, awakened sinner, to come to JESUS under the leprosy of sin. Would to GOD, I would say, like the poor captive servant in *Syria*, that all such were with my LORD, the LORD GOD of the prophets, that is LORD over Israel, JESUS. He can heal all of their leprosy of sin. Blessed JESUS! make all thy people sensible of this, according to the covenant promise *in the day of thy power*.

My soul! seek not for CHRIST'S kingdom, in the mere outward things of observation; but seek it in the power of grace within, in the LORD'S empire in the heart. Seek it in the FATHER'S testimony of his dear SON; seek it in the complete, full, all-sufficient, and all-justifying righteousness, and blood shedding of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and seek it in the precious, blessed, regenerating, and renewing grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Here JESUS manifests his distinguishing love and mercy in the taking of one, and leaving the other; for while *many are called, few are chosen*.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the Relation of the Importunate Widow, The Parable of the *Pharisee* and *Publican*. Children brought to *CHRIST*. Our *LORD'S* Discourses; and the History of the Blind *Man*, near *Jericho*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST, for his sweet and gracious office it is, to lead to the mercy-seat, to endite our prayers when there, and to give us every thing suited to that sacred place; that He will of his rich mercy so help us in our infirmities, that we may be enabled to do as JESUS here commands, *always pray and not faint*. And oh! what unanswerable motives the LORD hath here furnished us with, in beholding a cruel, time-serving, unfeeling judge, at length prevailed upon to give way to a poor widow's unceasing importunity; when we call to mind that the LORD to whom we go in *CHRIST*, is our righteous, gracious, compassionate tender FATHER; and who himself hath expressly said: *It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear!* Oh! for faith, *to believe the record GOD hath given of his dear SON!*

LORD hide pride from our eyes, that no child of thine may be tinctured with pride, like this haughty blinded *Pharisee*; but give to all thy redeemed grace to be humbled like this poor *Publican*, that with self-contrition as his, we may each smite upon his breast as he did, saying, *GOD be merciful to me a sinner!*

And oh! for the continual teachings and leadings of the HOLY GHOST, that as babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, we may come to JESUS; and never be sorrowful, as the young man rich in this world was, when called upon to leave all for *CHRIST*. Do thou, blessed LORD! do by us as by the blind man near *Jericho*, put a cry on our heart, and the more the ungodly rebuke for following JESUS, the more may our souls cry aloud for him, until JESUS heareth and answereth prayer, opens all the blinded senses of our spiritual faculties, and gives us grace to follow him in the regeneration; that

we may glorify the LORD upon earth, and praise him to all eternity in heaven.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Of *Zaccheus* the Publican. The Parable of the Talents. *JESUS* entereth *Jerusalem*, and goeth immediately to the Temple.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! do I behold thee, mine honored LORD, entering and passing through *Jericho*, the cursed city? Yes! I do. And is it, my soul, to be wondered at, when I know that that HOLY LORD, who knew no sin, was yet content to be made both sin and a curse, that his redeemed might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him? And was there a poor *Zaccheus* near *Jericho*, one of CHRIST'S, a son of *Abraham*, that JESUS went purposely to seek? And will not JESUS still seek his own, wherever they are scattered, in the present cloudy and dark day? Oh! yes! JESUS will call them down from every lofty imagination, or raise them up from every fallen state; for *the SON of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost*.

Almighty King! thou art indeed a nobleman gone to receive to thyself a kingdom, and to return LORD! give me grace to occupy till thou shalt come. The truest occupation, my honored LORD, is to live on thee, and to be everlastingly receiving of thy fulness, and grace for grace. And when my LORD shall come, shall I not, as those babes of Israel, hail thee with Hosannas; yea, with shouts and acclamations of praise? *Blessed, for ever blessed be He that cometh in the name of the LORD*.

And, oh! thou tender compassionate LORD! May my soul often call to remembrance thy tears over Jerusalem. JESUS wept! Oh! the largeness of mercies in the heart of the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. What shall ever keep my soul from going to Him, who knoweth my frame by his own; and whose mercies are the mercies of both GOD and man in one. Oh! the privilege of a throne of grace! Oh! the blessedness of such an High Priest!

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The Chief Priests and the Scribes demand of *CHRIST* his Authority for his Ministry. The *LORD* puts them to silence. He adds a Parable. In answer to a Sadducee, *JESUS* discourseth on the Resurrection.

REFLECTIONS

READER! observe in the opening of this Chapter, with what determined hatred the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and Elders, came upon *CHRIST*! What had *JESUS* done? He had preached the Gospel to the poor; and had gone about, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And was this the cause of all their hatred and malignity? Yes! truly; and cause enough, to Satan and his seed. Look into the world now. Is the offence of the cross ceased? Oh no! Let any of *CHRIST*'s servants in the present hour preach the Gospel the master preached; and hold forth salvation alone in his name, throwing to the ground all goodness and righteousness of men, and declaring, that *CHRIST*'s blood and merits are the sole cause of acceptance before *GOD*; and the same effects will follow. The whole body of modern Pharisees will rise up, and like the hornet's nest will buz about to sting if they can.

What an awful, but just parable, hath *JESUS* here delivered of the vineyard and the husbandmen. The very enemies of *CHRIST* were compelled to acknowledge the application of it. How truly awful it is, to behold a professing Church wholly destitute of godliness. Husbandmen like foxes of the desert, destroying, but not cultivating, the *LORD*'s vineyard!

Reader! The *HOLY GHOST* hath not recorded the events in this Chapter for nothing. Let you and I learn, both from *Pharisee*, and *Sadducee*, to discover the melancholy state of a mind unenlightened by grace; and if so be, the *LORD* is our teacher, to bless *GOD* that we are the children of the resurrection. Blessed *LORD*! do thou reveal thyself in a covenant way, as the *GOD* of *Abraham*, and the *GOD* of *Isaac*, and the *GOD* of *Jacob*, to my soul; and then shall I live unto thee, and live in thee, and derive all life from thee, for ever and ever.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* foretells the Destruction of the Temple. He answers the anxious Questions of his Disciples, in fortifying their Minds with suitable Advice for the approaching Trials.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in beholding this poor widow, whose charity of soul the LORD himself hath recorded, and made her history memorable in his Church for ever; learn how very costly and precious in thy JESUS'S sight, is the love of man, when flowing from the love of GOD. Oh! who would not wish, among the children of the LORD, to give a cup of cold water, when we have nothing warmer to offer, in the name of a disciple, than to build alms-houses, and give thousands, without an eye to CHRIST.

Blessed LORD! how truly awful was thy prediction concerning the once beloved city; and how truly verified was the whole! Most fully was GOD the FATHER'S sentence accomplished on *Jerusalem*, when he said, in relation to his dear SON, *For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish*. And, in the instance of Jerusalem! how awfully fulfilled. LORD, grant that all thy redeemed ones, preserved by sanctifying grace, and gathered out of the city of destruction, may be enabled by thy renewing mercy and free salvation, to watch and pray; and be accounted worthy in the alone blood and righteousness of JESUS, to escape all these things, and *to stand before the Son of Man!*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

An Account of the Passover. *Judas* engageth to betray *Christ*. The *Lord's* Supper instituted. *Christ* apprehended, and led away to the High Priest's House. *Peter* denieth *Christ*. The *Lord Jesus* brought before the Council.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us ponder well the precious contents of this most precious Chapter. Behold! how Jesus delighted in his *last* Passover, and *first* Supper! *With desire* (said that dear Lord,) *I have desired to eat it with you before I suffer.* And doth he not still desire sweet communion with his people *now*, as he did *then*? Doth not Jesus say the same concerning his Word, his Ordinances, his Table, his Supper? And doth not the Lord, from the first moment of beholding his Church, long for the season of the conversion of each, and the comfort of all, until the whole redeemed are brought home to glory? Oh! then how sweet to follow up the Lord's desires with our own; and while Jesus is coming forth to bless, You and I may, through his grace, be going forth to meet him.

Reader! pause over the awful character of *Judas*! Behold the different features of *Peter*! Contemplate from everlasting the cause in the sovereignty of grace, and if so be we can find in our own souls, tokens of rich, free, unmerited love, causing us to differ from the traitor, in being children of promise; oh! for grace to ascribe all the glory to Him, to whom alone all is due. Lord! how is it, we may well say, *that thou hast manifested thyself unto us, and not unto the world!*

Praised be thy dear name, in that Jesus the Son of God took upon him to answer for his people, by which the Holy One of Israel was reckoned among the transgressors. And shall not thy redeemed be accounted righteous in thee, before God? My soul! all the ransomed in Zion are authorized to this conclusion. Bless thy God and Savior for this unspeakable mercy. It is Jehovah that hath so concluded, and therefore make it thy conclusion also; for so the charter of grace runs to the Church's joy. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,*

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

The *Lord Jesus* is hurried away before Pilate, and accused. He sends *Christ* to Herod; where he is mocked, and sent back to Pilate. The unjust Governor condemns him to Death; and *Christ* is led away to Execution. The *Lord's* Death and Burial.

REFLECTIONS

See, my soul! thy Lord taken from prison and from judgment. And *who shall declare his generations?* Behold *Pilate, Herod, the Chief Priests, and Scribes*, yea, the whole multitude, all engaged in the foul act of Christ's crucifixion. And was there none beside? Think, my soul! how much thy sins, both in the original and actual transgression of thine *Adam-nature*, added to the vast account. Oh! for grace, that in a conscious sense of my own sins, upon this solemn occasion, I may look unto him *whom I have pierced, and mourn, as one that mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first born!*

Precious Jesus! enable me to connect with the solemn view of thine unequalled sufferings, that thou hast made my peace by the blood of thy cross, and by thy stripes I am healed. And from the cross enable me to behold thee proclaiming peace to all thy people, and doing away, the whole of sin by the sacrifice of thyself. Yes! thou Almighty Lord! truly, in the instance of the dying thief, thou hast shewn the sovereign efficacy of thy finished salvation. Here may poor, despairing, self-condemned, and self-condemning sinners, find the sweetest encouragement. And, if Jesus in the days of his flesh offered up strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared, will he not have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, since he himself was thus compassed with infirmity?

Lord! I would take my stand at the door of the sepulchre. Like Mary, I would wait in humble sorrow until my risen and triumphant Savior shall speak to me, as the Lord did to that poor woman. Oh! for grace, to have the first views of Jesus, the first love tokens as she had of Jesus, that I might hasten with the same tender commission, and tell the brethren of Jesus of the glorious tidings of the

resurrection. Lord! give me the assured earnest, in a resurrection of grace, for that great day of my God, when all his redeemed will partake in a resurrection to glory!

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

In folding up his Gospel, *Luke* relates in this Chapter, the necessary Witnesses to the Resurrection of *Jesus*. The *Lord* makes a Manifestation of himself upon a great Variety of Occasions; and having given his final Commission to his Disciples, he ascends in their Presence, visibly to Heaven.

REFLECTIONs

Reader! ponder well the blessed contents of this chapter. Never, surely, was there upon earth any record given to any one matter of fact, as plainly, as fully, and as circumstantially, to bear down with a full stream of evidences all opposition, as the testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus. But while the vast chain of testimonies surround the glorious citadel of truth, as an impregnable fortress; to the full doctrine of the Person and Salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ; what will the whole be found, where the heart is not renewed by grace? Christ is indeed risen from the dead? but are we risen with him? *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power!* Oh! for the earnest of the Spirit, by which the souls of the faithful are sealed unto the day of redemption!

Farewell *Luke*! Blessed be thy God, and my God, the Almighty Savior of both, for the ministry of thy record of Jesus! Ere long, the whole Church will be called home, to enter upon the personal enjoyment of those glorious things which the Lord hath here commissioned thee to deliver to his people! And then will burst forth, from millions of the redeemed souls, the song of salvation to God and the Lamb. In the mean time, may my poor offering of praise be often awakened by grace, through this, and all the other blessed portions of the holy Scriptures of truth, to bless the united source of all covenant mercies, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all

their love and purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, in Jesus Christ.
Amen.

JOHN

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Gospel according to *St. John*, comes home endeared to the Church of GOD in such a fulness of blessings, as cannot fail, under divine teaching, to call forth from every heart of the redeemed, unceasing praises to the Almighty Author *of every good, and every perfect gift*, for so precious a treasure given to his people. Some of the ancient Fathers, in their warmth of affection to this part of the inspired writings, were accustomed to call it a *spiritual Gospel* And such it certainly is; for GOD the SPIRIT is the Author of it. But then it should at the same time be remembered, that such are all the Gospels. For the LORD JESUS saith, *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*, John 6:63. And these divine and spiritual words of the LORD JESUS, are in the writings of all the Evangelists. But, perhaps the beloved Apostle, (for such John was specially called,) was led by the HOLY GHOST to dwell more largely on the discourses of the LORD JESUS than the other inspired writers of the Gospel; and therefore as the early saints of GOD, under divine teaching, felt the blessedness of his spiritual and heavenly writings on these subjects, they were prompted thus to distinguish them.

We cannot sufficiently bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for the ministry of this man, in all his writings, and eminently on account of this most blessed portion of the word of GOD. Here we have not only more contained in it of our LORD'S divine discourses than the other Evangelists were commissioned to deliver, but we have also, both in relation to CHRIST'S sermons and miracles, many glorious truths which were not noticed by the other Evangelists. And what tends, if possible, yet more to endear the Gospel according to *St. John* to the Church, is, that by this man's ministry herein, we have preserved to us those most blessed discourses of CHRIST, concerning the Person, Work, Offices, and Character of GOD the HOLY GHOST, without whose soul-quickenings, and life-giving operations, none can be

brought forth into spiritual apprehensions of union with CHRIST; and *be made wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. Every child of GOD, who is conscious of the great work of regeneration having passed upon him, and hath felt in his own soul the renewing influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST's sovereign and Almighty power, will clasp this blessed Gospel of the ever blessed GOD in his arms, and press it to his heart, crying out in words like those of the Apostles, *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*

It were needless to tell the Reader what were the plain designs of GOD the SPIRIT, in commissioning his servant *John* to give those records of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to his Church. They are made manifest in every chapter. The Apostle opens with the fullest declaration to the GODHEAD of CHRIST; and then proceeds to make manifest, in equal terms of plainness, the *Manhood* of our LORD; and, from the most ample demonstrations of the union of *both*, he shews what all the Scriptures of GOD blessedly harmonize in to confirm, that *CHRIST is the power of God, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to every one that believeth*. These glorious truths the Reader will meet in every part of the Gospel according to St. *John*, if the LORD the HOLY GHOST be his teacher.

I shall not think it necessary to detain him any longer by way of Preface. *John* hath not related to us in this Gospel, any circumstances of his own history, but confined himself wholly to the one momentous subject for which he wrote, and which seems to have fully occupied his mind. The LORD JESUS, and Him alone, swallowed up the Apostle's sole attention. *John* hath not so much as dated the *time* of writing his Gospel; neither hath he made mention of the *place* from whence it was written. Various dates have been given to it by others. *Some* make it as early as about *thirty years* after our LORD's ascension. And some place it so late as *sixty years* from that glorious event. But the whole is conjecture, It is our happiness that this is of no moment That the penman of it was *John*, the beloved Apostle, who lay in CHRIST'S bosom; that he was inspired in the writing of it; that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath blessed it in all ages of the Church; that He doth bless it, and will continue to bless it in the Church of GOD to the latest ages, while she remains in her present time-state, until the LORD JESUS, as her bridegroom, comes to take her home to glory; these are the grand points with which we are chiefly concerned, and these, blessed be our covenant-

GOD in CHRIST, are abundantly confirmed and assured. May the LORD the HOLY GHOST grant to both Writer and Reader his blessed teachings in the perusal of this, and every other part of the word of GOD, that as *John* himself said, so we may find, *we have an unction from the HOLY ONE, and know all things.* 1 John 2: 20. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

John opens his Gospel in this Chapter, with declaring both to the GODHEAD and Manhood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Testimony of *John the Baptist* is here given to the Person and Glory of CHRIST. The calling of *Andrew* and *Peter*. An Account of *Nathaniel*.

REFLECTIONS

Reader let you and I, in the review of this blessed Chapter, do as *Moses* and *Israel* did, at the borders of the Red Sea; stand still, and contemplate what is here revealed of the salvation of the LORD. Never surely was there ever a proclamation from heaven more full, conclusive, and satisfactory, in confirmation of the GODHEAD of CHRIST; the glories of his Person, the infinite preciousness of his work, and the greatness of his salvation! Oh! what a thought for the Church of GOD to cherish, and to feast upon, to all eternity; that *the* Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And Oh! for grace, like the chosen disciples of the LORD, to behold his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!

Blessed for ever be the GOD, and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath so loved us as to give his only begotten SON! And blessed be GOD the SON, who hath so loved us as to give himself for us. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, whose everlasting love prompted his infinite mind to give all the precious manifestations of the LORD in his scriptures. Oh! how inexpressibly sweet are all those views of JESUS, which GOD the Spirit hath here given of the GODHEAD, Person, Work, Glory, Grace, and Love, of the LORD JESUS.

And LORD! give thy whole Church upon earth grace to praise thee, for the wonderful witness of that wonderful man, *John the Baptist*. LORD, the Spirit! do thou graciously be pleased to give to

every child of GOD, thy heavenly teachings, that we may enter into a full apprehension of the design of his ministry; and behold him as raised up on purpose, and filled with the HOLY GHOST, even from the womb, to testify to those two great features of the LORD JESUS, contained in this Chapter; namely, his GODHEAD, and the efficacy of his one all-effectual sacrifice. For surely, the testimonies alone, which this herald of the LORD hath given, are in themselves enough to carry before them all the infidelity of the present CHRIST-despising generation. Oh! for a boldness in the faith, to say as *Paul* did upon a like occasion, to the infidels of his day; behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish! Dearest JESUS! may it be my portion, with all the Andrews, and Peters, and Philips, and Nathaniels, of this age of the Church, having found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write; to testify to thy glorious name and character, and say, Rabbi! thou art the Son of God! thou art the King of Israel!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Christ at a Marriage Feast, converteth Water into Wine. He departeth to *Capernaum*. He drives the Buyers and Sellers from the Temple.

REFLECTIONS

How is it possible to behold my Lord, honoring the bridal feast with his presence and miracles without having the mind led to the consideration of that yet more astonishing miracle, when the Son of God first betrothed his Church to himself, in *righteousness, in judgment, in loving kindness, and in mercies; and in faithfulness for ever!* Here I would say, as often as my soul reviews the vast mercy, here my Lord, my *Ishi*, my Husband, is indeed everlastingly blessing his Church with his presence; supplying every want, and turning all my water into wine. Lord! do thou daily manifest forth thy glory; and cause me by thy sweet influences, unceasingly to believe in thee.

Blessed Lord the Spirit! praised be thy name for this precious record of my Lord's zeal in purging his Temple. Do thou, Lord, so cleanse my heart; for thou hast said, the bodies of thy people are the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in them. And if my God will drive out all the vain thoughts which lodge there, which like the buyers and sellers in the Temple, so defile my poor heart; then, by my Lord's indwelling presence, shall I be enabled *to glorify* God, in my body and in my spirit, which are his.

And praised be my Lord for the very precious sign he gave the Jews; and for the very precious confirmation of it which followed. Yes! thou glorious Lord; while both the power of God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, were manifested in thy triumphs over death and the grave; thou wast most fully *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by thy resurrection from the dead!* And is it not by this same blessed testimony, the whole Church rests in hope for the sure accomplishment of the same in all thy mystical members! Hail! thou that art the resurrection and the life! Sure I am, that because thou livest, thy redeemed shall live also!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

Christ hath a conversation with *Nicodemus*. The *Lord* discourseth on the New-birth; and declares its absolute Necessity, for an Entrance into his Kingdom. Some further Account of *John* the Baptist.

REFLECTIONS

Everlasting praise to thee, my honored Lord, for the sweet and precious doctrine of the New-birth, so graciously taught thy Church, in this discourse with *Nicodemus*. Oh! for the distinguishing grace of God the Spirit upon my heart, that I may have all the blessed testimonies, in the assurance of it there; that I may not only know it, in the written word, but enjoy it in the engrafted word; to make me *wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

Do thou, dearest Lord, accompany those thine heavenly discourses, with thine Almighty grace; that from the words of my Lord and the commissioned discourse of his servant the Baptist, my soul may receive the truth, and the truth may make me free. Jesus hath all things in his Almighty hand. May I then Lord look to thee for all things, in grace, mercy, pardon, peace, and every New Covenant blessing here; and all the fulness of glory in Jesus, and from Jesus, to all eternity!

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Christ discourseth with a Woman of Samaria. He visits the Samaritans. Many believe on him. He healeth a Nobleman's Son.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! we have reason to believe, that the history of this woman of *Samaria*, handed down as it is, and hath been for ages past in the Church of God, hath been blessed to thousands. And what encouragement, indeed, doth such a record of grace hold forth, to poor sinners? Think how gracious the Lord dealt with this poor adulteress? How blessedly the view holds up Christ, to our love and adoration? Do not overlook what the Lord Jesus said to her as the sad cause Christ is so little regarded, and God's love in Christ so little known. Men do not know the gift of God. They have no apprehension that Christ is the remedy of God's own providing, for the wants of sinners. They neither know Christ in his Person, work, character, offices, and relationship to his Church; neither God's love in the free and full gift, he hath made of him, to the Church. But when God the Holy Ghost, as in the case of this poor woman, opens to the sinner's view, who Christ is, both in himself; and in the gift of his Father; the heart and affections are won: and the soul's thirst for Christ is excited by the same power, and as blessedly assaged, in the knowledge and love of him. *With the heart*, (saith the Apostle) *man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation!*

Methinks I could long for parents, and all that are interested in the temporal and everlasting interests of children, to do as this nobleman did; hasten to Christ, for their little ones. Behold! what a sweet miracle is here held forth, for the encouragement of all such. But how blessedly doth it preach to the believing parents of soul-sick children! Dearest Lord Jesus! did thy people but know thee more; how would thy courts be thronged, from day to day, in sending in petitions to the king! Lord, be it my portion, not to wait for signs and wonders; but faithfully to believe in thee, and all thy gracious promises, to the salvation of my soul!

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Jesus visits the pool of Bethesda. He healeth one there, after thirty and eight years disease. He preacheth most blessedly to the Jews.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Mediator! do thou still continue by thy Holy Spirit, to visit the *Bethesdas* of Ordinances, among thy people; and as in the instance of this poor man, the longest and most inveterate diseases, induced by the Adam-nature of out fallen state, will be done away, when Jesus speaks the soul-quickenings, the health-restoring word, to his people.

I desire to praise thee my honored Lord, for this sweet and blessed discourse of thine, thou hast caused to be left on record; for the joy and consolation of thy Church. What the infidel and unbelieving Jews of old, and all of modern times, which they say are Christians, and are not, call blasphemy, all the regenerated family of Christ embrace, as from the faithful and true witness in his own testimony, when he said, *I and my Father are One*. And must it not be then as God the Father hath appointed, that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father? Oh! for grace to honor Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in, and through, and by the God-Man Christ Jesus. And do thou, dearest Lord, unceasingly bless and

refresh my soul in the view of all thy powers, that they are thine, and thine to execute, because thou art the Son of Man.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Jesus feedeth a Multitude in the Wilderness. He retireth to a Mountain. At Night he walketh on the Sea. He preacheth to the people.

(John 6:1-14) After these things, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias: (2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles, which he did on them that were diseased. (3) And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. (4) And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. (5) When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? (6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. (7) Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. (8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, (9) There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? (10) And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. (12) When they were filled, he said unto the disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. (13) Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. (14) Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

If the Reader observes what is here said of the approach of the Passover, and compares it with the opening of the last Chapter, he will perceive, that there must have been very little less than a whole

year have passed between the one and the other. Here, therefore, we must bring in to our recollection what the other Evangelists have recorded of that portion in the life and ministry of Christ. The sea of *Galilee*, the same with what *Luke* calls *Gennesareth*, Luke 5:1. was made memorable upon many occasions for the manifestation of our Lord's glory, Luke 5:1-11. particularly after he arose from the dead. John 21:1. I do not swell the page with observations on this miracle of Jesus feeding the multitude. I sometimes purposely use shortness, (and I beg the Reader to remember it,) in order that he may be led to seek with more earnestness for the teachings of God the Holy Ghost. Let me therefore upon the present occasion, in addition to what hath been already said, Matt. 14:14. Mark 6:35. Luke 9:12. only observe, that the compassion of Jesus, manifested at those seasons, in working a miracle to supply the pressing wants of the body, and for a multitude, which the Lord then knew, and afterwards proved, were none of His, in the covenant of redemption, (see verse 66.) should be a constant source of comfort, both for the wants of body and soul, to his people, during the whole of their time-state upon earth. My brother! I would say to every child of God, let nothing tempt you to cast away your faith, or suffer you to be cast down with fear; both your bread that perisheth with using, and that which endureth to everlasting life, shall be given, and your water sure. Isaiah 33:16. Remember Christ's own words, *Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them! how much are ye better than the fowls?* Read the whole passage, for it is very sweet. Luke 12:22-40.

REFLECTIONS

Precious Lord Jesus! while I behold thee, my God and Savior, as set forth in this Chapter, feeding the multitudes with the bread which perisheth with using, and becoming in the same moment to all thy people the living bread, imparting solid, substantial, soul-feeding, soul-nourishing food, for time, and for eternity; Lord, I praise thee for the distinguishing mercy, and beg of my God to excite in my heart such a craving appetite to be fed and nourished in the divine life, as none but Christ himself can satisfy! Lord! *evermore give me this bread! Lift up the light of thy countenance upon my soul, and it shall put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased!*

And art thou, dearest Lord, the sealed of the Father? Doth God the Holy Ghost prove to thy people his anointings, both of the glorious Head, and also of his members? Oh! for grace thus to receive thee, thus to come to thee, since such a rich provision is made for all the Father hath given thee, to come. Yea, methinks I would have every poor, awakened, and sensible sinner, to come. Hear, my brother, what Jesus saith. They shall all come which are of this description and character. And sure I am Jesus will accept all that so come, for he here saith, that *he will in no wise cast them out*.

Lord! I would say for myself, and all thy redeemed family, behold! *we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God! Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Jesus keepeth the Feast of Tabernacles. He teacheth in the Temple. The Scribes and Pharisees are more and more enraged at him.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! behold the glories of the Lord Jesus, as set forth in this chapter. Say! do not the accumulated testimonies to his eternal power and Godhead, shine like the rich constellation of the heavenly bodies, in one full cluster? And in his Mediator-character no less, behold, what rich and splendid proofs the Lord manifested, that his doctrine was of God! But yet we are told, that *even his brethren believed not on him!* How should they, who were no brethren in the grace-union of his body the Church, but only brethren in the Jewish nation and character, after the flesh? Ah! no. *All are not Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.* What hath the *Ishmaels*, and the *Esaus*, to do with the covenant? Oh! the distinguishing grace of God! oh! the blessedness of the children of promise!

Dearest Lord Jesus! do thou condescend still to come to our feasts, by the sweet manifestations of thy Spirit. For without thy

presence, the richest ordinances have no savor. All the stars in the firmament to our world, will not make one sun. And where Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness is not, it is in vain to look for light, or warmth, from all our services. But if my Lord come up to his banquetting house the Church, and cause his redeemed to sit under his shadow with great delight, then shall the whole Jerusalem of our God upon earth, like the Jerusalem of our God which is above, be feasted with the same love of Jesus. Then shall that scripture promise be fulfilled; we shall *suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, and milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!*

Reader! let you and I be continually seeking grace from the Lord, that under this divine discourse of Jesus, brought home to our warmest affection by the gracious teachings of God the Holy Ghost, we may each for ourselves be enabled to set our seals *that God is true*. And Surely, my brother, if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, however you behold Jesus as *a stumbling block, and a rock of offence* to those blind rulers in Israel, to you he will be more precious, *more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey*. Every one who is made partaker of the grace in Jesus, will confess his graciousness, and know that *never man spake like this man!* Dearest Master! may it be my portion to derive all that is truly blessed and desirable in the present life from thee; for sure I am all that is truly glorious in another can only flow from thee. And be it, my honored Lord, my supreme happiness to live upon what Jesus is to me, and hath done for me, and not upon any supposed attainments of mine in following after thee. Indeed, indeed, thou Almighty Savior, the sole joy of the Church, both above and below, can only be in thyself, as that sweet scripture most blessedly confirms, *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory!*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

A woman taken in Adultery is brought to *Christ* for Judgment. The *Lord* pardons her. He preacheth a divine Discourse. The Jews

oppose him, and are about to stone him; but he passeth by, and escapeth their Hands.

REFLECTIONS

Precious Lord Jesus! may my soul gaze with rapture on every feature of thy divine Person, while by faith I behold thee, as in this Chapter, pardoning the poor Adulteress; and manifesting the mercy of thine heart. Oh! thou dear Lord! well is it for thine Adulteress Church, that thou art a God, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; or what would have become of all thy redeemed.

And Lord! I find new occasion to admire, to love, to adore, my compassionate God, in that he brings his people from the Adam-nature and servitude of sin, into the freedom and adoption of children, in my Lord's family. Truly Lord *thou hast loosed my bands!* Thou hast, brought all thy redeemed from the dominion and guilt of sin, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And as it is God the Son hath made his people free, they shall be free indeed. And although all thy children, thy blood-bought family, do still carry about with them a body of sin and death, which harrass and afflict the soul: though still the subjects of outward troubles, and inward fears: though many a fiery dart Satan still hurls at them; and many a wearisome path by his craft and cruelty, he causes them to tread in their pilgrimage: yet thou Lord hast brought them out of his servitude, where once they lived as his drudges; doing his work, and wearing his livery, and delighted with both: and art bringing them home, and wilt bring them all in, to thine heavenly kingdom! Blessed be my God and Savior, for all his love and mercy.

Reader! let us both join in thanksgivings to the great I am; both for his own eternal power and Godhead, and for thus drawing the line of everlasting, distinction as this Chapter hath it, between those awful characters who by denying Christ die in their sins; and those who believe in him to the salvation of their souls. Blessed, for ever blessed, be our great I am!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

Jesus giveth Sight to a Man which was born blind. The Pharisee are enraged at it. Jesus preacheth a sweet Sermon on the Occasion.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! contemplate in this man, thy state by nature; blind indeed, from thy birth, and in spiritual things, as ignorant as the very, brute that perisheth. And how long didst thou remain, stumbling over the dark mountains of sin, and unbelief? Nay, wouldest thou not have remained so for ever, had not Jesus passed by, and created life and light to thy spiritual apprehension? It was indeed the sabbath day when Jesus did this; for He himself became the very sabbath of thy soul. And in this sovereign act of grace, how sweetly hath he proved to thee his own eternal power and Godhead! Surely thou canst say, with this fellow-partaker in the rich mercy: *Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*

Oh! ye blind Pharisees! How long will ye have to learn a right knowledge of the Person and righteousness of Jesus? An whole eternity ye will have to mourn over the darkness of blackness for ever! How awfully verified, in that day which unfolds all, will be the words of Jesus! *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man; then shall ye know that I am.* Yes! know it, to your everlasting condemnation; but not to your joy, as the Lord's people!

Reader! Doth Jesus now put the question to you, and to me, which he put to the man born blind, when he had opened his eyes; *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* Hath the Lord opened our eyes? Have we seen the king in his beauty? Seen ourselves in our deformity? Can we, from the heart, and from the soul, fall down and worship him? crying out, as one of old: *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!* Oh! the blessedness of being taught by him! Surely the Lord will say to us, as he did to the Apostle, on his confession: *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for*

flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The *Lord Jesus* opens this Chapter with describing himself under the Character of the Good Shepherd; and his Church as his Sheep. He sweetly discourseth, and causeth a Division of Opinion thereby among the Jews. Many are brought to believe on Him.

(John 10:1-16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (4) And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (5) And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (6) This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. (7) Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. (8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. (9) I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture, (10) The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. (11) I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (12) But he that is an hireling: and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (13) The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (14) I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have which are not of this fold:

them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

I beg the Reader, at his entrance on this most blessed Chapter, that he will not overlook the double mention of one of Christ's precious names, as Jesus opened his discourse. *Verily, Verily; or Amen, Amen.* There is somewhat more in the word itself, than is generally supposed. Some have said, let us set *our* Amen to the Lord's words, if we hope Christ will set *his* to our salvation. But though it may be, and no doubt it is, highly proper to be able to set *to our seal that God is true;* and the general acceptance of *Amen* is not amiss, when *from the heart man believeth unto salvation:* yet it is equally proper, the truly spiritual Reader should have a yet higher apprehension of the *Verily,* or *Amen* of Christ. If he will consult what the Lord Jesus hath himself said on this point, when sending his solemn message, unto the angel of the Church of the *Laodiceans,* (Rev. 3:14.) he will there discover, that the Lord introduced the whole of his awful threatenings with the authority of this great Name. *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness.* And his servant, the Prophet, commissioned by his authority, taught the Church, that whenever a child of God *blessed himself in the earth,* that is stood in need of blessings, and asked for them, they should be sought for *in the God of truth;* or, as the words may be rendered, shall bless himself in God, Amen, meaning Christ, Isaiah 65:16. John 14:6. 2 Cor. 1:20. Ephes. 1:3. So that in the two Verilys, or *Amen* twice uttered, by Christ himself, at his entrance on this Chapter, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you!* it is as if this glorious Amen, this faithful and true witness, confirmed the whole of his discourse, both with his word, and with his oath. The Apostle, speaking of God the Father, in his Personal office in the Covenant, saith, *that because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself* Heb. 6:13. In like manner, God the Son, in his Personal office God-Man-Mediator, doth the same in his doubled *Verily.* In the first *Amen,* Jesus takes his glorious name; *the Amen, the faithful witness.* And in the second *Amen,* it becomes as his word and oath, confirming, and making sure all he saith. I pray the Reader not to lose sight of this, in all the *Verilys* of Christ, which he meets with in the whole of his divine discourses. The Lord Jesus hath been pleased to use the word nearly *fifty times,* as we read in what the three former Evangelists have recorded of his ministry. And a double *Verily,* as in this Chapter, in

more than *twenty* instances as recorded by *John*. Well therefore may it merit our close attention.

But let us now enter upon the Lord's discourse in this Chapter. The general scope of which is, under the similitude of a sheepfold, to describe his Church, which his Father had given to him, as his flock; and himself as the Shepherd, under all the endearing characters of such an office. The Reader should recollect, that the chief treasure of the East, at the time of our Lord's appearing, and for ages before, consisted chiefly in flocks, and herds, and vines, and fig-trees, and corn, and the like; and all the riches of agriculture. And as our Lord availed himself upon every occasion, to raise subjects for discourse from the objects around, and from such things as his hearers were most familiarly acquainted with: that of a sheepfold seems to have been the one chiefly used by him, and his servants. Indeed not only Jesus takes to himself this character, but God the Father called him by that name: Zech. 13:7. And the Church herself, catching the words from the Lord, invites the Lord Jesus to hear her as the Great Shepherd of Israel, from between the Cherubim. Psm. 80:1. And if the Reader wishes to have a most compleat view of the Lord Jesus under this blessed office, he will find a whole Chapter, directed by the Holy Ghost in the ministry of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, to this one subject. Ezek. 34.

It should seem, by the manner in which Christ hath introduced his discourse, of a robbery, in an entrance into the sheepfold, in an improper way, that the Lord had in view the Scribes, which sat in Moses's seat, and assumed the office of teaching the people, unauthorized of God. Matt. 23:2. Mark 13:38. And it is of such the Lord again speaks in the 8th verse; of *all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers*: meaning all false shepherds and hirelings, *who feed themselves but not the flock!* Ezek. 34:2-4. But Reader, do not fail to observe, what Jesus saith concerning them. *But the sheep did not hear them*: that is, were not led away by their false leadings, into unwholsome pasture. Sweet thought to the true sheep of Christ! There hath indeed, in all ages of the Church, been such false Pastors. And tremendously awful must be their final doom. But Jesus the true Shepherd, hath watched over the whole of his flock, and not suffered one of them to be lost; neither shall one of them be found wanting, in the day he maketh them up. The Prophet was

commissioned to tell the Church, that *the flocks must all pass again under the hands of Him that telleth them.* Jerem. 33:13.

I must not indulge myself as I could wish, in entering into the several most interesting particulars, which the Lord Jesus hath here set before us under this beautiful similitude, of a Shepherd and his flock; as descriptive of himself and his Church. I must content myself with only calling upon the Reader to a few of the more prominent features of character by which Jesus hath set it forth. The Father is blessedly shewn by Christ in his Covenant-character, as the giver of this fold. Jesus delights upon every occasion to keep this in view to the Church. *Thine they were, (saith Christ,) and thou gavest them me.* John 17:6. And in this Chapter, when speaking of the everlasting safety of his flock; he ascribes both the gift of his sheep, and their security in him to the Father. *My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are One.* Christ declares himself to be the Great Shepherd of his sheep, both by speaking of himself, under this character, as entering in by the door; and twice in the course of his description of the office, calling himself the *good* Shepherd. Verses 11 and 14. See also Ezek. 34:23. Isaiah 40:11. Heb. 13:20. 1 Pet. 5:4. And God the Holy Ghost is in my view very blessedly represented by the Lord Jesus, as opening the door of the sheep-fold to Christ, which he doth most effectually, when that gracious Lord opens the hearts of his people to receive Jesus, as it is here said, *he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.* And let it not be thought unsuitable or unbecoming to make application of the office of a *Porter* to God the Spirit, when using similitudes. Hosea 12:10. For if Christ calls himself, as he doth in this Chapter, *the door*, (verse 9,) there can be nothing improper in considering God the Holy Ghost, in that precious office of his, in opening to Christ as the *Porter*. Reader! pause over the review of the subject, as far as we have already gone. Behold! each of the glorious Persons of the Godhead, in their Covenant-offices, as here blessedly set forth, in reference to the Sheep-fold of Christ. Here is God the Father, giving the whole to Christ. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, calling his Sheep his own by virtue of taking them for his own, and as the gift of the Father, before all worlds. Ephes. 1:4. And here is God the Holy Ghost, in his sweet office-work, in the same everlasting Covenant, opening to Christ for his entrance into his

fold; causing the sheep to hear his voice, and to follow Jesus, that they may go in, and out, and find pasture.

Let us now observe some of the more prominent features of character, in relation to the fold. Jesus not only owns them, and calls them all by name; but hath given several strong and leading marks, by which his sheep are known and distinguished from all the goats of the world, and from every false resemblance which might appear, of goats in sheeps' cloathing.

And *first*, they are said to be the Sheep of Christ, given to him before the foundation of the world, when as Jesus under one of his well known office-characters or wisdom, saith, *the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old, when I was set up from everlasting.* And in the same moment that the Son of God in his Wisdom-character was set up, the Head and Husband of his Church, and the Great Shepherd of his Sheep; then must have been set up with him, and from him, and for him, his Church, his Spouse, his Sheep. For in none of those relations could he have stood; neither have had ability to have acted in the office, without the relative characters to have exercised such relations and offices towards. And hence in the same scripture, where the Son of God speaks of being thus set up from the beginning, he no less saith, *that he was rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* And this at a time, (or rather before time,) when as yet Jehovah, in his threefold character of Persons *had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.* Prov. 8:22-31. And I beg the Reader, before he proceeds further, to consult some at least, of those many blessed scriptures, which both confirm this precious truth, of the grace-union between Christ and his Church, before all worlds; and also of the going forth of all the Persons of the Godhead in the after acts of creation. Ephes. 1:4. Coloss. 1:15-18. Ephes. 3:9-11. Gen. 1:26.

Secondly. When those great leading truths are fully impressed upon the Reader's mind, I beg him to go on to notice, in relation to this Sheep-fold of Jesus, that it is a gathered fold, out of Nature's wild wilderness, chosen, fenced in, made separate, and distinct; from the everlasting love of God the Father, the apprehending union of God the Son, and the blessed grace, and anointing influence of God the Holy Ghost. For it is a point of infinite consequence to be observed, when giving to the Holy Three in One, the honor due to

Jehovah's name; that as God the Father chose the Church in Christ before the foundation of the world, and God the Son betrothed the Church to himself from everlasting: Hosea 2:19. So God the Holy Ghost, in his gracious Covenant-office, respecting Christ and his Church, did equally manifest his everlasting love in the divine appointment, by anointing the head and members as one, revealing and making known to the Church the Messiah as God's anointed, many ages before Christ was born. And as Christ was thus anointed in this office and relation character to his Church; consequently God the Holy Ghost had an eye to the Church in this gracious act, and foreviewed the Church, and loved the Church in Christ, with an everlasting love, as the Church of Christ, and with proportioned love of the body, as he loved the glorious Head. The oneness and union in the divine nature of the whole Godhead prove this. John 17:23.

Thirdly. It forms a most sweet, and precious part, in the contemplation of this subject of Christ and his Church, the Shepherd and his Sheep; that while distinguished as the fold is, by the electing love of God the Father, the redeeming love of God the Son, and the regenerating love of God the Holy Ghost; the whole Sheepfold is but one, however divided into distinct branches, whether *Jew or*

Gentile, whether bond or free. So the Lord speaks in this very Chapter; when he saith *there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.* And so he blessedly speaks elsewhere, when comforting his Church. *My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother: she is the choice one of her that bare her.* Song 6:9. Reader! do not lose sight of this. Christ's Sheepfold can be but one. Christ, the Husband of his Church, hath but one Bride. None can be added to his Church. None taken from it. The world's goats can never pass under his hands for sheep. No! neither goats in sheep-cloathing escape his eye. Here, in this world's wilderness, they may, and too often do, break over the fence, and mingle in the pastures of Christ's sheep. Indeed too often worry the Lord's sheep, and make them, as the Lord calls his oppressed ones, *the flock of slaughter.* Zech. 11:4-7. Rom. 8:36. But ere long, these things will for ever cease. Jesus the Great Shepherd will come and cause an everlasting separation. Matt. 25:31 to the end. Pause over this lovely subject. Christ and his fold as one. Jesus calls them by every endearing name, in a way of distinction and delight. They are a *little flock*: but yet a numerous body, *a multitude which no man can number.* Compare Luke 12:32.

with Rev. 7:9. They are black in their own esteem, but comely in the eyes of Jesus. Song 1:5. Ezek. 16:14. And elsewhere, the Lord calls them a *beautiful* flock. Jerem. 13:20. And what can the imagination form to itself more beautiful than the Church, made up of a vast multitude, as first presented to her Husband, in his eternal mind before all worlds; then recovered out of her fallen and polluted time state, in her *Adam*-nature, in being washed from her sins in Christ's blood, and clothed in his righteousness; and finally presented by Jesus *to himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before him for ever.* Ephes. 1:4. Psm. 45:9-17. Ephes. 5:25 to the end.

I must not swell our observations on those verses any further. But otherwise, what a subject opens to our view in the contemplation of Jesus in the extensive office of a Shepherd? It is indeed endless. The personal knowledge Christ hath of every individual of his fold. How can it be otherwise, than that he must know them, when he hath received every one of them at his Father's hands; their names written in the book of life; they are every one of them married to his person, united to himself; yea, part of himself: He calleth them all by name. He hath died for them, shed his blood for them, become the Surety for them, cleansed them in his blood from all their sins, hath ascended for them to glory, is gone before them to take possession of his Mediator-kingdom in their name, is everlastingly appearing in the presence of his Father for them, and he hath promised to come again, and take them home to himself, that where he is, there they shall be also! Reader! under such precious views and assurances, can it be possible that Jesus can overlook, forget, and be regardless of each, and every individual of his fold, when his own glory is concerned in the event of their present and everlasting welfare? Yea, the very charge of his office, as Mediator and Shepherd, will not be fulfilled until he hath brought the whole home, and *not an hoof left behind* in that great day of God, when they *must all pass again under the hands of him that telleth them?* Reader, do not fail, in confirmation, to turn to the perusal of some of those sweet scriptures, such as John 17:2. Psm. 139:16. Isaiah 4:3. Dan. 12:1. Luke 10:20. 1 Cor. 6:17. 2 Cor. 5:15, Heb. 6:20. John 14:3. Exod. 10:26. Jerem. 33:13. Blessed and Almighty Shepherd of thy blood-bought flock! very sure I am of thy pastoral love and care. As the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our

souls, thou wilt everlastingly be in thy diocese. Thou wilt feed thy flock like a shepherd. Thou wilt cause them *to lie down in wholesome pastures*. And, as thou hast said, *thou wilt search, and seek out thy flock in the day* (this time state of our wilderness dispensations,) *in which thou art among thy sheep, to bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick*. Yea, Lord Jesus, thou wilt seek me, even me, *for I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost!* But Jesus hath said, *I must bring the other sheep which are not of this fold*; thousands, and tens of thousands, which were not in the Jewish fold of the Old Testament, but of the Gentile fold, under both the Old and New Testament dispensation. Jesus *must* bring them. Why must my Lord do so? Because they are part of himself, they are the body of Christ, the Church the Father gave him, and purchased by his blood, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Hence Jesus must bring them all home, and they shall be *for a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of my God!* Isaiah

62:3.

(John 10:17-19) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Reader! make a long pause over these blessed verses, for they are most blessed. The love Jesus here speaks of cannot possibly mean the love of God the Father to God the Son, as God; for then, in this sense, no such reason as is here assigned, would be given. Neither did God the Son lay down his life as God. And, moreover, the observation of God the Father loving God the Son would have been unnecessary in Christ to have informed the disciples. For unless the Church had faculties suitable to the apprehension, (which is impossible,) we never could have the least conception what that infinite love is, which One of the divine Persons in the Godhead

bears to another. But the love of the Father to Christ here spoken of by Jesus, is the love he hath to him as God-Man-Mediator. He loved him for his voluntary undertaking to become the Head and Husband of his body the Church. He loved him for all the offices connected with it, in rescuing his Spouse, his Bride, which the Father gave him

before all worlds, from that dreadful state of sin and ruin into which, in the time-state of her Adam-nature, she had fallen. This, I venture to believe, was the love which the Lord Jesus here spake of, and which Jesus prized so highly. And well might all the persons of the Godhead delight in the God-Man love of Jesus to his Church. For the perfect unsinning obedience of the whole creation of God, yea, had the whole creation of God, added to that obedience, been offered up as one rich and full oblation, the whole would have been nothing in comparison to the holy life, and spotless death of Christ upon the cross, when doing away the whole penal effect of sin by the sacrifice of himself, and magnifying the law of God, and making it honorable. Reader! pause a moment longer, and then say, did God the Father thus love Christ on our account, think then how God the Father must love us. And if Jesus was so loved by the Father for us, how ought Christ to be loved by us?

I must not suffer the Reader to pass away from those sweet verses before that he hath also noticed, and with the due attention it merits, what Jesus hath said of his own sovereign power and Godhead. If no man had power to take his life from him, but as he elsewhere saith: *As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* John 5:26. let the Reader receive from those precious words, the Lord's assurance of his nature and office as God-Man-Mediator! Oh! how infinitely great must be his nature, how full of glory and dignity his person, who thus possessed such infinite power? And how unspeakably great his love, who so loved us, as *to give himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor?*

REFLECTIONS

Reader! you and I here plainly discover that Christ is the good Shepherd. Both his office, relation, and character, under this sweet figure, he is chosen into by God the Father, and all his sheep given by the Father to him as his own. They were his, in this appointment, from everlasting. And now in the time-state of a wilderness, where the Lord finds them wandering, he comes to seek and save that which was lost. Have you and I known Christ under this endeared character? Have we the features Jesus hath here described, by which we alone, prove, that we are the sheep of his pasture. Nothing can be more plain than what Jesus hath here marked to discover his sheep

from the world's goats. He saith, the sheep hear his voice, they know his call, they follow him. A stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of stranger's. Have we these undeniable tokens? Oh! for grace to be so distinguished! Blessed it is to lie down in his fold, to feed in his pastures, and to go in and out by those wholesome waters of comfort, beside which, *the Great Shepherd of Israel feeds his flock!* Reader! Jesus wilt do by all his fold as the Holy Ghost hath said. He will feed, protect, heal, strengthen, guide, and, in short, do all that pertains to the office of a shepherd; he will carry the lambs in his arms, and gently lead those that are with young. And, to crown all, he will most effectually preserve from all evil, and give them eternal life, so that *none shall perish, or any pluck them out of his and his Father's hands.* Hail! Almighty Shepherd of thy flock.

Reader! behold the triumphs of thy Lord over all the enemies of his Godhead, and against all the awful opposition made to his divine person and character. So was it then, so is it now, and so shall it be, until the Lord hath brought the whole under his footstool. Lord Jesus! establish thy people in their most holy faith, until that thou shalt bring them home unto *the fountains of living water; where, as a Lamb in the midst of the throne, thou art feeding them, and where thou hast wiped all tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of thy people thou hast taken away from off all the earth!*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

Jesus raiseth Lazarus from the Dead. The Priests and Pharisees become more desperately enraged at *Jesus*. They gather a Council to deliberate on his Death.

REFLECTIONS

What a blessed thing it is, when at any time, upon the sickness of our friends or ourselves, we are enabled to tell Jesus, as those sorrowful sisters did: Lord! *behold he whom thou lovest is sick!* Oh! the privilege of knowing the Lord, and knowing that we are beloved by him! Reader! do you know the sweetness of thus daily, yea,

sometimes hourly, going to the court of this gracious heavenly King, and receiving a look, a love-token, from Jesus himself, amidst the crowds which attend his Levee? And my soul observe: Reader do you also observe, how graciously the Lord proposed to visit the sorrowful family of *Lazarus*, under their bereaving providence. And although *two days* elapsed before he went, yet this delay was all in greater mercy, as the sequel of the history proved. Learn then from hence, how to interpret silence in the Lord. It is for the greater glory of the Lord, and the greater good of his people.

Reader! look, and look again, to the Lord, as he approached the grave of him whom he loved. Oh! that I had the power of persuasion, methinks I would call all whom Jesus loves, and who love Jesus, to take their stand there, and by faith, and behold the Son of God in our nature, shedding tears and groaning in spirit, over the sad consequence of sin, in our death. And didst thou, dearest Lord, mingle thy tears with ours, at such a sight. Didst thou indeed give such a proof, that *because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, thou thyself hast taken part of the same*? Oh! for grace to have it always in remembrance. Jesus *wept*. Jesus knows, and hath felt, what human sorrows are. Never, never my soul be thou afraid to go to him, in all thy afflictions, He that wept at the grave of *Lazarus*, and took part in the weepings of the sorrowful sisters, will take part in thine. *He knoweth thy frame, and remembereth that thou art dust.*

Hail! thou that *livest and wast dead; and behold thou art alive for evermore*. Still by the ear of faith, I hear thy soul-reviving, body-quickenings words: *I am the resurrection and the life!* Lord Jesus! give me that sweet earnest and pledge of the first resurrection in grace, here below; and sure I am that in thee, and from thee, I shall have part in the resurrection to glory hereafter. And dearest Lord! while my soul rejoiceth in hope of the glory of God; in the awful character of this High Priest *Caiaphas*, and in all the awful characters beside in every generation, which like those who went their way to the *Pharisees*, unconvinced at the resurrection of *Lazarus*; most fully deciding that grace alone makes all the difference; teach me to whom to look, and to whom to ascribe the source of all my mercies. *Though one arose from the dead*, such will not believe. And wherein Lord do I differ from them, but what grace hath made? Oh! prepare me, by living wholly *upon* thee, deriving all

from thee, and ascribing all to thee; for the great and awful day of my God, when the dead shall hear thy voice, and come forth; some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt. In that all-decisive hour, be thou to me the resurrection and the life, and my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* is at a Supper. *Mary* anointeth his Feet. He entereth Jerusalem, as foretold by the Prophet. He maketh a very blessed Discourse; and is answered by a Voice from Heaven.

REFLECTIONS

PONDER well, my soul, the many blessed things contained in this chapter concerning thy GOD and SAVIOR. And while thou beholdest the gracious condescension of JESUS in the days of his flesh, granting his sweet presence and divine discourses, in supping with his people, as in the house of *Lazarus*, and *Simon the Leper*; do not for a moment question, but that now, in the day of his power, he will come, as he hath said, and sup with his people, and cause them by faith to sup with him. And what though thou hast no costly ointment, as *Mary* had, to anoint thy LORD'S feet, yet, when JESUS comes, he will bring every thing that is blessed with him. Remember, that thy LORD comes not to receive, but to give, not that He may be made more blessed, for that is impossible, but that thou mayest be made more happy. It is enough when through his grace enabling them, his people lay low at his feet, and *while the king sitteth at the table* of his own providing, he will cause the spikenard of his own graces, called forth into exercise from thine heart by his HOLY SPIRIT, *to send forth the smell thereof*

Blessed LORD JESUS! may I never forget that soul trouble of thine which is here spoken of! Give me grace to meditate on the wondrous subject. Oh! for a solemnity of soul always suited to the contemplation. The very recollection is enough to damp all unsuited and unbecoming lightness of mind at all times. Did JESUS feel soul-heaviness on the account of his redeemed, and shall they be light

minded? Did JESUS groan, and shall I be unconcerned? Blessed be my GOD and FATHER, who so graciously answered his dear SON by a voice from heaven. And blessed be the LORD for his mercy to all his redeemed by the act, since it came for their sakes. And oh! for grace, to rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, in what GOD the FATHER then declared to his dear SON, concerning his Mediator-office and character, that the LORD had glorified his name, and will glorify it again, yea, for ever! And blessed be GOD for that precious assurance, more precious than the gold of Ophir, it was the glory of CHRIST, which *Esaias* saw when he spake of Him. It is, and everlastingly must be the glory of CHRIST, which is the joy of all his people. Oh! thou dear LORD! write these blessed words of thine in my heart, to lift up my soul with joy for ever: *I am come* (saith my LORD,) *a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness.*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The *LORD* washeth his Disciples' Feet. He intimates to the Twelve, that One of them is a Traitor. The Sorrow of the Eleven at the Account. *Peter* is admonished of his Denial.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not close your view of this most blessed Chapter, which unfolds so sweetly the heart of CHRIST to his people, and shews them that his whole heart towards them is love, before that you have begged also of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath given the Church such a view of that love, that the LORD will cause all the gracious streams of it to flow from CHRIST'S heart into ours. Can the imagination form to itself any thing more lovely, than thus to behold CHRIST encircled with his family, and forgetting his own personal concerns in the tremendous exercises both of soul and body the LORD had then to go through, and now opening before him, but yet in the midst of all, washing his disciples feet? Was there ever an instance of the kind heard of among the histories of the world for a Master to act thus towards his Servants? And here it was the LORD of

heaven and earth performing the service to poor sinners? *Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, for the LORD hath done it!*

But, dearest JESUS! wilt thou not in some measure, (as far as our poor short-sighted capacities can have any suitable apprehension of thy gracious design,) wilt thou not shew us of thy meaning? Was it as a parting act to say, when I am gone, as no opportunity can then occur of demonstrating by any such an *outward* act towards you, of what my *inward* affections are; I hereby shew you that I think no condescension too great to serve and bless my people? If I have washed your feet upon earth, fear not but that I will wash your souls from sin when I am in heaven. And though I am now going to my FATHER, and for a while ye will see me no more, let this shew you, that though my state is changed, yet not my nature. There, as well as here, I am the same JESUS. And though I am going to my FATHER, and to my redeemed gone before, nothing will lessen or remove my affection for my redeemed below. As oft as my Church calls to remembrance this act of mine, in washing my poor disciples' feet, let such a love-token become, as among other designs which I have had in view in the doing it. I intended a palpable proof, that *having loved my own which are in the world, I love them to the end!* Precious LORD JESUS! may not thy redeemed venture to form such conclusions from this gracious act of thine, as if JESUS thus opened to us his heart. Think often of this, I pray the Reader, yea, the whole Church of God. May my poor soul think of nothing beside! And, oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST, the sweet Remembrancer of JESUS, may keep the thought warm in my heart, until the cold clay hand of death come upon me, and my soul escape from the prison of the body to enjoy the fruition of it for ever.

And, oh! my honored LORD! let even the awful view of the traitor *Judas*, make my mercies infinitely more and more precious, from learning therefrom how distinguishing they are. LORD! it is all thy grace, it is all thy rich, free, sovereign mercy. Be it my daily delight to receive the whole, and every part of thy Church's peace and safety, and happiness, to covenant love; and to ascribe the whole to the united grace of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The LORD is here comforting his Disciples, to prepare their Minds against the Time of his Departure. He describes the Person, Work, and Grace, of the HOLY GHOST

REFLECTIONS

Almighty Preacher! give me grace to sit at thy feet and hear by faith thy sweet and all-powerful voice in this unequalled sermon of thine, causing all the gracious truths of it to sink deep in my heart. Yes! thou dearest LORD! thou art indeed *the way, and the truth, and the life*. None can have access to GOD but by thee. GOD hath set thee up in thy Mediator-character. And in thee, and by thee, as the life and the light of thy people, thy whole Church hath access by one SPIRIT to the FATHER.

Welcome HOLY and Eternal GOD the SPIRIT, to thy Church! Thou art indeed the very Comforter: for LORD thy great work is consolation. Oh! give me to know thee in thy sweet manifestations, in comforting my poor soul under all discouragements, with the suitableness of CHRIST. Yea, LORD, in all thy gifts and graces, make known to me the glory, the grace, the love, the infinite tenderness, and compassion, of my GOD and SAVIOR, in taking of the things of CHRIST, and shewing them to me. Be it my unceasing happiness, to be brought daily, hourly, under thy quickening, refreshing, soul-reviving influences, that I may be filled with that *joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul*.

FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all grace! blessed, for ever blessed, be that everlasting love, which hath followed up the manifestation of GOD'S dear SON, in the manifestation of GOD'S holy SPIRIT. *Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The *LORD* continues his Discourse through the whole of this Chapter. Under the Similitude of a Vine and the Branches, *JESUS* describes his Union with his Church. In the close of the Chapter, *JESUS* again speaks of the coming of the *HOLY GHOST*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to observe the intimate oneness and union between *CHRIST* and his Church. The vine and its branches are not more closely formed in one, than *JESUS* and his people. Indeed, there are no figures, no images, either in nature or art, which can fully come up to the resemblance. All figures must fall short of the reality. But while we observe the closeness of union, let you and I be still more anxious to know whether we are the happy partakers of it. Are we indeed One with *CHRIST*, and *CHRIST* with us? *He that is joined to the LORD is one SPIRIT*. One principle actuates both. What *JESUS* loves, we love; what *JESUS* hates, we hate. We look to *JESUS* for all things, and desire to eye *JESUS* in all things. Moreover, if one Spirit be in both, we shall undertake nothing but in his strength, and seek nothing but his glory. And as the branch wholly hangs upon, and is kept alive by the vine, so all our graces are kept alive by life *in JESUS*, and communications *from JESUS*. Oh! for grace to know these things in a lively, active, spiritual enjoyment of them, that we may be increasing in desires after him, and loosening from every thing that is not in him, till we come to see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever.

Blessed *HOLY Comforter* of the *LORD*'s people? Gracious *SPIRIT* of truth to lead into all truth! Oh! grant to me the knowledge of my *LORD* under all his sweet and precious offices! Send out *LORD*! thy light and thy truth to guide my poor soul continually! And, oh! for the daily, hourly renewing of the *HOLY GHOST*, to be shed abundantly upon the churches and people, through *JESUS CHRIST* our *SAVIOR*. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

The *LORD's* Sermon is continued through this Chapter, and here it is ended. *JESUS* comforts his Disciples with many sweet and precious Promises, and again dwells upon the gracious consolations which they should receive from the *HOLY GHOST*.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD GOD Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come! Blessed for ever be GOD the FATHER, for his everlasting love, in having chosen the Church in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. And blessed be GOD the SON, for having betrothed the Church from everlasting, and having redeemed her from all the ruins of the fall, in this time state of existence. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for his everlasting love, and accomplishing the regeneration of the Church, when *dead in trespasses and sins!*

Oh! for grace, to be often contemplating the office acts and manifestations of love, as shewn towards the Church in the communications of all that is communicable in grace, from each glorious person of the GODHEAD. Do thou, blessed SPIRIT, daily make a sweet revelation of the whole to, and in the souls of the redeemed, that the glory of the FATHER'S provision for the Church, in the person and blood of CHRIST, and the full mercy of the everlasting covenant, may, through thy sovereign power, be brought home, and confirmed in the heart. Oh! for grace to know GOD the HOLY GHOST, in every sweet office-act in which JESUS hath here so blessedly represented him. Thou knowest, Almighty *Comforter*, that my poor soul can find no comfort but from thy gracious operations. I can have no access, can find no freedom at the throne, nay, can have no disposition to go there, unless thy sweet leadings influence and guide me thither. Oh! then do thou, Almighty *Quickener* of the LORD'S people, *direct my heart into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST*. Do thou become to my poor soul, the SPIRIT *of truth*; and sure I am, amidst all the heresies of the day, I shall be guided into all truth. Do thou *glorify* to my view the LORD JESUS, and then no Infidel amidst a Christ-despising generation, will for a moment raise a mist to

obscure my clear apprehension of His GODHEAD. Precious, precious *Teacher*; in the Church of JESUS! do thou but mercifully fulfil all thy sweet office-characters, in and to my poor soul, and more will be accomplished to the settlement of that peace of mind, and peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding in my heart, than can be wrought in ten thousand years of human endeavors without thee. Yes! thou Almighty SPIRIT of *Sanctification* and *Holiness*, if thou wilt condescend to communicate of thy divine unction, thou wilt bring my LORD JESUS, in all his fulness and suitability, so immediately home in union with my redeemed soul, that I shall know him as *the LORD my righteousness*, and live upon him, and live to him, as being made *the righteousness of GOD in Him*.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* having finished in the foregoing Chapter his Sermon, here follows it up with Prayer. He first makes the Subject of it Personal, in Relation to Himself and the *FATHER*. He next offers up Prayer for his Apostles. And, lastly, for his whole Church.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! do thou, with uplifted eyes, and thankful heart, behold thy GOD and SAVIOR, in this most blessed representation the HOLY GHOST hath made of him, in this Chapter, here entering upon His High Priestly Office; and through faith, come under the golden Censer of his Offering! Oh! what a sample hath he here given, of his all powerful, all prevailing, and unchanging Priesthood. Yes! thou blessed LORD! let my poor soul, I pray thee, never lose sight of *the Pillar and ground of the truth*, on which thy Church, in all her members, both Apostles and people, stand everlastingly firm and secure; the perfection of thy finished work, and the faithfulness of JEHOVAH'S word and oath, in the Covenant, *ordered in all things and sure*. It is indeed eternal life, and it is thy office-character, to give it, to know JEHOVAH, the only true GOD ; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; and JESUS CHRIST, whom JEHOVAH hath sent.

Oh, ye Apostles of CHRIST! what unspeakable mercies did JESUS, in this sweet prayer, confer on you! And ye no less, whom in all the after ages of the Church, GOD the SPIRIT hath called to the ministry; how are ye all, from age to age, included, in this rich priestly blessing of my GOD! Oh! for an holy jealousy, over the fold of CHRIST, in all the under pastors of the Church; to see and know that their commission is of GOD. JESUS! in mercy to thy Church, grant that none may run unsent; but that all may bear with them, the same sweet testimony as JESUS in this address to his FATHER gave, concerning his Apostles: *As thou hast sent me into the world; even so have I also sent them into the world.* Oh! the blessedness for all of this description and character, to have a consciousness of being interested in CHRIST'S prayer; from being sent forth to the ministry from CHRIST'S ordination: HOLY FATHER! *keep through thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are!*

And no less ye whole Church of CHRIST! Never, never, lose sight of those most precious words of JESUS, when he said; *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* Yes! thou dearest LORD! though thou hast given *some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers:* yet the whole is for *the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of CHRIST.* Thy little ones dearest LORD, are as dear to thee, as the greatest and the best; for all is derived from thee, and none hath ought, but what he hath received from thee. Precious LORD JESUS! the hour is hastening, when that will of thine will be fully accomplished; and from an everlasting Oneness of thy Church and People with thyself, the whole Church will appear as thou hast said: FATHER *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me!* Amen.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

JESUS is here in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas, with the Band of Soldiers, apprehend CHRIST. He is arraigned before Pilate.

REFLECTIONS

OH! Gethsemane! sacred, hallowed spot! Did JESUS oft-times resort thither with his disciples? And wilt thou now, O LORD, by thy sweet Spirit, aid my meditations, that I may take the wing of faith, and often traverse over the solemn ground? It was a garden in which the first *Adam* began to break through the fence of GOD's holy plantation. And in a garden the second *Adam*, so called, shall begin the soul-travail of sorrow, to do away the effects of it. And, oh! what humiliation, what agonies, what conflicts in the arduous work? Oh! how vast the glory, when smiting to the earth his enemies, the LORD JESUS proved his GODHEAD by the breath of his mouth! Sweetly do I see thee, LORD, by faith, going forth a willing sacrifice. Lo! I come! said JESUS. So come, LORD, now, by grace!

Hail, thou King of Zion, for thou hast here most blessedly borne testimony to this glorious truth. Then as a King do thou reign and rule over thy Church, thy people, both in heaven and earth. And let my soul continually discover *the goings of my GOD and King, in his sanctuary*. Surely, dear LORD, it is thine, both by nature, providence, grace, and glory, to maintain and order, to regulate and appoint, to establish and confirm thy royal laws, and the government of thy kingdom, in the hearts and minds of all thy people, whom thou hast made willing in the day of thy power! Reign thou, and rule in me, the LORD of life and glory! Amen.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* is here scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked. He is crucified. He giveth up the ghost. His burial.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! never give over thy meditations of this unequalled subject! Follow the footsteps of thy LORD from place to place, the hall of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, from Gabbatha to Golgotha, and through all the painful process of the wonderful sights exhibited on that memorable day, and hear the voice of thy LORD at every one; *Behold! and see! if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger!*

But do not barely contemplate the astonishing scene, but meditate the cause. Read the inscription on the cross. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed! Matchless love! The SON of GOD becomes man that man might become a son of GOD. JESUS the HOLY, harmless, undefiled JESUS, is made sin who knew no sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.

From the cross let my soul in holy meditation follow the LORD to the tomb. And why not hear the same voice as the holy women did, which said, *Come, see the place where the LORD lay*. Never, surely, did the grave receive such a Prisoner, though but for a short space! Never had death and the grave their full triumphs, when in the same hour their empire received a full overthrow. Precious JESUS! thou hast the keys of death, hell, and the grave. Oh! for grace frequently by faith to visit the garden and the tomb where the body of JESUS hath lain. Here let my soul meditate the wonderous subject, until He who hath the key of David, opens my little spot and grave to receive my body. Even now I hear the voice of consolation, *blessed are the dead which die in the LORD!*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The *LORD* appeareth to Mary Magdalene. Afterwards to his Disciples. Thomas doubteth the Resurrection of *JESUS*, is convinced of the Truth of it, and expresseth his Joy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you behold the privileges of GOD's people. JESUS will reward the humble waiting of his redeemed who seek him. They who went early to the sepulchre, and Mary, who remained there, at length had their full portion of the sight of JESUS. And now, what is it but the same? They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.

And what a very precious encouragement is the first appearing of CHRIST to *Mary Magdalene*! She had the first view of JESUS. AS if to comfort every poor sinner, that *where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound*. That soul in CHRIST's family shall have the first glimpse of JESUS, the first kiss of CHRIST, who most needs him. Precious LORD! let all thy Magdalenes, where Satan hath most cruelly wounded, be first healed!

Oh! dearest LORD JESUS! deal by the *Thomas's* of thine in the present hour, as thou didst by the Apostle of old. Thou knowest of the sin which doth so easily beset us, and thou knowest the cause. Oh! thou great and Almighty Author and Finisher of faith! keep thy redeemed from the sin of unbelief. LORD! *give us to believe, and help thou our unbelief!* Amen.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The *Lord Jesus* renews his Appearance to his Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He feeds his Disciples: gives a particular Charge to Peter. John ends his Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! what praise, what thanks, what love, doth thy Church owe thee, dearest Lord, for the many repeated manifestations which thou didst so kindly shew to thy poor despised disciples, after thy resurrection from the dead. Miracles upon miracles: and grace for grace. Oh! let it teach my poor soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, from such striking testimonies as are here recorded, how very nigh Jesus is to his people, when they are

unconscious of it. Yea, Lord! how much thou art watching over all their concerns, and providing, both for their bodily and spiritual sustenance, when they can provide for neither. Oh! for the grace shewn *Peter*; to comfort all the exercised members of Christ's mystical body. Oh! for faith, and love, to be able to appeal, as *Peter* did to Jesus, saying, Lord *thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee!*

Praised be the Father, Son, and Spirit, for all the revelations which Jehovah hath graciously made to the Church of God's dear Son. Lord! grant that all thy redeemed under the Holy Ghost's teaching, may, with the disciple, *which hath testified of these things, and wrote these things*, be able to add, from their own assurance, and say, as the Church then did; *we know that his testimony is true.*

Farewell! for the present, thou beloved Apostle *John*! We hope to meet thy further records of thy dear Lord, and our dear Lord, when we come to those precious writings of thine, under the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost, which are in the same sacred volume. But here we thank thee, for thy labors in this Gospel, and for all the precious relations thou hast given, of Christ our Lord. And blessed, for ever blessed be He, that called thee to this service, in his Church. Shortly the whole Church of God will be called to see Him, in whose bosom the beloved Apostle lay, who wrote these things of his divine Lord. And then, all the redeemed with *John* will surround the throne, and sound their united praises, in one full hymn of thanksgiving, to God and the Lamb, for evermore. Amen.

ACTS

General Observations

In this book of GOD, we enter upon a very interesting part of the divine records, in what relates to the Church of CHRIST, from, and after our LORD'S ascension. The history of the Church from this period becomes highly important, in that it presents us with the account of the first open manifestation of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his Almighty Ministry, agreeably to the promise of CHRIST, before his departure; and thereby becomes a confirmation of the whole. Here it is proved, that GOD the HOLY GHOST is the Founder, and Builder, of the Church, from the beginning. He had framed, and ordained the whole, in all the departments of it. But now, redemption-work being finished, by the Almighty Author of salvation, the LORD the SPIRIT is here mercifully pleased to reveal himself more openly, in the Almighty Ministry, which belonged to Him in his Covenant-office character.

The Acts of the Apostles, so called, because it contains the records of those holy servants of the Lord, takes up the subject from whence the Gospels had left off, at the ascension of the Lord Jesus; and carries on the blessed history of the Church, through a period of about thirty years, until the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul.

In respect to the Writer of it, there can be no question. Luke is allowed by every one to have been the inspired Pen-man of it. The preface with which he begins it, and his directing it to the same person, to whom he sent the Gospel which bears his name; are evident proofs, And the Church hath abundant reason to bless God the Holy Ghost, who is the Author and Giver of all Scripture, for the ministry of this man, on both those occasions.

I do not think it necessary to add any thing more by way of preface. I only very earnestly request the Reader, to enter upon the perusal of this sacred book of God, with prayer; because this will furnish a well-grounded hope, that the close of it will be in praise.

Blessed Author of the whole Scripture of inspiration! (I would say both for myself and Reader,) vouchsafe thy gracious teachings! Open to us both, if it be thine holy will, the precious pages here contained. And, Lord! do thou open our hearts to the right apprehension of all the great truths of God, contained in them. Oh! for an ear to hear, what the Spirit saith unto the Churches! Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This blessed Record of Divine Truth, opens with the History of CHRIST'S Ascension. Peter's Address to the Apostles. The Election of Matthias to be of the twelve, in the Room of the Traitor Judas.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, Reader! on the very entrance at this sacred book of God, and mark well the blessed evidences here afforded of that most precious article of our faith, and hope; in the Lord's return to glory. Jesus! we hail thee, as our risen, and ascended Savior! Thou art indeed gone up on high: thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men: yea, Lord, in the manhood of thy nature, thou hast all grace for men, even for thy rebellious children, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Send down, O Lord, the choice effusions of thy Holy Spirit; and remember Lord thy promise, in which thou didst say: I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. Even so. Amen.

Reader! let it be our daily exercise of faith, to make this article of our Lord's ascension, the constant subject of holy joy. There, would I say, as often as I consider the ascension of Jesus, there dwells the Lord Christ, in my nature, having accomplished redemption by his blood. The heavens must receive my God and Savior, until the times of the restitution of all things. And he is gone before, to take possession of the kingdom in his Church's name, that where he is there they may be also. Moreover, by my Lord's ascension, the justification of his whole redeemed is confirmed. Here, he offered his soul an offering for sin: and there, he presented it perfect before Jehovah. His sacrifice he made upon earth, as our

Great High Priest: and in heaven, he still ministers, going in before the presence of God with his own blood. And by virtue of the everlasting efficacy of that blood, all heaven is perfumed; and the redeemed are sanctified. Hail! thou glorious, and ascended Savior! Send down Lord all thine ascension-gifts upon thy people!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

God the Holy Ghost visits the Apostles in a wonderful and miraculous Manner. The Apostles, being filled with the Spirit, speak divers Languages, The Astonishment of the Multitude. Peter's Sermon; and the Conversion of three thousand Souls.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed be God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all the blessings vouchsafed the Church, in all the Covenant purposes, before all worlds: and for all the mercies in the time-state of the Church, through all dispensations. Oh! blessed hour, when Jesus, having finished redemption-work, returned to glory; and God the Holy Ghost came down, to render effectual his great salvation! Do thou blessed holy Lord, still vouchsafe thy Pentecost-days to thy Church; until, not only three thousand souls, but thousands of thousands, yea, every one to whom this promise is made, to all that are afar off, and to all that are nigh, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, shall know the joyful sound, and walk in the light of thy divine countenance!

Ye ministers of my God! seek for the daily proofs of your Apostle-ship, in the anointings, and ordination of the Lord's Pentecost visits! And ye, no less, of the Lord's people, who have hitherto lived, unconscious of the resurrection of Jesus, from any saving testimony of it in your hearts; be on the look out for those ascension-gifts of a risen and exalted Savior, whose gracious act it is, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. Oh! for the out-pouring of the Spirit upon all the Lord's redeemed ones, that there may be daily added to the Church, such as should be saved.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

Peter and John heal a Cripple at the Gate of the Temple. Peter takes Occasion therefrom to preach to the People.

REFLECTIONS

What a sweet thought is it to my soul, that to all the crippled faculties of my fallen nature; the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth can make me whole. Yea, his name, through faith in his name, will give a perfect soundness to all his redeemed. Lord! grant that in all my approaches to thy house of prayer, I may go always in thy name, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. And oh! with what holy joy and rapture, shall I tread thy courts, when God the[31] Almighty God of our fathers! the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; thou hast indeed glorified thy Son Jesus! Oh! Lord, send down thine ascension-gifts, and bless my soul, in all the sweet manifestations of thy love. In thee, and by thee, and from thee, let all my joy be found. As a child in the Covenant, which God made with our fathers, being Christ's, and consequently Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise; let all my springs arise, and let that assurance to the great father of the faithful be mine also: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Peter, and John are put into prison. They are examined before the Council, threatened, and dismissed. The Lord gives a gracious Token of his Presence, in answering to their Prayers.

REFLECTIONS

Let us ponder well those precious things contained in this Chapter, which are so freely given to us of God! And let us particularly keep in remembrance, that all that is here recorded of

the prosperity of the Church, arose from the blessed Person and Office-work of God the Holy Ghost! We behold him here, under many of those most gracious characters in which the Lord Jesus promised him before his departure. As the Lord the Spirit is the Founder, so is He the Governor, Preserver, Teacher, Comforter, Sanctifier of the Church in all ages. In every individual instance of blessing both ministers and people, his is to manifest the gracious act, and in glorifying Jesus, to take of the Lord Jesus, and to make known to his disciples. And amidst all the diversities of gifts, and all differences of administrations, and all diversities of operations, all these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will!

Oh! blessed and eternal Spirit, do thou now, as thou didst then, manifest thy love to the Church of Jesus! Come, Lord, into the midst of thy Zion, though the builders have set at nought the chief corner stone! Raise up a faithful ministry, who, receiving their ordination from thee, may as faithfully dispense thy word to the people. Let the sweet ascension-gifts of our risen and exalted Savior, again come down to enlighten our Churches, and let that precious Scripture be again fulfilled in our day and generation, where it is said, that He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Pastors and Teachers, and all for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Lord, in mercy hear and do it; defer not, O my God! till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

We have here the awful Account of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Ghost. Peter's Detection of them. The Apostles again imprisoned. The Angel of the Lord brings them out. They are brought before the Council, and after being beaten, are dismissed.

REFLECTIONS

What an awful delusion, must that delusion of the mind be, which like Ananias and Sapphira, is trifling with God? What an horrible state to be feeding on ashes, when a deceived heart hath turned the sinner aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?

Blessed Lord! let my soul be relieve, and comforted, when turning from the view of the Ananias's and Sapphira's of the present generation, I behold the zeal and honesty, the faithfulness and diligence of thy servants the Apostles in their day, holding forth the word of this life. Endued with the Spirit from on high, let me admire the burning fervor of Peter's mind, in punishing by divine authority, the daring lie of such awful characters, committed against God the Holy Ghost. And cause me, thou dear Lord, to see how the Lord honors them, whose delight it is to honor the Lord. Oh! for such a portion of the same spirit, as actuated the mind of Peter, to be poured out on all the faithful ministers of the sanctuary, that they may teach and preach Jesus Christ, and be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.

And Lord, to all the persecutions and malice of their enemies, may an holy indifferency manifest, that they are borne up and supported by thee; that though troubled on every side, yet not distressed; or if perplexed, yet never in despair; that they may always bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus; that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in their body. And do thou Lord to all the prison frames, and bondage exercises of thy Church and people, give them to see the Angel of the Covenant always at hand to bring them out. Yea, let every eye of thy redeemed family be directed by GOD the Spirit, to be looking to Him, who is exalted as a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to his Israel, and remission of sins. Precious Jesus! send down all thine ascension-gifts, and bless thine whole Church with the manifestation of thyself, until Christ be formed in every heart the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Church of Christ requiring it, Deacons are chosen. Stephen being elected, and speaking by the Spirit, is opposed by many.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! ponder well even in this golden age of the Church, how tarnished with abuse the Lord's mercies were, when murmurings arose from partial ministrations of the good things of God's providences. Behold from it, my soul, and learn what a mass of corruption, the unrenewed part of our fallen nature is, and what a handle Satan makes of it to interrupt the peace of the Church! But learn also, how the Lord the Spirit takes occasion therefrom, to raise improvements for his people. The appointment of inferior officers in the Church of Christ, took its rise from hence. And in how many instances, have they since that time, proved a blessing. But what a sweet relief ought such views of the imperfection of the best of Churches bring to the mind, in the recollection, that amidst all the errors of men, the Lord's truth is the same; and, however brethren, through the infirmity of a fallen nature, may neglect one another; Jesus never overlooks, or neglects his people. Precious Lord Jesus! let me never lose sight of this.

Happy and prosperous is that Church of Christ, where men of good report, and full of the Holy Ghost, minister in her government, and are helpful to the Lord's family. And blessed must be those ordinances, where faithful pastors, like the Apostles, give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. Not serving tables, and mingling with the carnal, and learning their works; neither as being lords over God's heritage; but being ensamples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity.

Oh! for the faith of Stephen, to be valiant for the truth, amidst all the libertines of the present day. Jesus will own and bless all such. Their witness is in heaven, and their record on high. And, though a brightness like that of Stephen, may not, because it is needed not, shine upon their countenances, to the view of their foes; yet, the Lord will cause their eyes to be so directed to Him in faith, that their souls will be enlightened, and their faces shall not be ashamed.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The History of Stephen is continued. He preacheth before the Council; is interrupted in the Midst of his Discourse by his Enemies; dragged forth from before the Council, and stoned.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I bless God the Spirit, for this most precious sermon of his servant Stephen. Surely God the Holy Ghost would not have caused it to have been so fully recorded, (since we have already the whole subject contained in it, at large in the scriptures before written,) had not this Almighty Teacher in the Church intended from it some sweet instructions, and which are here very particularly set forth. It is our mercy therefore to attend to them, and bless the Lord for his grace in giving them. And what a light is thrown upon the history of Moses, by Stephen's sermon, in that part of it (which without this information we should not have known,) of his early apprehension, that the Lord would use him, as an instrument, for the delivery of his brethren? And what a blessed proof we draw from Stephen's sermon, in addition to the other relations we have in Scripture, that it was the Lord Jesus, which spake to Moses from the bush. Reader! these are sweet things. May you and I learn to prize them very highly; and bless GOD the Holy Ghost, in having given them to us, by his servant Stephen.

Precious Lord Jesus! be thou eternally loved, and praised, for the grace manifested to thy dying martyr, in such a season of peculiar trial. Oh! let thine whole Church, from age to age, be refreshed in the sweet assurance, such a memorable instance affords, of thy continual presence with thy people. May my soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, learn from it, how we are to commit our departing spirits into thine Almighty hand, in the hour of death, as unto a

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Church under Persecution; which affords Occasion to Philip to preach Christ in Samaria. Peter and John visit Samaria. The awful History of Simon Magus. Philip preacheth to an Ethiopian, and baptizeth him.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! behold in this chapter a true representation of the church of Jesus in all ages. In one view persecuted, and while the friends of the bridegroom are cast down, the enemy triumphing with an high hand. In another, like Samaria, where the word of God is faithfully preached, and graciously received, there is great joy in that place. See, opposed to the faithfulness of Peter and John, the sorcery and hypocrisy of Simon Magus; and mark in all churches similar effects, from the contrast of grace and corruption; Christ and Belial.

Blessed Jesus! let the sweet view here afforded, of thy watchful eye over this Ethiopian, who came from a vast distance led by thy grace to seek the Lord, in sending a special messenger after him, be uppermost in the thoughts of thy people. Jesus hath said, and this sweet scripture confirms it, all that the Father hath given him shall come to him. And rather than one of Christ's little ones shall perish for lack of knowledge, the Lord will meet them in the desert; and when ordinances fail, the Lord will work without them. Oh! for grace, that all the ministers of the Lord's sending, may, like Philip, preach Christ to the people. And oh! that all, to whom the Lord shall reveal himself, as to this Ethiopian may, like him, go on their way rejoicing!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The wonderful History of Saul's Conversion. The Effect it had upon the Jews. Peter healeth Eneas, and raiseth Tabitha from the dead.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, my soul, over the several miracles recorded in this chapter, and behold the wonders connected with the event of Christ tabernacling in the flesh! All, and every circumstance, which hath occurred, or hereafter to be accomplished, in the present life, of the time-state of the Church; all spring out of that one mystery, GOD manifest in the flesh! Precious Lord Jesus! what a world of mysteries is thy Church in? What a world of mysteries is the one view of thy love to thy Church? While I read the conversion of Paul, the healing of Eneas, the bringing back to life Tabitha; and ponder the cause of these, and all the numberless miracles recorded in the word of thy grace: while I contemplate the continuation of the same, daily going on through the earth; and all arising from the love of my Lord to his Church; oh! who shall speak of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

And is this the manner of Jesus, in testifying his love? Doth Jesus indeed delight to raise a persecuting Saul from the brink of hell, to employ him in the service of heaven? Will the Lord indeed take pleasure, from having his name proclaimed from those very lips which have been uttering continued blasphemy? Shall he, who consented to the murder of Stephen, and persecuted unto death, men and women, of the Lord's people, be the very One Jesus hath chosen to be his honored instrument in the conversion of thousands? Lord! how mysterious thy ways; and how full of grace thy judgments? But, my soul! amidst all these wonders with which thou art surrounded do not lose sight of what the Holy Ghost taught Saul after his conversion to tell the Church; that it was for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him the Lord Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting!

Reader! let us bless the Lord for the sweet records in this chapter; and for the grace manifested to the Church in the rest which she is here said to have enjoyed after the sharp persecutions. Oh! that those latter ages may find revivals from the Lord among the people; and that walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they may be multiplied.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

Cornelius, taught by an Angel, sendeth for Peter. The Apostle is at the same time, taught by a Vision to obey the Call. He preacheth before Cornelius and his Household, and God the Holy Ghost blesseth his Ministry.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! in the perusal of this blessed Chapter, let us pass by every lesser consideration, to attend to the one great and glorious truth, taught in it, and by it, how God the Spirit watches over, and is carrying on all the vast designs of his Almighty ministry! How blessedly hath the Lord here taught, that the Jewish and Gentile Church is but one: both branches equally dear to all the Persons of the Godhead, and equally calling forth the joint love, grace, and mercy, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, And Reader! let not you and I forget, how infinitely important in the sight of Jehovah, is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his mediator-character; that all the devotion of this honest Centurion towards God, and his conscientious dealings with men, would not have procured him salvation. Oh! the preciousness of Jesus Christ.

Let all humble waiters upon the Lord, take courage from the grace manifested in this sweet history. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And Jesus will call his redeemed from all places of the earth, where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. When the Lord writeth up his people, even Caesarea will have her children, like Cornelius, to be numbered.

Blessed Spirit of all truth! in all ages thou hast manifested thy saving power. Do thou be pleased, O Lord, from the water of regeneration, until grace is consummated in glory, to carry on thy work with power in the heart of thy redeemed, until thou hast brought the nations of Christ's heritage to thy sceptre; and made every knee of the Lord's people to bend to Christ's name, and every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father! Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The tidings of Cornelius's Conversion are communicated to the Church Jerusalem. Peter is at first reprov'd for going to Cornelius; but: afterwards the Apostles glorify God for the Mercy. Some Account of Barnabas.

REFLECTIONS

I would ponder well the several weighty things contained in this Chapter, and chiefly with an eye to behold the gracious tendencies of God the Spirit, watching over his Church and people. It is really wonderful when we trace how the Lord carried on the ministry of his sacred word, amidst all the oppositions, not only against the wickedness of the enemy, but the mistaken weakness of friends. Who could have thought, that after Christ's own direction to his Apostles, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; those very Apostles should have been so prejudiced in Jewish notions, as to feel displeasure, when that Gospel was preached by Peter, and owned of God. But, Reader! what is human nature, in its highest attainments!

My soul! ponder that worthy name by which thou art called; and see amidst the undistinguished mass of the Christian world, falsely so, called, what distinguishing part is in it, known by thee, and by which thou canst prove thy real title. For as he is not a Jew, that is one outwardly: so neither can he be a Christian, that is not one inwardly. Regeneration it is, which gives the just claim. And this is in the heart. The name first began at Antioch, Antioch is now no more. And where will be the last place where this holy name will be truly known? It is a solemn question. But what a tremendous scripture is that of Christ's, and which must be assuredly fulfilled: Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

Herod persecutes the Church. James is killed by him, and Peter put into Prison. An Angel of the Lord opens the Prison Doors, and delivers him. Herod's awful Death.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let not you and I overlook the wonderful success of prayer, in the case of *Peter*, as related in this Chapter. Oh! what cannot prayer accomplish, when awakened by the SPIRIT of the LORD? And let us not fail to remark, how very near sometimes the LORD permits the enemy to approach, and the apprehensions of his people to be exercised, before the LORD vouchsafeth his answer to prayer. The night was advanced, and the morning hastening on, which was to end the life of *Peter*, before that the prayers for the Apostle's deliverance were answered. So is it frequently with the Church. But *there is a time to favor Zion*. And that time, shall not fully run out, before the LORD'S hour is come. Oh! the wonders of the LORD'S timing; and the LORD'S giving deliverance. And, oh! the exercises of the LORD'S people, thereby to their good. In every one the LORD speaks; *I the LORD teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go!*

What a lesson is here read, to the great and the mighty of the earth, of such as are enemies to GOD, and his CHRIST. *Oh! how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end!* Behold in *Herod*, the sad representation. It is the shout of a god, said the mistaken multitude. And before the shout was hardly ended, he shrieked, though unheard by them, the first shriek of his in hell. What a striking, but just account, the word of GOD gives, of such awful characters, *Like Sheep*, (said the Psalmist,) *they are laid in the grave: death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning: and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. He shall go to the generation of his fathers: they shall never see light.* And where is that? Nay, where is it not? *Peter* saith; *to the spirits which are in prison*. And if they never see light, where can that be but hell? *A land of darkness*, as *Job* saith; *as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any*

order; and where the light is as darkness. Oh! for grace to know distinguishing grace, and to say with the same Psalmist: But GOD will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The HOLY GHOST specially ordains Barnabas, and Saul to his Service. They are sent forth. Elymas the Sorcerer, is struck blind. Saul, {who also is called Paul,} preacheth in the Synagogue. The Jews blaspheme. The Gentiles believe.

REFLECTIONS

ALMIGHTY GOD the SPIRIT, blessed be thy holy name, for the open and signal display which thou wert pleased to make of thyself, and thy sovereignty, in the ordination of *Barnabas* and *Saul* to the ministry of thy word. Do thou, gracious GOD, in mercy preside over all the assemblies of thy people, and especially in the setting apart to the sacred office the ministers of thy Church and people. Hast thou not said, with an eye to this unspeakable mercy, *I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* In mercy, LORD, be it according to thy word, in an eminent manner, in the present day and generation!

LORD, grant that the fearful judgment of *Elymas*, may deter the sworn foes of our GOD, and of his CHRIST, from daring to oppose thy faithful sent servants. And for the word of salvation which our GOD hath sent, very sure we are that it will *never return unto thee void*; but as thou hast promised, give thy people grace to wait the accomplishment of it, for it must fulfill thy pleasure, and *prosper in the thing whereunto the LORD shall send it!*

Oh! precious LORD JESUS! cause thy people to rejoice in thy full and finished salvation. *By thee, all that believe, are justified from all things.* Here then, LORD, give thy people grace to rest. Let there be nothing wavering, nothing unsettled, in our faith; while every thing in the covenant of grace is *ordered, and sure in all things.* Oh! for faith, in lively exercise, to believe *the record GOD hath given of his*

dear SON. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Let all thy faithful therefore of the present hour, as were the disciples of old, be strong in the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS, and, like them, be filled with joy, and with the HOLY GHOST.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

Paul, and Barnabas, preaching in the Synagogue, are opposed by the unbelieving Jews. Paul healeth a Cripple. The Multitude are astonished, and are for offering to the Apostles divine Honors. Certain Jews from Antioch persuade the People, and Paul is stoned. He recovers, and, with Barnabas, departs from Antioch.

REFLECTIONS

GRACIOUS LORD! we behold, in what is here said in this Chapter, the true representation of thy Church, in all ages. The faithful sent servants must endure persecution. The pure Gospel of JESUS, will never be relished by the corrupt minds of the unawakened; neither will it be cordially received by those, who desire to add law to Gospel. But, what grace LORD must it be in thee, to overrule the malice of the enemy, when opposing thy truths, in making the flight of thy servants from persecution to minister to thy glory, in dispersing thy word every where. Oh! may such views sweetly teach my soul, to cry out with the Psalmist, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath wilt thou restrain!* I see, LORD, by this wonderful work of thine, that so much of the wrath of man as thou wilt convert into good, shall be employed to praise thee; all the further malice intended, shall be driven, like water running to waste, into another channel.

Will it please my honored LORD, to teach my soul to profit, from the changeable opinion of men, as here set forth; first in honoring his servants too much, and afterwards in treating them so cruelly; to leave all confidence in the creature, and live wholly upon my God the Infinite Creator. Precious JESUS! doth not every day's experience

with a loud voice proclaim the solemn truth: *Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Oh! the blessedness of knowing thee, living to thee, walking with thee, and rejoicing in thee, as the LORD my righteousness. Here let my soul be daily confirmed, and then it matters not, what tribulation I pass through, to enter into thy kingdom! And grant, LORD, to all thy seat servants, the continual manifestations of thy favor, to bear them up, and bear them on, and bear them through, all opposition. Shortly the LORD will come, to take all his redeemed home, both ministers and people, to himself, for ever: and then the whole of persecution will end, in an everlasting day of the full knowledge, and enjoyment of may GOD for ever!

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

Disputes arise in the Church, on the Subject of Circumcision. The Apostles and Elders are consulted on it. Their Determination is sent to the Churches. Paul and Barnabas differ, and separate.

REFLECTIONS

How can I begin, or end, the perusal of this blessed Chapter, without having my whole soul led to the LORD JESUS, in contemplating the infinite preciousness of his Almighty Person, and the finite preciousness of his Almighty work. Truly, LORD, thou hast shewn thy Church and people, that *in CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*, No obedience to the law, nor all the imperfect and unmeriting services of thy servants under the Gospel, can recommend to GOD. All justification is alone in thee. And oh! how very blessed to the souls of thy redeemed ones, is that precious Scripture, *CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. Be it my portion, O LORD, under the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, to enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of these things, that I may be included in that glorious assurance of my GOD, by his servant the Prophet, *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*.

Praises to GOD the HOLY GHOST for thus causing the frailties of his faithful servants to be recorded, for the edification and encouragement of more frail and exercised servants of our GOD, in the service and ministry of his word. Oh! that the LORD the SPIRIT may render *the* review of it at all times profitable to his Church. Earthen vessels at the best, even the Apostles of CHRIST were, and how less than nothing, but as the sufficiency is in CHRIST, must be all that labor in the Word and doctrine. Oh! then vouchsafe thy sovereign grace, O LORD the SPIRIT, to all thy sent servants. Make them one in CHRIST, and then will they with one mouth and one heart glorify GOD, and be at peace among themselves.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

We are here first brought acquainted with Timothy. Paul hath a Vision to call him to Philippi. The LORD opens the Heart of Lydia. Paul and Silas are imprisoned. The Jailor is converted, Paul and Silas depart from Philippi.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST many gracious improvements to be made of this Chapter, I would desire to remark the LORD'S merciful manifestations, in the instances here recorded of sovereign grace, in opening the heart of *Lydia* by the sweet constraining cords of love; and in alarming into conviction the heart of the *Jailor*; by the trembling convulsions of horror, and anguish of soul. Oh! how various, how wonderful, and how full of mercy in all, are the multiform ways of our wonder-working GOD! *He will beautify the meek with salvation.* He will pull down the strong-holds of sin in his people; and make the stubborn knee of the soul to bend to his power.

Reader! have you observed, carefully observed, what is said in this Chapter of GOD the SPIRIT? How truly awful to read of his forbidding the word to be preached in *Asia*! How strikingly solemn, that when the servants of the LORD assayed to go into *Bithynia*, the SPIRIT suffered them not. Reader! have you noticed these things? And can you notice such things without pausing to remark, yea, and

to remark with astonishment, wonder, love, and praise also, that the LORD hath not long, long since forbidden it in our guilty land? Oh! the forbearance of our GOD to the present CHRIST-despising generation! LORD! let it never be said of our British *Judah*, *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it!* But, oh! in mercy grant, that *the goodness and long suffering of our GOD may lead to repentance.*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Paul and Silas prosecute their Circuit of preaching the Word through Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. We have an awful Account of the latter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to observe, how highly *Paul* was taught, so as to adapt his discourse to the different hearers among whom he exercised his ministry. To the Jews he preached CHRIST crucified, in all his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. To the *Bereans*, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, still JESUS CHRIST became the one text, sum, and substance of the Apostle's sermons, in declaring to every hearer, CHRIST *the power of GOD, and the wisdom of, for salvation to every one that believeth.* To Philosophers, falsely so called, (for, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,) who erected an altar to an Unknown GOD, *Paul* preached JESUS, and the Resurrection. He, and He alone, as the New Testament Altar, the High Priest, and the Sacrifice. In short, so highly taught was *Paul*, and so divinely commissioned by GOD the SPIRIT, that *he became all things to all men, that by all means he might save some.* And, what a sweet testimony the LORD gave to the word of his grace, when, even in *Athens*, he called out his own, and manifested the SAVOR of his name in every place!

Reader! let you and I learn, rightly to value our mercies. Oh! the blessedness of having the glorious Gospel of the blessed GOD made known, and proclaimed in his Churches. LORD! grant thy people grace to know the truth, and the truth to make them free. *Blessed is*

the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance!

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

We have the great Apostle Paul here represented as working with his Hands for his daily Bread. He preacheth at Corinth. He is opposed by the Jews. He is encouraged by a Vision. He departs to Ephesus. Some Account of Apollos, Aquita, and Priscilla.

REFLECTIONS

It must have been a blessed time in the Church, when Ministers, ordained of GOD the HOLY GHOST, found their minds disposed in the intervals of public service, to labor in private for their daily bread, that they might not make the Gospel of GOD chargeable to any. And we find, that so far was this employment in honest industry, for their own maintenance, from damping the ardor of their zeal for GOD, that while *Paul* wrought in tent-making for his daily bread; his soul burned with an holy flame, to preach CHRIST to the people. Oh! that all the faithful ministers of the sanctuary now, were under the same blessed influence as *Paul* was *then*, when *he was pressed*, as it is said, *in SPIRIT, and testified to the Jews that JESUS is the CHRIST*.

Reader! let you and I bless GOD our SAVIOR, that in such a city as *Corinth*, the LORD had a Church: yea, much people. Let us love the LORD JESUS, for granting so sweet and timely a vision, to tell *Paul* this, as is here recorded. And, let us ponder well the record, as it concerns the Church of GOD, in all ages. Depend upon it, the same is now, and so will be, is the very end of time. JESUS hath much people in every city where he sends his Gospel, his word, his servants. In this our city, our sinful land, which like *Corinth* is full of uncleanness, luxury, pride, and every evil. His people are in the midst of many people, as the remnant of *Jacob*. They are like sparks, among the stubble as pure seed, among the tares. Yea, how many of them, all of them indeed, originally and by their Adam-nature living during the days of their unregeneracy, in the same sin, and under the influence of the same corruptions. But Jesus will search and seek

them out. They are his, and he must gather them. The FATHER gave them to him in charge, and they must all pass again under the hand of him that telleth them. They are the purchase also of his blood, and too dearly bought to lose one of them; too dearly loved to be indifferent about them. And, GOD the SPIRIT hath marked them to the day of redemption. Precious LORD Jesus! cause all thy faithful ministers to keep these things in remembrance, and like Paul when oppositions from men or devils arise, to call to mind this sweet vision of their LORD, as though they still heard JESUS say: Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I have much people in this city!

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Paul passeth through Ephesus. The HOLY GHOST blesseth his Ministry. A Tumult is excited in consequence of Paul's preaching. The Town-clerk appeaseth the People.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, in the history of those disciples *Paul* met at *Ephesus*, how easy it is to have a name to live, and yet be virtually dead before GOD. Oh! how sweet the baptisms of the SPIRIT. LORD, let my soul seek thy daily baptisms, thy sweet anointings, without which all outward ordinances, how good soever in themselves, will profit nothing!

Oh! for a portion of the same SPIRIT as *Paul* had, when speaking boldly for the space of three months in the Synagogue, and contending for *the faith once delivered to the saints*. Oh! how cold and languid are our warmest arguments, compared to the burning zeal of this Apostle. Ye ministers of my GOD! beg of Him who touched the Prophet's mouth, to touch yours, that the words of GOD's grace may not freeze as they drop, but from being warm yourselves, your souls may kindle others, and from *the abundance of the heart the mouth may speak*.

Blessed LORD JESUS! we would praise thee, that even in the darkest days, as here, so now, thy miracles of grace upon the heart

are plainly distinguished from all counterfeits, like those vagabond Jews. Thy work, Almighty LORD, in conversion, manifests the people of thy love from all idol worshippers. Great is the cry of the world in their various schemes of creature perfection. But, oh! thou dear. LORD! do thou hold up thy faithful servants, as thou didst *Paul*, by giving testimony to the word of thy grace, and granting signs and wonders in the conversion of the heart to GOD, to follow a faithfully preached Gospel.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

Paul goeth to Macedonia. He preacheth at Troas, and celebrates the LORD'S Supper. A Youth falls front a Window while Paul was long preaching, and is taken up as dead. Paul restores him to Life. He gives a Charge to the Elders at Miletus, and enters into a Ship.

REFLECTIONS

READER! *let* you and I behold with delight, what is here said, of the Apostle and his companions, celebrating the LORD'S supper on the LORD'S day. Let it encourage our hearts to delight in that sweet service, that we may be often found, in breaking of bread, and of prayer. And do thou, LORD Jesus, always preside over those assemblies of thy people. Oh! the blessedness, when by faith we receive the gracious emblems at thine own hand! Then will it always be a feast upon a sacrifice. CHRIST our New Testament Altar, our High Priest, and Passover sacrificed for us. A sweet commemorating, communicating, refreshing, strengthening Ordinance. Yea, we shall say *the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of CHRIST?*

Who that reads of the *Eutychus* in this Chapter, and beholds the *Eutychus* in the many instances of the present day, but must be ready to cry out; *what meanest thou, O sleeper: arise, call upon thy GOD that thou perish not?* What, if such sleepers in the house of GOD were to open their eyes no more, until awakening in eternity? -Is the

sanctuary of the LORD, and the place where his honor dwelleth, a fit place to sleep in? Can it be possible, for men to snuff at Gob's ordinances, and say: *Oh what a weariness is it! When will the Sabbath be gone?*

Let my soul be relieved, from such a contemplation as the weary and the sleepy in the house of GOD, to look once more at *Paul*, and the Elders of *Miletus* at this most refreshing meeting, described in this Chapter. Ye servants of the LORD, who are sent by Him to minister in his Name; and ye faithful among the congregation, who are ministered unto: let this interesting service between *Paul* and his beloved people, which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath so graciously recorded the account of for his Church's edification, be your pattern, and the object of your imitation. Such indeed, should be every assembly of the faithful. lie that preached', should preach, as though it was his last. And they who hear, as though they should hear no more. Every separation, and the breaking up of assemblies, as it the final farewell. LORD JESUS! do thou be present at all, that in the close on earth, instantly thy redeemed may meet thee in heaven.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

Paul is advised by the Brethren not to go up to Jerusalem. He persists. On his Arrival there, he visits James. Soon after he is seized by the Jews. He is rescued by the Chief Captain.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a sweet prospect is here shewn, to the ministers and congregations of the faithful, in the representations of *Paul* and his companions, going about in their visitation of the different Churches? The imagination cannot conceive any thing equally lovely! And, though private Christians do not, because the LORD hath not called them to it, in their sweet societies and meetings, exercise any ministerial function with each other; yet are they both taught, and exhorted, by such examples, to have all their assemblings together, opened, and closed in prayer. And, when the LORD, who is in the midst of them, according to his own most sure

promise, pours out upon them a SPIRIT of prayer, so that they commend each other to the LORD, the very place where they are assembled is sanctified, whether on the shore, or in the house: blessings are implored for those going away, and for those that remain behind; and the sweet union of CHRIST'S love forms them one in Him, that whether absent froth each other, or present, they are accepted in JESUS!

How unpromising soever the removal of our friends may appear, though like Paul, bonds, or imprisonment await the believer; this reflection is always full of comfort: the LORD'S people must be the LORD'S care. That Scripture should never be forgotten: Yea, he loveth the people; all his saints are in thy hands. Oh! then, how sweetly one of the Apostles reasoneth upon it: Casting, saith he, all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Let Paul be at Ephesus, or Jerusalem; let the LORD'S people be at home, or abroad; the consciousness of JESUS being with them, secures all. How wonderfully were all the circumstances of evil, made to minister to greater good, in his instance. The Jews would have killed him. The Roman power would have scourged him. But, the LORD puts a hook in the nose, and a bridle in the lips of both; and GOD shall be glorified by his servant's preaching a sermon to them, and which they shall hear. Reader! observe these things, and then remember that sweet promise: All things work together for good, to them that love GOD, to them who, are called, according to his purpose.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

Paul addresses the Assembly, and relates the Particulars of his Conversion. He is interrupted by the Clamour of the Jews. He is again rescued by the Chief Captain, and conveyed into the Castle.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! behold the great Apostle, rescued from Jew, and Gentile, and with a mind awakened, animated, and strengthened by the LORD, boldly addressing both, and declaring the glory of GOD, in the wonderful work of his conversion! And do not fail to remark,

with what candour, and openness, he confesseth his former state of unregeneracy; when persecuting unto the death, the precious followers of the Loco JESUS! He seems to be at once regardless, what shame, and confusion of face he takes to himself; so that he may but thereby give the greater glory to his LORD. Is it so with thee, my soul? While CHRIST's name is so precious: art thou laying lower in the dust before GOD, in token of thine unworthiness? Is *Paul's* language thine, when he saith: *And the grace of our LORD was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS!* Oh then, tell it abroad as he did, and in every direction, proclaim the blessed truth: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief!*

Reader do not fail to remark, the stedfastness of *Paul*, amidst all the rage and malice of his enemies, He was indeed free born, when by his new birth in regeneration, the LORD had made him free. This was a freedom, unpurchasable with money. And, as it made *Paul* a true citizen of no mean city; so it secured him all the everlasting and eternal privileges of a kingdom, which cannot be moved, whose Builder, and Maker, is GOD.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

Paul pleadeth his Cause before the Council. A Dissension takes place in consequence of it among his Accusers. He is sent to Felix.

REFLECTIONS

I would summon my own heart, while I call upon the Reader's also, in the review of *Paul's* appeal before the council, to solemnly enquire whether we have *lived in all good conscience before GOD unto this day?* It is an important question, and not hastily and presumptuously to be answered. We are such partial judges of evil thoughts, when that judgment respects ourselves, that self-love too often gives a bias to the *opinion*. But, when we come to be weighed in the balance of unerring truth, not according to our view of things, but according to GOD's righteous judgment, the question then

becomes solemn indeed, how is the LORD sanctified in the soul? Reader! doth it not strike you, (I bless the LORD it doth me,) that it is well for poor fallen sinful creatures, we have a better righteousness than our own to trust in, and to plead before GOD, under all the misgivings of conscience, and under all the accusations of sin and Satan!

Let not the Reader overlook (I pray the LORD I may not) the LORD'S watchful care over his servant, amidst the host of foes with which he was surrounded. Beautiful is that scripture, and here it was fully proved, *The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Paul* had no knowledge, but the LORD had, how he should escape, when both *Jew* and *Gentile* seized upon his person. It would be very blessed for me, if I always had this in remembrance. There are numberless anxieties I crowd into life for want of recollecting, that these things are my LORD'S concern, and not mine. JESUS hath said by his servant, casting *all* your care upon him, for he careth for you. I know this in theory as well as words can make it. And frequently under this authority I *do* cast *all* my care upon the LORD, and bring the whole to his throne of grace. But soon after, yea, sometimes in a few moments after, I discover that I must have fetched them all away again, and taken them up, for they are all upon me. Oh! thou dear LORD! is it thus I learn my unworthiness and faithlessness to know more thy grace and all-sufficiency?

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

Paul accused by Tertullus, answereth in his Defence. Felix defers Judgment. Paul preacheth before Felix and his Wife. The Governor is superseded in Office, and leaves Paul in Bonds.

REFLECTIONS

READER! dismiss not this chapter without taking one short view more of this mock court of pretended justice, before whom the Apostle *Paul* was brought to answer for his life. Behold, on the one side, *Tertullus* hired for this purpose, that by his eloquence he might lead the minds of his hearers from what was right; and *Ananias* the

high priest, to give weight by his presence to the accusations against *Paul*, and the whole body of the Jews with open mouth forming a clamorous cry to criminate the Apostle! On the other hand, behold the poor defenseless prisoner, while hearing their violent abuse, standing silent, and not presuming to open his mouth, until commanded by the governor. And, behold this time-serving prince presiding at such a court, whose object was to get money, and not administer justice! And where are the different parties now? What is become of the oratory of *Tertullus*? What are his present views of the sect of the *Nazarenes*, or of *Paul*, the ringleader? And what hath *Felix*, and all the characters of his complexion found of judgment, when from the trembling at the representation only, they have now entered into the full manifestation of it in reality, in the eternal world?

Blessed LORD JESUS! how sweet to the souls of all thy redeemed ones, is the recollection that thou art judge of the quick and dead! And amidst all the unjust decisions, and painful perversions, thy people are not unfrequently brought under, in the present time-state of the Church, the thought of thy righteous judgment brings relief to every case. He that is the believer's judge, is in the same moment his advocate and brother. He will vindicate the cause of his people, and finally and fully restore perfect order among all the works of GOD.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

Paul is accused to Festus, the Governor. After some Time he is brought forth to trial. He appeals to Caesar. Festus and Agrippa confer on the Subject.

REFLECTIONS

READER! learn from *Paul's* history, in the unceasing pursuits of those men for his blood, the bitterness of heart in a state of nature, against the doctrine of grace; and be convinced, that in every individual of the fallen sons of *Adam*, the case is the same. *The carnal mind is enmity against GOD*. Oh! the blessedness, when brought out of this Adam-nature, by sovereign mercy; and brought

into an heartfelt acquaintance, with the LORD JESUS CHRIST. None but they who know the truth, from a personal experience of its Almighty power, as *Paul* did, having part in the first resurrection, can, like him, enjoy it. But, where a saving work of GOD the HOLY GHOST, hath taken place in the soul, by regeneration; that person will have the same confidence as the Apostle had, and with the same holy joy, be always speaking, as he did, of One JESUS, who was dead, whom the heart affirms to be alive.

Blessed LORD JESUS! be thou everlastingly loved and adored, for thy grace, and wisdom, imparted to thy servant *Paul*, when thus ready to be swallowed up by his enemies. Surely, LORD, it was thy strength; made manifest in creature weakness. It was JESUS who taught him, in such a moment, to make an appeal to *Caesar*: though *Caesar* no more than *Festus* was a friend to *Paul*, or his LORD. Here, LORD, thy promise was fulfilled in giving him *a word and wisdom, which all the adversaries* of thy poor prisoner, *could neither gainsay nor resist!* And thus, in a moment, their whole policy fell to the ground! And, thus the LORD is continually doing now, amidst the exercises of his people, by which they are *more than conquerors, through Him that loveth them.*

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

Paul is permitted to speak for Himself. He makes his Defence: declares his Conversion, and the Manner of it. He is interrupted by Festus. He again reassumes his Discourse, and speaks to Agrippa. The whole Court breakup, astonished at what they had heard, and separate.

Acts 26:30-32

And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: (31) And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (32) Then said

Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

The great end the LORD the SPIRIT had appointed by this meeting, being now accomplished, (I pray the Reader not to lose sight of this,) the business is over. The several hearers have now heard for their life, or death. *Paul's* sermon will at the last day be again brought forward, as the ministration of mercy or condemnation. The one class of mercy for the blessed opportunity, Hebrews 10:39. The other of condemnation, Psalm 1:7.

And now the assembly is broken up, the congregation separate, and the prisoner is sent back to his prison. He might have been set at liberty, said *Agrippa*, if he had not appealed unto *Caesar*. No, *Agrippa!* that must not be, for the LORD had shewed his servant, that he must bear witness also at *Rome*, Acts 23:11. How little and contemptible would this whole assembly have appeared, even in their own eyes, amidst all their pomp and splendor, could they but have seen the parts they were then made to act for the divine glory. They were to hear for their own condemnation, if not made *the savor of life unto life*; and they were to prepare for the sending the LORD's messenger and witness to *Rome*. *Howbeit*, (said the LORD of a similar character of old,) *he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so*, Isaiah 10:5-7. It is truly blessed to a child of GOD, to trace the LORD's hand in all the LORD's appointments. *My counsel shall stand*, saith the LORD, *and I will do all my pleasure*, Isaiah 46:10.

REFLECTIONS

IT will be a blessed improvement of this chapter, under the HOLY GHOST'S teachings, if by contemplating the different characters at this assembly; our souls are led to see how dignified was the poor prisoner in his chains, compared to the nobles in their mistaken splendor. Could any eye, have been opened to discern objects spiritually, while looking upon the meeting, as the Prophet's servant was in the Mount, he would have beheld the prisoner in the robes of JESUS's righteousness, and Festus and his royal host wearing the chains of sin, and prisoners to *Satan*. Oh! what mistaken views do we make of all the objects of time and sense, while the vail of nature's darkness is upon our hearts!

Reader! let you and I once more, (we never shall too often,) bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for the thrice record of *Paul's* conversion in his blessed word. Add a blessing to it, O LORD, and cause it to be a sweet savor in the souls of thy people, to numbers now on earth, as it hath been in times past, to numbers now in heaven. Yea, bless it to numbers yet unborn, even to endless generations! Amen.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

We have here the Apostle entering on Ship-board, to be conducted to Rome. The Voyage is attended with danger. The LORD comforts Paul with a Visit in the Night. He foretells the Loss of the Ship, but of the saving of all the Crew. They are shipwrecked, but escape all to Land.

REFLECTIONS

How blessedly the Prophet *Nahum* spake, when he said, *the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm!* And how fully proved, was that way manifested, in all the circumstances of this voyage? Well might the Apostle say, *in perils often, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.* But, said he, as upon another occasion, *out of them all, the LORD delivered me.* Reader! it is well to be brought into exercises, that we may discern the LORD'S hand in bringing out. The loudest cries of the awakened soul, are, when all is dark and discouraging, and when neither sun nor stars appear for many days. A child of GOD will then indeed pray, and pray hard, and in earnest, while the hand of chastening is upon him, and the grace of the LORD is within him, leading him forth in acts of faith and trust, upon the LORD his righteousness. Who of the LORD'S people but would gladly pass through a storm, like this of *Paul's*, to have *Paul's* LORD with them, in the storm in such visions of the night? Oh! the unspeakable felicity, whether in storms or calms, in rough or smooth seasons, when a soul can say, there stood by me this night, the LORD and Angel of the Covenant, *whose I am, and whom I serve.* Reader! it is not simply an act of faith, but faith is then become the

substance, realized into possession; when you and I, can, on sure grounds, say, I am GOD's property by grace;. sure I am, that I shall be equally enabled to say, then am I GOD's care by his covenant love and faithfulness, LORD! help all thy redeemed to cast all their care upon thee, and into thy hands; for JESUS will bring home the whole, and every one to land, and bring them in to his everlasting haven, *where they would be!*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

The LORD disposeth the Hearts of a barbarous People, on whose Ground Paul and the Ship's Company were cast, to receive them kindly. Paul healeth the Sick in the Island. They at length depart, and go to Rome. Paul preacheth in Rome two Years.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for those precious Acts of his Apostles in his Church, for most blessed and delightful they are, as monuments of the LORD's grace in his servant's ministry. Think what multitudes now in glory, enjoyed the sweet savor of them, while on earth. Think how daily now the LORD is blessing them to his people. And, think what numbers yet unborn, will in succession rise up to the enjoyment of them, when you and I shall have been gathered to our fathers, and have seen corruption. Let us close our perusal of this sweet book of GOD, with thanks to the Almighty Author of it, for all the mercy shewn in it, and by it, to ourselves, and to all that are past. And let our prayers be added, that the LORD may continue to bless its use to endless generations. Amen.

ROMANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

We here enter upon the inspired writings of the Apostle *Paul*. They may well be called inspired; *for Paul* himself was taught by the HOLY GHOST, to tell the Church, that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD*. So that in truth, GOD the SPIRIT is the Author, and his Servants are but the Pen-men of all the holy records. And hence we do right, when at any time we make quotations from the Word of GOD, instead of saying, (as is but too commonly done,) the Apostle, whose name the writing bears, saith thus, or thus: We consider GOD the HOLY GHOST himself the speaker, by his servant, and give the Lord the glory. For this would tend, under GOD, to keep alive in our remembrance, both the Person and authority of Him that speaks; and cause us to look beyond the words *which man's wisdom teacheth, to the words which the HOLY GHOST teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.

The Epistle to the *Romans*, is placed first in point of order to all the writings of the Apostle *Paul*. But this priority is not on account of the *time* when written, for many of the Epistles which bear his name, were written before it. Perhaps it stands first in the list of *Paul's* Epistles, partly by reason of its bulk, being larger than all his other writings, and partly on being directed to the Church of the chief city in the *Roman* Empire.

The persons to whom it is addressed are said to be *Romans*. By which is meant, not the whole body of the people who lived at *Rome*; but the Church of GOD in that place. *Paul* indeed, declares as much, in the opening of the Epistle, when directing it: *to all that be in Rome, beloved of GOD, called to be saints*. It is highly needful, that this should be always kept in view. And, not only in relation to this Epistle of *Paul* to the *Romans*, which is now before us, but in all the writings of the servants of the Lord, in their Epistles. And, I take occasion from hence to remark to the Reader, the great importance

of the thing itself. For, to the general inattention on this subject, must be ascribed the sad perversion, which is not infrequently made, of particular passages in those holy writings, to wrong purposes. I mean, when the carnal and ungodly make application of certain words and promises found in them to themselves, and the world at large; which, if properly considered, would be found as belonging only to the Lord's people.

The place, and time of writing of this Epistle by *Paul*, may be easily learnt from the date, which is given in the close of it, and from several incidental passages we meet with here and there in the different parts of it. He dates it from *Corinth*. And in the last Chapter, he tells the Church at *Rome*, that *Gaius, his host, and Erastus, the chamberlain of the city*, (that is, the city of *Corinth*,) *sent their salutations to the Church*, Romans 16:23. And this is further confirmed, by what the Apostle saith elsewhere, 1 Corinthians 1:14; Acts 18: 8. Moreover, *Phoebe*, by whom *Paul* sent this Epistle, is said to be a servant of the Church at *Cenchrea*, a small seaport of the *Corinthians*, about eight miles from the city, Romans 16:1-2. And, from these particulars, it is no difficult matter to discover the *time* when the Apostle sent it to the Church; perhaps about the year of our LORD GOD 57, when *Paul* was on the eve of departure from *Corinth*, see Acts 20:2-3.

But the most important point to be attended to, in these general observations, by way of introduction to the Epistle, is the enquiry, what was the great and leading object GOD the HOLY GHOST might be supposed to have in view, in sending so blessed a portion of his holy word to the Church. And this, be it spoken to the Lord's glory, and the Church's happiness, is as plain and evident as if written with a sun-beam. The one chief doctrine taught in it to the Church, is the method of the sinner's acceptance before GOD, *of justification alone, through faith, by the LORD JESUS CHRIST*. This glorious truth runs through the whole Epistle, like one continued golden chain, linked together in all its bearings, and may be seen, more or less, in every Chapter. And the doctrine is set forth in such plain and clear terms, as if GOD the SPIRIT had determined, for the Church's happiness, that no possible mistake should arise, in the minds of any of his people, when taught of Him, on a point of such infinite consequence. Hence he shews, that this method of GOD's own providing of justification, in and by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is totally distinguished *from*, and

wholly unconnected *with* the law, either in whole, or in part: and, that an obedience to the precepts of the law, hath not the smallest share in contributing to the merciful design of Jehovah, in this plan of salvation. All is the result of free sovereign grace. Christ is here set forth as the One ordinance of heaven. Salvation is shewn to be in no other. Christ is the sole cause. And, even the sweet and precious influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which manifest themselves in the hearts and lives of the redeemed, are shewn to be the blessed *effects*, and not in part the *cause*, of justification. The leading tenor and language of this blessed Epistle, runs, through the whole of it, to this effect; *being justified freely by the grace of GOD, through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS*, Romans 3:24.

The Reader will enter upon the perusal of this Epistle, and have a better apprehension of the whole contents of it, if I previously give him a brief analysis of the several Chapters.

The Apostle begins from the platform of the subject, at his first Chapter, with describing the miserable state of every man by nature, in consequence of the fall; and, in the instance of the city of *Rome*, at that time advanced to the greatest height of human science, but sunk to the lowest degree of profligacy, he fully proves, that *the world, by wisdom, knew not GOD*. From the Gentile, he next goes on to the Jew, and in his *second* and *third* Chapters, states a faithful account of that highly-favored nation. But here, as in the former instance, he makes it abundantly plain and evident, that all are alike included under sin: and that *by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified before GOD*, Romans 3:19-20. Foreseeing, however, that some objections might be made to arise among those who prided themselves in their being descended from *Abraham*, as if the case of that great Patriarch became an exception to this statement of universal corruption; the Apostle, in *his fourth* Chapter, takes up the full force of the objection on this ground, and proves, in *Abraham's* instance, the truth of the doctrine which he had before asserted. He shews most fully and decidedly, that *Abraham* himself was actually justified by faith in Christ, even when he was in a state of uncircumcision. And that in fact *the sign of circumcision* was appointed him, as *a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised*, Romans 4:10-11.

Having thus most clearly and blessedly proved the truth of the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ, by such palpable

evidences, the Apostle's mind seems to have been led out in the vast comprehension of the glorious subject, as he had been led to write it, in those *four Chapters*: and therefore in *the fifth*, he runs back to the very beginning of time, and, in stating the fall of *Adam*, and the Church in him, the Apostle is led to shew, that, as misery and ruin came by this *first Adam*, so blessedness and salvation came by the *second Adam*, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He proves here, with equal clearness and force of truth, that it is the goodness and grace of GOD, to bring the Church out of that Adam-corruption, by a means in which they have no part in the performance, as they were involved in an original ruin, to which, by actual transgression, they did not contribute. *As by the offence of one, (saith the Apostle,) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life,* Romans 5:18.

The *sixth, seventh, and eighth Chapters*, are directed to set forth the blessedness of the dispensation, that *being justified by faith, and having peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST*, the persons of believers are freed from all condemnation; and, from their union with Christ, they partake in his triumphs over sin, death, hell, and the grave. And the Apostle very fully shews, that so far are these privileges from tending to relax the motives, to a corresponding life of sanctity and holiness, such principles become the only source to give life to it, and ensure it. The Apostle speaks with an holy indignation and abhorrence of the bare suspicion, that they, who by union with Christ, are dead to sin, could live any longer therein. He denies it, as a thing impossible, Romans 6:1-2. And very sure it is, that where justification by faith *in Christ*, springs out of a grace union with Christ, (and where this is not the case there can be no justification,) the most ample security is made for every thing that is blessed, in life and conversation. *For, (saith the Apostle,) as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the Sons of GOD,* Romans 8:14. *And if any man have not the SPIRIT of Christ, he is none of his,* Romans 8:14.

In the *ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters*, the Apostle most blessedly dwells upon the grace and mercy of Jehovah, in his threefold character of persons, in this high dispensation of his sovereignty and holiness. And here he manifests the Almightyness of the teaching he was under, when he wrote this Epistle. He speaks

with such humbleness of soul, while bowing down under a sense of Jehovah's wisdom and power in, his appointment of things, as carries with it the highest testimony that GOD the HOLY GHOST guided the Apostle's pen.

The *twelfth*, *thirteenth*, and *fourteenth* Chapters, together with a part of the *fifteenth*, are directed to shew the Church what blessed effects will follow from those gracious principles formed in the heart, where the Lord's people are living in a state of justification, by faith in Christ, before GOD. For, while Christ is lived upon by faith, the SPIRIT of Christ dwells in the heart, and induceth every thing that is truly blessed in life and practice. Christ being made the *sole cause* of salvation, the SPIRIT of Christ, in the believer, manifest the *effects*, as the sole work of GOD the SPIRIT. And these things are not spoken so much as *precepts*, but as *promises*; not so much in a way of *bidding*, as *enabling*: similar to what the Lord JESUS said to his disciples; *Abide in me, and I in you. Continue ye in my love*: that is, ye shall abide in me; ye shall continue in my love; and I will abide in you, John 15:4-9. See Commentary there.

And thus the Apostle having accomplished the great design which GOD the HOLY GHOST had in view, when dictating this Epistle to the Church, *Paul* concludes the whole in the remainder of the *fifteenth* and the *sixteenth* Chapters, with his blessing and his prayers, accompanied with the affectionate remembrances of the brethren with him to the people, and desiring an interest in their prayers for him, in his person and ministry. And he closeth all, with giving *glory to GOD through JESUS CHRIST*.

Reader! I have only to call upon you, before we enter on the Epistle, to join me in spirit before the Throne, that the teachings of the same Almighty Lord, which guided the Apostle's pen, may guide our hearts, that in the reading of it, we may be made wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Paul opens the Epistle with declaring his Apostleship. He salutes the Church, with the Profession of his brotherly Love: declares his

willingness to visit them; and draws a faithful, but melancholy Picture of the Ungodly.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I both pause at the entrance on this blessed Epistle, and while we adore GOD the HOLY GHOST for so precious a gift to his Church, let us beg of Him to give us an understanding and believing heart, in the right apprehension of all its sacred contents. And here, in the very opening, let us look up and behold the LORD JESUS CHRIST in our nature, in all the glories of his person, and offices, and character. He was, he is declared to be, the Son of GOD, with power. His divine nature fully proved by his quickening SPIRIT, and his human nature by his death and resurrection, and both confirming his suitability to be *the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all!*

And, oh! what preciousness is hereby discovered of the Gospel of Christ! How blessedly adapted for the delivery of our poor nature from the ruins of the fall! How graciously contrived for the everlasting happiness of the Church! Reader! behold the holy joy of *Paul*, in his readiness to preach it to all that were in *Rome*, yea, all the world, among *the beloved of GOD, and called to be saints. I am not ashamed* (said *Paul*,) *of the Gospel of Christ!* Ashamed? Who is, who can be ashamed at that which is the highest glory of our nature? The Son of GOD in our nature proclaiming mercy, pardon, and peace, in the blood of his cross. But, Reader! see to it, that we shrink not from the same standard, and the same cause; when we can say, and appeal as he did, *GOD Is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son!* Lord! grant that thy people, in the awful view of what thy servant hath here shewn of a fallen state, may be led to contemplate the blessed deliverance wrought out for the Church by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, And, oh! for grace to enter into an heart-felt enjoyment of these unspeakable mercies, that while the righteousness of GOD therein is revealed from faith to faith, all truly justified believers may live by faith!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle having shewn in the foregoing Chapter, the sad State of all Men by Nature, he shews with equal Proofs arising from human Depravity, the total Inability of the Law to bring Sinners to GOD: and from hence, as in the former Instance, manifests the Necessity and Importance of the Gospel, of Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us, in the view of Israel, and the privileges of Israel, and the sad abuse of them by Israel; feel suitably affected with the sense of our mercies. Is it possible to behold that nation, to mark *the* Lord's watchful eye over them as a nation; and now to call to mind their dispersion and misery, as a nation; and have no concern for ourselves, as a people ?

Let us moreover solemnly deliberate, as fully shewn in their history, how incompetent both law and ordinances are, to bring the heart to GOD. Yea, let us in them learn, how sure it is, that where privileges do not lead to good, men pervert them into evil. Outward means, unaccompanied with an inward grace, are among the most fatal deceptions of the present day. And, beyond all doubt, whatever becomes not *the savor of life unto life*; will have *the savor of death unto death*!

Precious LORD JESUS! how sweet is it, when our souls can seek unto thee for relief and comfort, under all our discouragements! Thou art indeed the life, and light; and the sole righteousness of thy people, Oh! grant, that from being stripped of every thing the pride of unhumiliated nature might be prompted to take up with after the *Gentile*, and the presumption of any supposed righteousness in the law after the *Jew*; thy redeemed may come under the teaching of thy blessed SPIRIT; and wholly seeking in JESUS, and from JESUS, glory, honor, and immortality, may have eternal life; and with full assurance of faith, *believe the record that GOD hath given of his Son.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here further prosecuting the Subject respecting the Jews. He proves the full Condemnation of all the World before GOD by the Deeds of the Law, In the close, he sweetly preacheth CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold the awful state by nature, both of Jew and Gentile! See, what a portrait to humble our souls to the dust, the LORD the SPIRIT hath twice drawn, in his sacred pages; once by *David*, and here by *Paul*, of our utterly lost, and ruined estate, by nature and by practice; as we stand in ourselves before GOD. And this we are told, was the result of that enquiry, when the LORD looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that would seek after GOD. *All were gone out of the way. All together become unprofitable. None good, no, not one.* And how then could it be otherwise, than while beheld in our *Adam-nature*, and without being considered in CHRIST, *all the world must become guilty before GOD?*

And, can it need any argument of persuasion, to prompt the heart convinced of this, to look to JESUS; yea, to flee to Him, from the wrath to come? Am I, are you, convinced of these most unquestionable truths, and do we pause, or remain stupid, and senseless, in the view of these vast concerns? Hath GOD set forth his dear SON, as propitiation through faith in his blood; and do we hesitate in the acceptance of it? Is it declared from heaven, that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in GOD's sight; and are we looking to that quarter, either in whole, or in part, for favor with the LORD? Oh! Sir! if at that awful tribunal, when GOD cometh to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people, we are found without the righteousness of JESUS, and his propitiation, to be our security; what paleness, what horror, will mark the countenance of every son and daughter of *Adam*? Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my propitiation, my high Priest, my Altar, the LORD my righteousness *now*: and sure I am thou wilt be my everlasting glory *then*. When law, and justice, in the multitude of breaches I have committed against both, would give in their verdict

against me: *Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD! Oh! the preciousness of that voice now heard by the ear of faith, and then confirmed with the unalterable determination from the throne: deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle is prosecuting the same Subject through this Chapter. He brings forward the Patriarch Abraham's Faith, in Proof that there can be no Justification before GOD, by the Deeds of the Law.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST for the boundless condescension of his grace, in explaining to the Church the precious doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law. And blessed be his name for illustrating the truth yet more abundantly in the instance of the Patriarch *Abraham*. Now, LORD, through thy blessed teaching we see, wherein the call of GOD consisted, in taking the great father of the faithful from his country and his kindred, and his father's house, to come unto the land which a covenant GOD in CHRIST shewed him. And doth not the same GOD in covenant now command all the Church to forget her own people, and her father's house, that she may be brought into the King's palace? Oh! precious faith, in a precious, precious SAVIOR! LORD I give all thy redeemed grace, that when called upon by grace, like *Abraham*, to go out into a place hereafter to be received as an inheritance, they may, like him, by faith go out, in full confidence in thy grace and mercy.

But let thy people learn, O LORD, from this beautiful illustration of the precious doctrine in the instance of *Abraham*, that the justification of thy Church and people is by CHRIST's person and righteousness, and not our faith. That which was, and is counted for righteousness, is not our faith in that righteousness, but the righteousness itself imputed to the persons of the faithful, from their union and oneness in CHRIST. By faith in the Person and Righteousness of CHRIST, We do indeed enjoy the blessedness of it,

but the work of faith, no more than other works in the creature, can give any title to it. And faith itself comes *from* and is *by* this righteousness. Oh! for grace from the LORD to have a right apprehension of the important distinction. And do thou, blessed LORD! grant to thy whole family the sweet enjoyment of their vast privileges. Neither the circumcision of the *Jew*, nor the uncircumcision of the Gentile, are any thing, where CHRIST and his righteousness are imputed; *Seeing it is One GOD which justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel, both Jew and Gentile, be justified, and shall glory.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The blessed State of a justified Soul. The Subject traced back to the Fall of Adam yet more fully, to shew, that Justification can only be by CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! I would say, as I meditate on this sweet Chapter; what hath my GOD wrought for his Church and people? Here I behold the blessedness of a justified state! Peace with GOD; access to the throne, to the mercy seat, to the pardon office of JESUS CHRIST; and a sure foundation for a daily, hourly rejoicing, in hope of the glory of GOD. And, have I this peace? Am I indeed justified freely, fully, everlastingly, in the LORD my righteousness? Hath JESUS made my peace in the blood of his cross? Is it GOD that justifieth me? And shall I not demand with *Paul*, and say: *who is he that condemneth me?* Oh! the blessedness of a justified state before GOD. *There is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the SPIRIT.*

Praises to my GOD and FATHER, for all his Covenant-love from everlasting! Praises to my GOD and SAVIOR, whose Suretyship righteousness hath done more for me in the recovery of my poor nature, in the *Adam*-fall ruin; than all the original and actual transgressions of the Church have done, to cast the redeemed down.

And praises to my GOD the HOLY GHOST, in causing this blessed Scripture to be given to *the Church*; and writing the blessed effects of it in my heart, and the hearts of his people. Oh! for grace, to be in the daily, hourly enjoyment of it, and to live in the constant unceasing dependence upon it. *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Doctrine of Justification by CHRIST, shewn to be a Doctrine of Godliness. And so far is it, in its Nature and Consequences, from leading to Licentiousness, that it is here proved to be the only Foundation for an holy Life in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both learn from this most blessed Chapter, how to answer the character, of every description, who ventures, from the pride or corruption of his heart, to charge the doctrine of free grace with a tendency to an unholy life. Never, surely, were the motives to an upright and conscientious conversation ever found in the least powerful or persuasive in the soul, until brought home to the soul, in *the death of CHRIST*. And the child of GOD, who is dead with CHRIST, baptized into CHRIST, and buried with CHRIST, in his death; cannot but feel from the HOLY GHOST, an implanted conformity to the likeness of CHRIST, so as to bear part with CHRIST in his resurrection, and walk in newness of life. And, what dominion shall sin have over that soul in whom the HOLY GHOST dwells, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin? What shall tend to mortify the deeds of the body, but living in the SPIRIT, and walking in the SPIRIT? Blessed SPIRIT of holiness! give grace thus to live, and walk, that we may manifest to all gainsayers, thy people are dead to sin, and cannot live any longer therein!

But oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! while seeking daily, hourly, grace from the HOLY GHOST, to adorn the doctrine of GOD my SAVIOR, in all things: never, never, for a moment may my soul forget, that the whole, and every part of redemption-work, and redemption

glory, is thine. GOD be thanked that we were the servants of sin. And that the whole Church, both in heaven and earth, are brought out of this prison-state, is all of grace. And do thou, dearest LORD, cause me to, have my redemption by thee, always in remembrance! May my soul be more and more humbled to the dust before thee, that my GOD and SAVIOR may be more and more exalted. Through life, in death, and for evermore, be it my joy to acknowledge, that there can be no wage mine, but the *wages* of sin, which is death: and all the LORD bestows, even eternal life, with all its preliminaries can only be the free, the sovereign, the unmerited *gift* of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Under the Similitude of the Marriage State, the Apostle in the opening of this Chapter, represents the Power of the Law, over a Man that is wedded to the Law, as long as he liveth. But as in the Married State, the Death of one of the Parties destroys that Law; so CHRIST hath delivered his Church. The Apostle closeth the Chapter, in an affecting Representation of the workings of Sin in the Flesh.

REFLECTIONS

OH! the blessedness of the marriage state in CHRIST! If a woman is bound to her husband so long as he liveth, and the husband to his wife; JESUS my husband, my Maker, my Redeemer, ever liveth; and I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine. And, though I have played the harlot with many lovers, yet will I go and return to my first husband, for I am his in an everlasting covenant which cannot be broken.

Blessed and Eternal SPIRIT! I praise thee for the account which thou hast caused thy servant the Apostle to give of himself in this sweet Chapter. Here, through thy teaching, I behold *Paul* the spiritual condemning *Paul* the carnal, and groaning under a body of sin, which will not let him do the things the soul would do, because evil is present with him. And do I not behold in it, O LORD, my own features of character? Oh! for grace to enter into a right

apprehension of the blessed teaching here presented and brought home to my poor heart. Surely, LORD! grace was in lively exercise in *Pauls* heart, when, from the conscious depths of sin in a body wholly of sin, the soul cried to the depths of divine mercy. And surely, the Apostle was enjoying sweet soul-union with JESUS, when under all, he found deliverance from sin and death, with all the consequences of evil in his own fallen nature, in the full redemption by CHRIST. Here, LORD, may my soul find deliverance also, while carrying about with me the present body my flesh, where dwelleth no good thing. Oh! for the unceasing and lively actings of grace and faith, to cry out with *Paul* under all these exercises; *I thank GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Apostle, having in the foregoing Chapters, fully established the Doctrine of Justification by Faith: here enters upon describing the Blessedness of it. He shews the Privileges of the Faithful, from the first Stage of Freedom from Condemnation, to the final Entrance into Glory.

REFLECTIONS

READER! can you, can I, find strength of faith, under the assurance of being justified in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, to rest in him for everlasting life; then may we take part in the precious truth of the Apostle's words, for there is no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And, blessed be GOD for all the high privileges of a justified state before GOD. Led by the SPIRIT of GOD, we are the sons of GOD. And CHRIST being in us, though the body be dead because of sin, yet is the spirit life because of righteousness. No spirit of bondage any more to fear. No debtors to the law any more to dread. But, living in the SPIRIT, and walking in the SPIRIT, we through the SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body, and we shall live.

Grant, Almighty LORD and FATHER, grace to call thee *abba*, Father! LORD! by the SPIRIT of adoption we have received, give us to be conformed to the image of thy dear SON. And being called, and justified, and made heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST, we may at length be glorified in CHRIST for ever. And nothing, in life or death, in time, or in eternity, *shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The Apostle having now fully established the Doctrine of Justification by CHRIST, and shewn the blessed Effects of it in the Heart and Conscience; here enters upon the Doctrine of GOD's original and eternal Purpose in Election. He treats of the Case of Israel in Abraham's Seed; and towards the close of the Chapter, shews the same Doctrine, in the Call of the Gentiles.

REFLECTIONS

How sure, how certain, and how unalterably fixed, are the ways and purposes of JEHOVAH. From eternity the whole is *ordered in all things, and sure*; and through the whole time-state of the Church, GOD's purposes have been, and must be, fulfilled. As in the eternity of the LORD's nature, so in his ordinations there can be nothing liable to change. His sovereignty is the rule of all his actions, and his will and pleasure the invariable standard of good.

Sweetly, in relation to his Church, all is planned in wisdom; and nothing can arise to alter his ways towards his people. Electing love gave birth to the Church in CHRIST. And in the instance of *Jacob and Esau* it hath been shewn, that not only before the children had done any act of good or evil, but, that the purpose of election might stand, it was said, that the elder should serve the younger; so that electing grace preserved what electing love had began. Reader! it is very blessed when the proud sails of human confidence give way to the sovereign decrees of GOD; and we hail GOD's appointments as the result of GOD's favor to his Church in CHRIST. *Oh! the depth of the*

riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here expressing his deep Concern that the Jews were turning from CHRIST to the Law, He speaks very blessedly towards the Close of the Chapter, that no Believer, whether Jew or Gentile, looking to CHRIST, shall fail of Grace and Salvation in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a beautiful example the great Apostle of the Gentiles holds forth to all that minister in the Gospel of CHRIST, in his earnest desire and prayer to GOD, for Israel's salvation! With what rapture he speaks of his LORD, and the fulness of redemption in him. *Paul* well knew in his own experience, and therefore most affectionately longed for the apprehension of it in others, that CHRIST is *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

It will be a very blessed use of this scripture, if from the statement the Apostle hath given the Church in this Chapter, the minds of the people are taught, under GOD, the vast difference between head-knowledge, and heart-enjoyment. Oh! for grace to rightly know, and as rightly to enjoy, the blessedness of the Apostle's words, that it is *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation!*

Blessed Author and Giver of all faith! Thou that art the glorious object of faith, and in whom faith centers all her hopes, joys, and expectations! Do thou, LORD, increase our faith in thee, and our dependance upon thee! And cause the several means of grace in thine house of prayer, to be blessed of our GOD! Oh! for faith, in the largest, fullest, and most extensive enjoyments of it, to be in the daily actings of my soul, that through GOD the HOLY GHOST I may be kept alive in the hearing of thy word, and by faith be enabled to keep up and maintain unceasing communion with my GOD and SAVIOR, in the enjoyment of it. Precious JESUS! do thou make me new and fresh

discoveries of thyself, in greater frequency, and to greater extent. Let thy Person, thy love, thy favor, which is better than life itself, be the food of my soul every day and all the day, that by living a life of faith upon thee here, I may be fully preparing in body, soul, and spirit, for the everlasting enjoyment of my GOD in glory hereafter.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The Apostle here takes up the Subject again concerning Election. He states the Doctrine particularly, as relating to the Jew and to the Gentile.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and, beholding the rejection of *Israel* as a nation, after all their high privileges; consider what may be, what will be, the rejection of any, and of every mere nominal Church, which hath the *form*, but is destitute of the *power*, of godliness! To this our guilty sinful land, and to every CHRIST-despising generation like the present, how awful that Scripture sounds, in trembling accents: *If GOD spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee!*

Almighty Sovereign, LORD of Heaven and earth! give thy redeemed grace to receive all thy wise, and unerring appointments, with humble joy, and reverence. All must be right; because thou, LORD, hast done it. Let every one taught of GOD, enter into a full apprehension of that most precious truth : *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty, Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!*

And, amidst all the discouragements of the present day, though like the Prophet we find cause to mourn in secret, at the depressed state of *Zion*; yet let this always comfort: *even now at the present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* Reader! forget not that it is grace, yea, all grace. May you and I have grace, to give our GOD all the glory!

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the Apostle shews some of the blessed Effects, which, through Grace, arise out of a Justified, and Sanctified State, before GOD. And he very sweetly proves thereby, the Work of Grace upon the Soul.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! in the unceasing view of thee, and thy living sacrifice, through the mercies of Covenant-love, oh! may I be enabled to come daily, hourly, to the throne of grace, and present myself in thy holiness, for acceptance before GOD, as the reasonably service of thy redeemed. And do thou LORD, grant me grace, to be daily, hourly, weaning from a world, from which I am momentarily departing, that I may no longer be conformed to it, but transformed, by the renewing of my mind, in the unceasing renewings of the HOLY GHOST. Yes! thou dear LORD! through thee I shall prove my membership in CHRIST, and with his Church, in the exercise of all those sweet graces thy servant Apostle hath enumerated. And do thou, my honored LORD, SO help me on by thy gracious, unceasing manifestations, through the whole of my walk and conversation while here below, that I may daily feel my need of thee, and daily act every grace upon thee, and by thee. Surely, LORD! grace is kept alive by grace received from my LORD. And, if my LORD will give my poor soul out of his rich fulness, grace for grace, then will his grace be manifested in all my life and conversation. Living *upon* CHRIST, walking *with* CHRIST, and receiving *from* CHRIST, then will all the fruits and effects of his grace be holiness, and CHRIST my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

Here are various Directions concerning Christian Graces, And the Chapter concludes with an affecting call of the Apostle from the shortness of Life, to be always clothed with CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

SURELY the good order of society, and the general peace of states and kingdoms, are promoted, by wise laws, and regulations; and happy the nation, who hath the LORD for their GOD.

But, my soul! as thou art looking for a city which hath foundation, whose Builder and Maker is GOD; be thou on the watch tower, for the LORD'S coming. And, aware that to thee the night of this wilderness-state is far spent, and the day of the immortal world is at hand, which like the tide of a vast ocean is hastening to cover over the whole earth; oh! for grace to be weaned from all things here below, and to be ready at a moment's warning to mount up and meet the LORD in the air. Blessed LORD JESUS! be it my happiness, to be found waiting! And may GOD the SPIRIT put on CHRIST, and his righteousness on my soul, that when my LORD shall come, *I may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

To avoid unnecessary Contentions in the Church, from the Custom Jews and Gentiles, the Apostle directs this Chapter to the mutual Accommodation of each, in Things of small Moment.

REFLECTIONS

READER! In all the circumstances of life we may well bear with the weak in faith, and receive none to doubtful disputations, while earnest in the grand points of the cross to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. In meats, and drinks, and inventions of

men, and carnal ordinances, there is nothing worth contending for. But while all outward things, though they make a great shew of will-worship, satisfy the unawakened; let it be my pursuit, the things of inward peace. For the LORD'S kingdom *is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the* HOLY GHOST. Blessed LORD JESUS! grant that my life may be a life of faith on thee; and then will my death, be a death of security in thee; for living, or dying, I shall be thine. And to all the lesser circumstances of life, may my walk through the world, in the unavoidable intercourses of it, be conducted with love to thy people from love to thee. Never to wound one of CHRIST'S little ones here below, much less to destroy his comfort, though nothing can destroy his everlasting happiness for whom CHRIST died. And do thou, dearest LORD, grant me increasing faith in thee, since all, and every act, without an eye to thee, and thy righteousness, is sin.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The Apostle exhorts the strong in Faith, to bear the Infirmities of the weak. He recommends the Example of JESUS, and concludes with recommending the Church to the GOD of Peace.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I seek for grace everlastingly to have in view the Person of JESUS. Nothing will tend to endear us more to our weaker brethren, and prompt us to be gentle and affectionate towards them, as when, under GOD the SPIRIT'S glorifying CHRIST to our view, we behold his gentleness and meekness to his redeemed, in the days of our LORD'S flesh, what reproaches he endured, and what unequalled grace and humility he manifested under all. Lamb of GOD! let a portion of thy meek SPIRIT be upon me, and upon all thy Church and people!

Almighty Author of thy Holy Scriptures, let the sweet savor of thy word be always uppermost in my heart. Let me never lose sight of thy love, thou gracious GOD the SPIRIT, in that thou hast caused whatsoever things were written aforetime, to be written for our

learning. LORD! may I esteem thy word more than my necessary food! And do thou, O GOD of hope, fill my soul with all joy and peace in believing, that I may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.

And do thou, glorious GOD and FATHER! who art the GOD of peace; and in proof of it didst bring again from the dead our LORD JESUS, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, be with all thy people and thy Churches alway, to confirm them to the end. Yea, Almighty GOD! do thou establish them in thy truth, and make the blessed word of thy servants mutually refreshing, both to ministers and people. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This Chapter, which closeth the Epistle, is chiefly Greetings and Salutations to certain Persons of the Church, known to the Apostle. Paul closeth the whole with ascribing Praise and Glory to GOD.

REFLECTIONS

MAY the faithful Ministers of CHRIST here learn from *Paul*, how near, and dear, to the heart, must ever lie the Church of CHRIST, when the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwells in the heart. Not content with addressing the whole mystical body of CHRIST, the Apostle here particularly mentions one by one, in name, as members of CHRIST's body, his flesh, and his bones. Oh! how infinitely more to be valued is this record of CHRIST's people in the book of GOD, than the being enrolled among all the great ones of the earth.

Reader! do not overlook what *Paul* hath said, in honorable testimony of those, who by awakening, and regenerating grace, were in CHRIST before him. How sweet is early grace! How blessed to know the LORD from our youth! Little children! if peradventure the LORD should, put this *Poor Man's Commentary* in the way of any such, who like *Josiah*, or *Timothy*, have been brought acquainted with the LORD GOD of your fathers from your youth; do not fail to mark and bless GOD for the distinguishing grace! And you no less of upper years, who even like *Paul*, can observe those that were in the

knowledge of CHRIST before you; yea, if even at the eleventh hour! Oh! bless GOD for his distinguishing mercy. He that came in at the eleventh hour, was made equal with him which had borne the burden and heat of the day! And why so, but because it is all of free grace. He that is called early, is not called for his deservings. And he that is called late, is called then for GOD's grace, and not his merit. All is *to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

And now, for the moment, we take leave of the Apostle. Farewell *Paul!* We have cause to thank thee for thy ministry. But we bless *Paul's* LORD infinitely more, who appointed it. Oh! for grace, mightly to value and love the servant; but to pass by the servant, and love and adore the Master. Precious JESUS! he is indeed thy minister. Oh! make those sweet writings blessed to the souls of thy people. And may they minister in thine Almighty hand, to all the Churches, to bring glory to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, now, and for ever.

Amen.

1st CORINTHIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE city of *Corinth*, which formed a part of *Greece*, in the province of *Achaia*, was a place of great opulence. And from its situation on an isthmus, or neck of land to the sea, opened a large source for trade and commerce; and, as is but too common, where opportunities for the indulgences of corrupt nature are found, *Corinth* was remarkable for abounding with luxuries, pride, and uncleanness. To this place, however, GOD the HOLY GHOST in his providence sent *Paul* to preach the Gospel; and the Apostle continued his personal labors in it for about two years. And, as the LORD who sent *Paul* to *Corinth*, had a people there to receive him, so a church was formed during his abode there, while the Apostle went in and out among them.

After his departure, as appears from certain parts here and there in his Epistle, some irregularities crept in among the people; which *Paul* as a watchful minister of CHRIST set about to reform. But beside this, GOD the HOLY GHOST had other views, when guiding the mind and pen of the Apostle, in dictating this Epistle. The Church of GOD, in every age, hath found cause to bless the HOLY SPIRIT for so precious and invaluable a portion of his sacred word. The interesting account the Apostle hath given of the institution of the Lord's Supper, of Spiritual gifts, and of the Resurrection, (not for the present to mention other subjects treated of by *Paul* in this Epistle,) renders it most blessed indeed!

The *time* in which the apostle wrote it, and sent it to the Church, is not so clearly known, as to determine with exact precision. Some have supposed that it was in the first year of the reign of the emperor *Nero*, which corresponded to the year of our LORD GOD 55. Some place it later. But the chief concern we have, is to know that it was divinely written, under the immediate inspiration of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And this every day's testimony in the hearts of GOD's

people, nourished and refreshed by its gracious contents, abundantly confirm.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any further preface, but invite him for himself to come and see. Very fully persuaded I am, that, if the Writer of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, and the Reader of it, are both led by the LORD's hand, while going over this precious book of GOD in the perusal of it, and the same ALMIGHTY LORD which guided *Paul's* pen to write, shall graciously guide our hearts to read the sacred contents; like the man the Apostle speaks of in one of the Chapters of this epistle, *the secrets of our hearts will be made manifest*, as we attend to the ministry of this word, *and falling down on our face, we shall worship GOD, and report that GOD is in it of a truth*. The LORD (if it be his holy will,) vouchsafe this mercy for the LORD JESUS CHRIST's sake. Amen.

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle openeth his Epistle after his usual Manner; with Salutations. He holds up CHRIST, and very blessedly speaks of his Cross.

Reflections

READER! let you and I, as we enter upon the perusal of this inspired Book of GOD the HOLY GHOST, first pause, and bless the Almighty Author of it for giving so sweet and precious a portion of his holy word to the Church. Oh! for grace, to be always watching the footsteps of GOD the SPIRIT, who hath been from the first formation of the Church, to the present hour, watching over it, watering it every moment, and keeping it, night and day. And, oh! for grace, while we bless GOD for giving to his Church some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; to keep always in view, that these are but instruments; it is the LORD himself is the Almighty Minister, presiding over his Church: *for all these worketh that One and the self-same SPIRIT dividing to every man severally as*

he will! LORD! from thee, may my soul look for blessing, on thy servant's labors!

And Reader, let us also not lose sight of the LORD's distinguishing mercy, in this, and all the sacred, and inspired writings, sent to the Church. It is to CHRIST's Church, they are sent; not to the world. It is to them that are *sanctified*, as the opening of this Chapter shews, not to the unsanctified: to the *called to be saints*, not to them whose names are not written in the book of life. Oh! for grace here also, to watch the LORD's gracious regard to his Church.

And Reader! let you and I, as we go over the several beautiful, and soul-refreshing portions of this sweet Chapter, remark, the preciousness of JESUS in all, his Person, offices, relations, and characters, to his people; the blessed teachings of GOD the SPIRIT, in glorifying CHRIST JESUS to their view; and the faithfulness of GOD the FATHER, in calling his people to the fellowship of his SON, JESUS CHRIST. And, Oh! for sweet communion, and fellowship, with all the Persons of the GODHEAD, in, and through CHRIST, that amidst all the diversity of forms, and contentions of the several Churches, like *Corinth*; our souls may be found resting wholly on CHRIST. And while the fleshly wisdom, and pride of men of the world count CHRIST and his cross foolishness; we may know the LORD JESUS to be to us, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation *to every one that believeth*. Thou hast indeed, O LORD, in the instance of all thy redeemed, chosen the weak and the foolish, yea, the base things, to confound the mighty; but the LORD's strength, is thereby made manifest, in creature weakness And we bless thee, our GOD, that as we have nothing, and are nothing in ourselves, yea, worse than nothing, by reason of ignorance, sin, and unholiness: CHRIST is made of GOD to us, all we need, for grace here, and glory hereafter. CHRIST is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: and all our glorying is in the LORD!

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle enters upon the Relation of his Ministry, which he had exercised among the Corinthians. He reminds them, that he

passed by all human Eloquence in his Discourses before them, and had preached only CHRIST. He spews them how GOD the SPIRIT had confirmed his preaching, in their Hearts.

Reflections

READER! behold the great Apostle in his fervent zeal to the cross of CHRIST! Think, in what view that cross appeared to his mind! He knew it's value. He hath felt, and experienced, the blessedness of it, to his own soul; and as such, he could not remain silent, in holding it forth to others. And his own weakness, and feebleness, in preaching CHRIST, and him crucified, he considered as nothing, while he kept in remembrance that divine strength was rendered the more conspicuous in human nothingness. Nay, the Apostle rejoiced in the consciousness, that the more feeble his ministry was in itself, the more evident would appear CHRIST's glory: and their faith be found, not to stand *in the wisdom of man, but in the power of GOD.*

Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for the sweet instruction communicated to the Church, in this precious Chapter. Yes! thou Almighty Teacher! we do find cause to bless thee, for the very clear, and decisive line thou hast drawn, between natural knowledge and divine; between the wisdom which is from beneath, and that which is from above. None, indeed, of the princes of this world, knew the LORD of glory: neither will they ever, by mere human intellect, discover the hidden wisdom of GOD. But, while these things are hidden from the wise and prudent; oh! the graciousness of our GOD, to reveal them to babes! LORD! may thy people know their sonship, and adoption- character, by thy divine instruction; and may we have all grace, while thou art condescending to be our Teacher, *to know the things which are freely given to us of GOD, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

Chapter 3

Summary

The Apostle is prosecuting the Subject of his Ministry in this Chapter. Under several sweet Similitude's, he describes the Manner he had used among them, for Instruction.

Reflections

DEAREST LORD JESUS! while I hear thy servant, as in this Chapter, reproving the Church, for their weakness in faith, and their little disposition to any thing more than as babes in CHRIST; how can I overlook my LORD's tenderness to his flock, who hath fed them in all ages, and is feeding them now, as a Shepherd! Dearest JESUS! thou knowest how to bear with the weaknesses and infirmities of thy people! Thou carriest the lambs in thy bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young.

Do thou, gracious LORD, watch over the husbandry of thy Church! Do thou order all the apartments of the spiritual building. LORD! grant, that I may never bring the wood, and hay, and stubble of any thing of my own, to lay upon the foundation JESUS CHRIST; And let the gold, and the silver, and the precious stones, laid upon, CHRIST, be the doctrines of CHRIST, that in the hour of trial, they may never be burnt up, but be found to be CHRIST'S, which, will stand every trial.

And blessed LORD the SPIRIT! suffer me never to lose sight of that soul-reviving truth, that the bodies of CHRIST'S members are his Temple. LORD, take up thine abode in my poor nature, and reign in me, and rule in me, as the Almighty LORD of every affection. And let that vast inheritance, to which, by my new birth, I am begotten; be my everlasting consolation, against every exercise, and sorrow of life. While I can say with the Church, *I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me*; sure I am, that both in life and death, things present and things to come, every matter and every event, must minister to the LORD'S glory and my salvation. If CHRIST be mine, all is mine. And blessed shall I be in my basket and in my store, in my lying down and in my rising up, in life, in death, in time, and, to all eternity. Precious thought! *Allure ours, for we are CHRIST'S, and CHRIST'S is GOD'S.* Amen.

Chapter 4

Summary

A further Account respecting Ministers. The humbling View Paul gives of himself, and his few faithful companions.

Reflections

Reader! do observe with what lowliness of heart, *Paul* desired the Church to regard him, and his companions in the ministry: mere servants and stewards, not as lords over GOD'S heritage. *Paul's* great object was, to be found faithful. He considered, that all he was, and all he had, his gifts, graces, knowledge, time, talents, were wholly for the benefit of CHRIST'S Church. And, as he told the LORD'S followers upon another occasion, when writing to them, so in all the departments of his ministry, he felt a willingness to have imparted unto them, not the Gospel of GOD only, but also his very soul, because they were dear to him. Oh! the blessedness of sect a frame of mind, when found among the servants of the LORD'S sanctuary.

But, Reader! do not overlook the sure consequence of faithfulness in the ministry. *Paul* experienced it then: and the same, more or less, is the same now. Simply to preach CHRIST, in all his glory, fulness, and all-sufficiency, never did, nor ever will fail, to call forth the anger of all self-righteous Pharisees, and excite the indignation of the mere nominal professor, even more than the profane. It was so in the days of the Apostle, it is so now, and will continue through the whole time-state of the Church. But, oh! how sweet to eye CHRIST amidst all exercises, and to refer all events into his sovereign hand, as *Paul* did; *he that judgeth me, (said he,) is the LORD!*

Almighty Master! give to all thy faithful servants grace, that when reviled, they may bless; when persecuted, may suffer it; when defamed, they may entreat. May they be content to suffer shame, so JESUS be but honored; and delight to go forth unto their LORD, *without the camp, bearing his reproach!*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle here enters upon the Subject of Reproof. He very sweetly introduceth the Example of CHRIST, and speaks of Him as the Passover. The Chapter concludes with Exhortations.

Reflections

SEE, my soul! what corruptions the human heart is exposed to, and how the peace and prosperity of Church-communion, is liable to be interrupted by the improper indulgence of fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Oh! for grace to keep the heart with all diligence! LORD, do thou keep thy Church, thy people, with thy watchful care, for without thee we are nothing!

Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for this short but sweet portion in this Chapter, which calls upon us to behold CHRIST, *our Passover, sacrificed for us*; and to know our LORD in this most precious, and blessed office-character. Yes! thou dearest JESUS! methinks I would eye thee with unceasing delight, as *the LAMB of GOD slain from the foundation of the world*. Thou wert, indeed, and art still, and ever will be, *a lamb of the first year without blemish, and without spot*. Thou wert taken out, as the Jewish lamb was; from among the flock, the One, the holy individual One chosen by GOD from among the people; *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. LORD! give me grace to keep the feast on this, thy one, thine all-sufficient sacrifice, to thy praise and my unceasing comfort, during the whole of my time-state here below, until thou shalt bring me home to the marriage supper of the LAMB in heaven. Let there be no leaven found in my heart or house. Oh! for the LORD so to prepare me for this and every other holy ordinance, that I may make CHRIST my whole and sole Passover. Let me so paschatize and keep the feast upon my LORD's sacrifice, that both in doctrine, and in life, and conversation, CHRIST may be all, and in all. JESUS will preside at his own table, who both makes the feast, and is the feast, my New Testament altar, sacrifice, and sacrificer. And I shall sit down at his table with great delight here below; and ere long, at his table above, with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, the heirs with the whole Church of the same promise!

Chapter 6

Summary

The Apostle opens this Chapter, with giving Directions to the Church, how to manage their Disputes without the Law. He closeth the Chapter with a short, but very blessed Account, that the Bodies of CHRIST's People are Members of CHRIST's Body.

Reflections

READER! let you and I learn, from this interesting Chapter, how utterly unsuitable, and unbecoming it is, in a child of GOD, called out of the Adam-fall of nature, and redeemed from the law of works, to be entangled in courts of earthly judicature, when we are professedly looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD. Oh! what a reproach it is, as the Apostle saith, to see brother going to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers!

Let us pause again, and again, over that precious Scripture, of sinners washed, sanctified, and justified, when brought out of nature's darkness, and the shadow of death. And, oh! what delightful view are we called to contemplate, in being told, and with such an assurance of undoubted testimony, that our bodies are the temples of the HOLY GHOST. *Solomon* was struck with astonishment, in contemplating the infinite condescension of JEHOVAH to regard the house; which he had made. *Behold*, (said he,) *the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee!* But here we are called upon to behold GOD, the HOLY GHOST making the bodies of his people his temple. LORD! give me grace to honor those members of CHRIST's mystical body, which are made the indwelling residence of the HOLY GHOST; and never by any act of sin and infirmity; desecrate what the LORD calls his temple. Precious LORD JESUS! let me never lose sight of this blessed truth: that I am thine, and bought with a price. Oh! that every thought, and word, and action, could give glory to thy Holy Name!

Chapter 7

Summary

The Apostle is chiefly treating in this Chapter, on the Subject of Marriage. He dwells largely on the several Circumstances connected with it, and makes very many blessed Observations, by way of Improve. went.

Reflections

READER! You and I shall read this Chapter of the Apostle's to no small improvement, if from what is here said in relation to the civil societies in common life, we make a spiritual reflection on that near, and dear union, which subsists between CHRIST and his Church. There can be no connection so near, none so dear, none so important, interesting, and durable; for it is for ever. All other unions die with the body. But CHRIST and his Church are one, to all eternity.

It may be very blessed to have an eye to this, in our forming connections in the marriage state; and to invite the LORD JESUS and his disciples to the wedding. And, with respect to the humble, or exalted state, in which the members of CHRIST'S body are placed, experience loudly confirms the truth every day; poverty, or riches, go but a little way, to frustrate, or promote, the real comforts of life. Where JESUS is, and where He forms the union, blessedness must follow, in the sanctified use of all dispensations.

Reader! do not overlook, or forget, the decision of the LORD by the Apostle in this Chapter, concerning ordinances. Circumcision or uncircumcision, with every other ordinance whatever, are in themselves nothing. Many of CHRIST'S redeemed ones now in glory, like the man JESUS took with him to Paradise from the cross; never enjoyed a single ordinance upon earth. And many, it is to be feared, who have had all the privileges of ordinances, know nothing of the GOD of ordinances to their souls joy. Reader! may it be your happiness, and mine, to form our conclusions upon the Apostle's standard, as regulated by the SPIRIT of GOD. *In CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD, Amen.*

Chapter 8

Summary

The Apostle in this Chapter, is treating on the Subject of Meats offered unto Idols. He very blessedly states the Privileges of the LORD'S People, in their Christian Liberty; but shews, with what Caution a Child of GOD ought to walk, so as not to wound a weak Brother.

Reflecions

Who that beholdeth CHRIST offering his precious soul an offering for sin, and by faith considers the vast and infinite importance of that offering, as it concerns his own soul, would ever after sit down in the idol's temple. And yet my brother, wherein doth the sin differ, when indifferency and coldness to CHRIST'S Person and interest in the Church distinguisheth the conduct of any of his professing followers? Surely the offence of the cross is not ceased. And a man must be singular indeed, in the present day of the Church, if like *Paul*, he glories in that cross, and offences do not come. Blessedly the Apostle hath marked it in this chapter. *But if any man love GOD, the same is known of him.* It is blessed to be known, blessed to be noticed, blessed to be reproached for his Name's sake. *Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name's sake, said, let the LORD be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

Reader! let us seek grace to be faithful to GOD and to souls. And while the Lost) is making manifest his faithfulness in covenant-love, in the person, royalties, perfections, and finished salvation'of his dear SON; see that we offend not one of his little ones which trust *in* him, nor for a moment wound those for whom CHRIST died.

Chapter 9

Summary

The Apostle pleads the Dignity of his Office, and therefrom sheweth his Liberty. Ministers have a just Claim, and from the LORD'S Appointment, to be maintained in their Labors by the People. The Chapter is closed with comparing the Christian Life to a Race.

Reflections

GREAT Apostle of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! The Church of GOD will hail thee, in all generations, as the faithful servant of the LORD. Truly thou didst see the LORD JESUS, and didst become a witness to his resurrection. Truly the seal of thine Apostleship, the Churches in CHRIST, are in the LORD. And all the Churches of the saints, in all ages, and generations, find cause to bless the LORD for thy ministry. Yea! we of the present hour, are reaping daily mercies, through the grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST, for thy labors in the Church of *Corinth*.

Blessed JESUS! while running the race which is set before us, we would be everlastingly looking unto thee, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And, while the world is engaged in the empty and unsatisfying chase of life, may it be the portion of thy redeemed family, to be always following after thee, forgetting things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, and thus to press towards the mark of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. And do thou, LORD, so bless thy people with the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that we may mortify the deeds of the body and live. And JESUS himself will keep his redeemed from falling, and present them faultless in his own spotless righteousness before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

Chapter 10

Summary

The Apostle is here explaining some of the Events of the Church in the Wilderness, as Types of the New Testament Dispensation. He sweetly discourseth on the Subject of the Lord's Supper.

Reflections

WHO would have thought, on reading *Israel's* history in coming up out of Egypt, that all the great outlines of CHRIST'S Church is here shadowed forth? Yes! my soul, thy deliverance from the worse than Egyptian bondage of sin and death, of Satan's captivity and prison-house, was here represented. As all our father's in the Church were baptized unto *Moses*, as the LORD'S minister, in the cloud, and in the sea; ate and drank of the spiritual sustenance, by faith in CHRIST; and eyed CHRIST as the sum and substance of all: so thou, by the same faith in the same GOD and SAVIOR, art now passing through the same wilderness dispensations; and fetching strength for every new exercise by living on JESUS, and of his fulness receiving *grace for grace*. Oh! GOD the HOLY GHOST, bring me under thy continual baptisms! Let my spiritual life in CHRIST, be maintained, as the faithful *Israelites* were, by the same spiritual meat; and let My soul's thirst be continually satisfied in drinking of the same spiritual drink; for He that went before in the pillar of the cloud, and that followed them in the pillar of the fire, is the same LORD JESUS to me, as them; even the Rock whose work is perfect, just as true is He! Precious LORD JESUS! do I not know? hast thou not taught me? that all grace for thy whole family here, and all glory for thy redeemed above, is treasured up, and hath been treasured up, in thine Almighty Person, as the Covenant-head and Husband of thy Church from all eternity?

Sweet cup of blessing in my Lord's Supper! may it be my holy joy and delight often to take thee. For surely, it is an ordinance of JESUS' own appointing. And He who appointed it at the first, promised to be present at every celebration, and will continue to the last, to make it sanctified to every true partaker. Surely it is among the

love-tokens of JESUS. He will be always there where his people are assembled. We shall feed on Him by faith. And we shall know

heartfelt experience, while the King sitteth at his table, and this graces of our souls, which he himself hath given, and calleth forth into exercise, is like the spikenard, that the cup of blessing which we bless is indeed rich communion with the blood of CHRIST; and the bread we break is indeed precious communion of the body of CHRIST! Oh! for the sweet quickenings of GOD the SPIRIT leading to the feast, that my soul may be often taking the cup of salvation, and calling upon the name of the LORD. And do thou, dearest LORD, so lead, so guide, so daily, hourly, momentarily, bring my soul under thy blessed teachings, and influences; that in providences as well as seasons of grace, at my own table or at the LORD's, wherever I am, however employed, in the Church or in the market place, in dealings with men, or sweet communion with the LORD; *whatsoever do, in word, or deed, do all to the glory of GOD, in the name of JESUS CHRIST.*

Chapter 11

Summary

The Apostle is giving Instructions in the opening of this Chapter. He enters somewhat more largely in treating of the Lord's Supper and very sweetly discourseth upon it.

Reflections

LORD give thy people grace to follow thy faithful servants as they have followed thee! Truly, thou dearest LORD! thou art the head of every man, for by creation all is thine. But, oh! how sweet to my soul, that, while JESUS is the head of dominion to the whole creation of GOD, he is the head of union to his body the Church, *the fulness that filleth all in all.*

Almighty JESUS! blessed for ever be thy name for thy grace in committing to the Apostle, for the benefit of thy Church, the precious form of institution of thine holy Supper. Oh! for grace to eye thee at every renewed opportunity of attending thy table, as receiving sinners, and eating with them! Oh! for faith in lively actings upon thy Person, and blood-shedding, and righteousness, so as to hear thee saying to my poor soul, amidst the numbers of thine

round thy table, *Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, This Cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me.* Oh! LORD! who shall thy people ever remember, if we are capable of forgetting thee! LORD! make the sweet service to all thy redeemed, a commemorating, communicating, refreshing, soul-strengthening ordinance, to feast thy saints here below, till we come to sit down with thee at the Marriage Supper of the LAMB in heaven.

Chapter 12

Summary

This very blessed Chapter, from beginning to end, is directed to one and the same Subject; namely, to describe the Oneness and Union of CHRIST and his Church. The Apostle from thence shews that all the spiritual Gifts and Graces which CHRIST'S Members enjoy, flow from their glorious Head, through the blessed Ministry of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

Reflections

BLESSED GOD the SPIRIT! suffer my poor soul never to be ignorant of spiritual gifts! I know, indeed, O LORD, through thy divine quickenings, and gracious teachings, that like those *Corinthians*, I was once an ignorant, blind, and senseless Gentile; carried away unto the idols, and stumbling blocks of sin, and iniquity, which a fallen nature, under the dominion of *Satan*, had set up in my heart, Blessed be the LORD the SPIRIT, which brought me out of darkness, and hath enabled me to say, that JESUS is JEHOVAH, and my LORD! And I do desire to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, for all his spiritual gifts to me, to every child of GOD, yea, to the whole Church, Blessed be the LORD, for the numberless, nameless gifts, with which he blesseth the people! All are his. From the first moment, in which the LORD quickens the poor sinner, through all the vast diversities of gifts he bestows upon every saint, whether Prophet, Apostle, or Teacher; until he brings home the whole Church, rich, for glory in CHRIST; well do I know, and with holy joy confess, that it is the same GOD, *which worketh all in all.* Yes! thou

Almighty Minister of the Church! sure I am, that *all these worketh that One and the self-self SPIRIT, dividing to every man severally as lie will.*

And blessed be thy Name, sweet and precious JESUS! thou, and thy Church are one. Many are the members of thy mystical body; yet, whether in Heaven or earth, still but one. Our LORD JESUS, our glorious Head, hath but one body. Our faithful Husband, but our Wife. Oh! then, do thou own, and bless, and sanctify, and keep, and love, and delight in thy Spouse, the Church! Make her, LORD! what thou wouldest have her to be. And at length bring her home, as one espoused by thyself, and presented by thyself, and to thyself, a glorious Church: the body of CHRIST, and members in particular, to be holy, and without blemish, before thee for ever.

Chapter 13

Summary

This is a short, but interesting Chapter on Love. The Apostle speaks in the highest Commendation of it, and declares that it will abide for ever.

Reflections

Who can read this sweet Chapter, in the relation of Charity, and in the many lovely qualities, with which the Apostle hath so beautifully set it forth, without having the mind at once directed to JESUS, who is all that is here said, and abundantly more, even Charity in the full, compleat, and finished representation of it. Yes! thou dear LORD! every thing of love, lovely, and loving, shines in thee, in one rich constellation. What love, what charity, was that of thine, which prompted thine infinite mind, before all worlds, to set thine affections upon our nature; and at the call of GOD thy FATHER, to betroth thy Church to thyself for ever! And, what charity, what love, passing all knowledge, when after creation-work had taken place in the earth, and thy Church had treacherously departed from thee, to assume our nature, and die *the just for the unjust to bring us to GOD!* And, what an everlasting, unwearied, boundless affection, of love and charity; in cleansing, sanctifying, washing in thy blood,

cloathing in thy righteousness, making comely in thy comeliness, and bringing thy Church through all the time-state here below, until thou shalt bring her home to the eternal world above, to present her to thyself, a glorious Church, to her joy, and thy praise, for ever! Oh! for grace, to contemplate the GOD-Man, in whom alone, all love and charity centers; and from whom alone, all the manifestations of both, must be derived.

Blessed LORD! let it be my happiness to learn, from the contemplation of thyself, and from what is said in this sweet Chapter; that the most splendid talents, and most showy services, no pompous language or head-knowledge of all mysteries, neither the largest display of alms-giving, no, nor the martyrdom of the body, can recommend to GOD: nothing short of the love of GOD in the heart, can profit the soul. Oh for that washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed upon us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD!

Chapter 14

Summary

The Apostle is discoursing in this Chapter, on Spiritual Gifts, and Prophecy. He points out the great Advantage of ministering in the congregation in a Language suited to the Hearers. And the Apostle adds, some Instruction, for the better Order of Worship.

Reflections

PASSING by many very useful observations, which in relation to Church government, might be taken from this Chapter; I shall only request the Reader, to make one general improvement from the whole, with respect to what the Apostle here calls prophesying, or preaching. The absurdity he shews to arise from the preaching in an unknown tongue, is hardly more glaring, than that of preaching in a stile and language, unsuited to the capacities of the hearers, which is little less unknown also.

Nothing can be more evident, than that the whole design of the Gospel is to proclaim to fallen, sinful man, tidings of Salvation. When the Angels posted down from heaven to tell a lost world of the

coming of a SAVIOR; their preaching was short, but comprehensive, *Behold!* (said they) *we bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOR, which is CHRIST the LORD.*

But let us suppose, that those angels had brought those tidings in a language, to a lost world, that no one understood; of what importance would have been their message? When a preacher speaks in a stile of studied elegance, high flown periods, and florid words, which the hearer cannot understand; of what avail is the whole sum and substance of his sermon? And in like manner, when the discourse is directed to expatiate upon the great excellency of virtue, and the happiness which will arise from a discharge of all the high duties of life; and when a poor sinner, with a sinful, sorrowful, broken heart, hears of this blessedness, but is conscious that he had done nothing to merit it, but his whole life meriting the reverse, in punishment; of what possible use can such preachers prove to a wounded soul like his? If indeed, preachers had to do with hearers not sinful, and polluted, who felt no concern for sin, because they had none to answer for; then, I confess, Moral Essays, as they are called, and harangues on the Loveliness of Virtue, might do very well to amuse, and gratify the pride of human nature. But, my Brother! my Brother! If every man be a sinner before GOD, and every man, as the Scriptures solemnly declares, standeth in need of salvation; oh! how needful must it be, to preach CHRIST plainly, fully, completely. Every preacher, sensible of the plague of his own heart, (and he who is not sensible of the plague of his own heart, is not fit, to be a preacher to others,) will rather, as *Paul* saith, speak five words with his understanding, and to be understood of others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. LORD JESUS! stop the mouths of those who run unsent: who preach they know not what! But oh! send out Pastors after thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with knowledge, and understanding.

Chapter 15

Summary

This is a most blessed Chapter, on the Subject of the Resurrection of the LORD JESUS. From CHRIST'S Resurrection, the Apostle proves ours. And the blessed Effects of the Doctrine are shewn.

Reflections

On! thou that art the resurrection and the life! Hail! thou glorious Almighty LORD JESUS! Thou hast indeed declared thyself to be the SON of GOD, with power, according to the SPIRIT of holiness, by thy resurrection from the dead. And thou hast thereby shewn to the fullest demonstration, that in thy life thy people live, and by thy resurrection theirs also is secured, thyself becoming the first fruits of them that slept. Praises to thy great and glorious name! Sin is now pardoned. Justice is now satisfied. Law is now fulfilled. Satan conquered. Hell subdued, and heaven open to all believers!

Oh! ye faithful in CHRIST! rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. Death hath no longer a sting; the passage through the grave is but the valley of the *shadow* of death, for the *substance* is done away. CHRIST hath perfumed the grave with his holy body. It is no longer the territories of the devil, but the chamber of rest to the LORD'S people. From thence, clear views are now seen of the city of the living GOD. Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us unto this lively hope by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead! Blessed be GOD the SON, who is the resurrection and life of his people. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, who *by* the washing of regeneration, which he hath shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR, hath made us partakers of the divine nature, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life! Amen and Amen.

Chapter 16

Summary

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. Several very earnest Admonitions are given, which are followed up with Salutations to the Church.

Reflections

READER! let us not take leave of this beautiful, and blessed Epistle of the Apostle, without first praising the LORD the HOLY GHOST for so precious a portion of inspired truths, and thanking Him for the services and ministry of it by so faithful a servant.

And, while we both look up to the Great Author of his Holy Word, for his divine teachings to accompany our perusal of the whole contents of it, as often as we are favored with the opportunity, let us, as we pass on from chapter to chapter, be everlastingly on the look-out for Him whom *Paul* preached, and whom *Paul* determined to know nothing beside; even JESUS CHRIST, *and him crucified*; JESUS CHRIST, and him glorified; the sent of GOD, the Lamb of GOD, the word of GOD, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to every one that believeth; yea, JEHOVAH'S One, and only One plan of mercy, in the joint love of the HOLY THREE IN ONE; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, to all eternity.

Farewell *Paul*! for the present! We bless thy LORD, and our LORD, for having counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. May the LORD render thy services yet blessed, as the LORD hath in the ages past, and in the present hour, so on to thousands yet unborn. Oh! may the LORD commission those sweet and sacred Epistles to the edification and establishment of the Church upon earth, as long as time shall remain, until the whole redeemed of the Lon are brought home to join the Church in heaven.

Amen.

2nd CORINTHIANS

General Observations

It should seem, from several expressions scattered over the different pages of this *Second* Epistle to the Church at *Corinth*, and particularly from what *Paul* saith, about *Titus* coming from them to him; that the Apostle's former Epistle had been very kindly received by the Church in general. And, it is more than probable, that *Paul* felt his mind, in consequence of it, the more encouraged to address the Church, as he here hath done in several of the chapters in words of the sweetest consolation.

As to the *time* when written, it hath been very generally supposed, that it was not later than a year after the former. The close of the Epistle dates it from *Philippi*. And *Titus* and *Lucas*, were the highly favored Post-men, to convey it to the Church.

The sum and substance of it, I do not think it necessary to describe, by a long detail of contents. Every Chapter carries with it the blessed particulars in its bosom, I would only observe, that the ministry of it, was not intended to be limited to the Church of *Corinth*, but to have regard to the whole body of CHRIST, in all ages. As *Peter* said of the Prophets, so we may say of the Apostles: *not unto themselves, but unto us did they minister the things which are now reported unto us by them, in the Gospel preached with the HOLY GHOST sent down from Heaven.*

I only detain the Reader, on his entrance on this blessed book of GOD, to desire him, to join my spirit, in prayer to Him, *from whom alone cometh every good, and every perfect gift, that it may be commissioned to our mutual benefit, and the divine praise, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle opens this Second Epistle, with his usual Apostolic Benediction. He blesseth GOD for the sweet Consolations the whole Church are possessed of, in and through CHRIST. He speaks of the Exercise of his Ministry among them, as in godly Sincerity; and reminds them, that GOD's Promises are all Yea, and Amen, in CHRIST JESUS.

Reflections

READER! let you and I seek for grace to do as *Paul* did; and, looking up with holy faith and love, to a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, bless the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and hail him, *as the FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort!* And oh! how sweet the thought to my soul, that as a FATHER of mercies, he can, and will beget mercies for me, suited to my wants, and to his glory. I shall have pardoning mercy, and renewing mercy, and refreshing mercy, yea, every mercy, to help in every time of need; for my GOD *can supply all my need according to his riches in glory in CHRIST JESUS.* And, he will not only be my Covenant-GOD, and FATHER in mercy; but the GOD of all comfort. Who then shall want comfort, who hath GOD for their portion? And who shall question divine love and faithfulness, when GOD hath given all mercy, and all comfort in his dear SON? Oh! for grace to be everlastingly reading, and enjoying the inscription of the cross: *He that spared not his own SON, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him, freely give us all things?*

Precious LORD JESUS! the Amen! the faithful, and true witness! Oh! how blessed, and delightful to my soul's joy, that the blessings in thee, and from thee, are not at a yea, and nay uncertainty; but all the promises in thee, are yea, and in thee Amen. LORD grant, that in thee, the testimony of *my* conscience may be in simplicity and godly sincerity; and that I may thus have my conversation in the world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of thy great day, when I shall see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever.

And oh! Almighty SPIRIT! do thou establish me, and anoint me, and seal me, to the day of redemption; that I may have *the earnest of the SPIRIT in my heart!*

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle prosecutes the Subject of his Epistle in this Chapter. Very blessedly he speaks the inmost Feelings of his Soul, and finds cause to bless GOD, for causing him always to triumph in CHRIST.

Reflections

READER! may the LORD give grace to fix our eyes, our hearts, our whole souls, upon the person of JESUS until like *Paul* we can, and do cry out, with the same full assurance of faith: *Now, thanks be unto GOD, which always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST.* Oh! the blessedness of having the sweet savor of his knowledge, always upon the mind! And do we not know, that from being secretly made one, in the members of his mystical body, the persons of all his redeemed are so secured, in all the blessed effects of his blood, and righteousness, that there is an everlasting cause to triumph in Him, amidst all the discouragements we meet with in ourselves.

And, oh! Almighty GOD and Father! when I consider, that it is unto thee, CHRIST is a sweet savor, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; oh! how refreshing to my soul is the blessed consideration, that all CHRIST is, and all our enjoyments in CHRIST are; thy love is in all. And GOD the SPIRIT, no less brings home my LORD, the LORD of life and glory to my affection, and gives me *to rejoice, in hope of the glory of GOD.* Again, again I say; nor shall the sweet words cease, until I come to see my GOD in glory: *Now thanks be unto GOD which always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST!*

Chapter 3

Summary

In this Chapter, which is but short, though sweet, the Apostle appeals to the Hearts of the Corinthians, as Proofs of his Ministry. He draws a beautiful Comparison, between the Ministration of the Law, and the Gospel; to shew the vast Superiority of the latter.

Reflections

READER! let you and I, learn to rightly value our privileges!. Blessed be GOD, we are not come to the Mount, that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest! Oh! what an awful dispensation, to shadow forth the terror, and dread, with which the broken law of GOD stood over the alarmed conscience of the trembling, guilty soul! Well might it be called, the ministration of death. For it denounced everlasting indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil. Reader! what a mercy is it, that the poor sinner is come not to Mount *Sinai*, but Mount *Zion*; not to the law to condemn, but to the Gospel to save; even to JESUS *the Mediator of the New Covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* LORD! Take away every remaining vail, of darkness and unbelief. Cause my soul, with open face, to behold as in a glass, the glory of the LORD! Cause my soul to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD. And do thou, Almighty SPIRIT, grant me freedom of access, to the mercy-seat of my GOD, in CHRIST. For where thou, LORD, art, there is liberty. Oh! for liberty to pray, to plead, to wrestle with my GOD in prayer, in the blood, obedience, and death, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Give me, LORD, that sweet spirit of adoption, that I may be no longer under a spirit of bondage, but cry, Abba FATHER! And, oh! do thou be an unceasing witness to *my* spirit, that I am a child of GOD!

Chapter 4

Summary

This is a most beautiful, and interesting Chapter. The Apostle sets forth, the solemn Views he had of the Ministry, and his Earnestness to be found faithful, in the discharge of it. He speaks of his great Exercises, in consequence thereof; and tells the Church, of the Supports he had in JESUS, to carry him through all.

Reflections

I would ponder well the contents of this sweet Chapter. What a mercy to a place, to a Church, to a people, is a faithful servant of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! What a mercy to that servant, that minister, that he hath this treasure, in an earthen vessel; that when creature-weakness is made manifest, and successful in Creator-strength; it may lead his heart, to give all the glory to the LORD.

Blessed JESUS! make me an humble follower of those faithful servants of old, who were enabled through grace, to bear about with them always the dying of the LORD JESUS; that the life also of JESUS might be made manifest in their body. Oh! for grace to be kept above the afflictions of a moment, in the sure and certain prospect of that eternal glory, which shall be revealed. LORD! grant, that a believing view of that everlasting Covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure, and a consciousness through grace, of a personal interest in all the blessings of it; may keep my soul from fainting, under any of the exercises of the present time-state of existence. *Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Oh! for a life of faith in full exercise, until *that which is perfect is come; and when that which is in part shall be done away.*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle is here prosecuting, much the same Subject, as in the preceding Chapter. He speaks with full assurance of Faith, of his

eternal Interests, He closeth the Discourse, with stating the Grounds of all Security in CHRIST.

Reflections

Who is blessed in the LORD, that can join the Apostle's confidence, on the same well-grounded assurance in CHRIST; that when the tabernacle of this earthly house shall fall, the mansion of glory in JESUS, stands open for his sure reception? Oh! the vast, the conceivable difference, which will take place, at the judgment-seat of CHRIST, between the redeemed of the LORD, and the unregenerate! Who shall form conception, between the shouts of holy joy, and the shrieks of the condemned? LORD JESUS! be thou my portion *now*; and sure I am, thou wilt be my everlasting confidence *then*, LORD! give me all the sweet properties of the new creature, and so cause the love of CHRIST to constrain me, that during the whole time-state of my continuance here below, I may thus judge, and thus act, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, who died for them, and rose again! Blessed LORD JESUS! I would be wholly thine! And, oh! the rapturous thought! I am made the righteousness of GOD in thee!

Chapter 6

Summary

In, the former Part of this Chapter, the Apostle is treating the Subject of the Ministry. In the latter, he cautions the Church against communications with infidels.

Reflections

WHAT everlasting praise hath the Church of GOD to offer, to the joint Authors of such unspeakable grace, and favor, as are given to the Church, in JESUS CHRIST! Blessed for ever be GOD the FATHER, who both gave his dear SON, as a Covenant for the people; and heard him, and succored him, in the day of salvation! And blessed for ever be GOD the SON, who hath given the accepted time, and the day of salvation to his Church, during the whole of her time-state, upon

earth. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, who not only maketh the LORD's people willing in the day of his power; but in the infinite condescension of his grace, maketh their bodies his temple! Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou give me to know, and live under, thy gracious abidings, from day to day. Suffer me not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For as CHRIST hath no concord with *Belial*, so let not my soul have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Oh! for grace to be separated, that I may daily, hourly, be enjoying the astonishing grace, in having the knowledge, and enjoyment of GOD as my FATHER, and live, among the One and daughters of the LORD Almighty!

Chapter 7

Summary

This Chapter contains many earnest Exhortations, arising out of the foregoing. Paul adds several affectionate Observations, as expressive of his Good-will to the Church.

Reflections

How very encouraging it is to the true believer in CHRIST, to behold where his security is, and in whom is his strength found! LORD! thou knowest, and thou hast in some measure taught me to know, that I can do nothing of myself, and all my sufficiency is of thee. I bless thee, my gracious GOD, that I have these sweet promises of thy indwelling abode, in my heart. Keep me therefore, by thy Almighty power; and by faith, give me daily, hourly, to see, and know, that thou art cleansing me, and I am cleansed: thou hast perfected holiness, yea, thou art thyself the holiness of thy people; and, by faith, I am made the blessed partaker of it, in the fear of GOD.

And, oh! thou risen and exalted SAVIOR! send down thine ascension gifts in holy profusion, upon Churches, ministers, and people. Sweet will it be to my soul, and to every child of GOD, to receive from thine own hand, the genuine grace, which worketh godly sorrow, in a true, and sincere repentance, not to be repented of. LORD keep open this spring in our souls. Divorce us from all self-

righteousness. Let every thing tend to hide pride from our eyes; and open the LORD JESUS to our view. And let a daily sense of our nothingness, and creatureship, and unworthiness, endear our LORD, more and more to our apprehension; that we may behold JESUS, and JESUS alone, as the whole of salvation. Not tears, not prayers, not repentance, no, nor faith, as an act of ours. These are *effects*, not the *cause*. Neither any thing wrought *by* us, or any thing wrought *in* us; but CHRIST himself; and his own Personal, incommunicable work, the whole of salvation! Oh! for grace, daily, hourly to know, and as often to sing; the words of him of old: *The LORD is my strengths and my song, and he is become my salvation!*

Chapter 8

Summary

The Historical Part of this Chapter, is in relation to the Provision Paul recommended, for the poor Saints in the Church. He speaks sweetly of CHRIST, and shews the Fulness, and Suitability of the LORD, to his People.

Reflections

WHAT a lovely view those Churches of *Macedon* exhibit, of the real love of CHRIST, in their hearts, in their liberal attention to the wants of CHRIST'S members. Not only in proportion to their power, but beyond their power, the Apostle testifieth, of their willingness to help them. But Reader! while paying all due respect to those faithful members of CHRIST'S body; look beyond all and every other consideration of charity, to contemplate that unequalled grace of JESUS, who throws back at an infinite distance, all comparison.

Blessed LORD! in the sweet view of the Israelites, gathering day by day of their perishing food; let my soul learn, how to gather every day, and all the day, of that bread, which endureth to everlasting life. Precious JESUS! he that gathers the least of thee, hath that which empires cannot purchase. LORD! give me largely of thy fulness; and even in the smallest portion, I shall have no lack.

Praises to thy great name, O LORD! for the sweet discovery thy servant hath here made, of thine inheritance in thy Church. While

thou art all the glory of thy people, they are thy glory in giving out of thy fulness. And while they are made everlastingly blessed, and happy in thee, thou art everlastingly glorified in their salvation. Now do I see a beauty in that Scripture, which GOD the HOLY GHOST makes blessed to my view. *Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD; and a royal diadem in the hand of thy GOD.* Amen,

Chapter 9

Summary

This Chapter is not unsimilar to the former. It treats principally of Alms-giving. But Paul sweetly closeth it, in blessing GOD, for the first, and best, and comprehensive Mercy of all Alms-giving, in GOD's unspeakable Gift, in, and by, CHRIST.

Reflections

IT will be a blessed improvement from this Chapter, Under the LORD's teaching, to learn, while *Paul* is speaking of alms-deeds, and liberality to the poor; how pure that source of real charity is, which runs *from* GOD, and leads *to* GOD. What an astonishment would it induce in the minds of some men, if they were told, that as no alms-giving whatever is real charity, unless it ariseth, as a stream doth from a fountain, from the love of GOD; the numberless public charities as they are called, which have not this origin for their birth, cease to be real charities; and will be found more the effect of pride, and ostentation, than either intended for divine glory, or human happiness. If all the actions of men on the score of charity, were ascertained by this standard, what a draw-back would be found, in the calculations of self-righteous Pharisees, of their real state before GOD? Reader! do attend to the Apostle's character of the love of the heart, in that which comes from GOD, and leads to GOD. GOD loveth a cheerful giver. Not simply self-delight, in the deed; for this is often the choicest fruit the self-righteous character gathers, from his charity, in the offering made to the shrine of his vanity: but a cheerful giver to the LORD, of his own bounty, as the LORD's Almoner. Cheerful in seeing the LORD's poor, fed from the LORD's

gifts; in which self hath no gratification of pride, but feels humility. Here it is, the cup of cold water becomes a precious gift. And the hundreds of the affluent, given without it, hath no value in the sight of GOD.

But, Reader! if things be so, think what a gift was, and is, that which flowed, and will for ever be flowing, from the free, pure, disinterested love of GOD, in the gift of his dear SON? Think, what a sovereign, unlooked-for, boundless, bottomless mercy, in the gift of GOD the SPIRIT! Oh! for grace to have a right apprehension, of this *unspeakable gift!*

Chapter 10

Summary

The Apostle enters upon this Chapter with one of the most endearing Expressions of Entreaty, to enforce what he wrote to them, in holding forth the Meekness, and Gentleness, of CHRIST. And he follows it up, with several very interesting Arguments.

Reflections

LAMB of GOD! be it my mercy to learn of thee, for thou art meek, and lowly in heart. Thou knowest, LORD! and blessed be thy Name, since thou wert pleased to call me by thy grace, that thou hast taught me, in some measure, also to know, that by nature, and by practice.

I am haughty and proud; and like ground thrown open, I am exposed to all the ravages of the wild beasts, and to the still worse ravages of my own poor, fallen, sinful, and corrupt affections. Precious JESUS! what a refreshing, sweet thought, to comfort me under these depressing circumstances; thou art the perfection of thy redeemed! Divinely fitted, and divinely disposed, to be the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, of thy people!

LORD! let me go forth to the holy war, in thy strength, and in thy power. Do thou put on me, all the holy armor. But while divinely clad, never, never, my glorious Head, may I for a moment forget, that all the victory is thine, and all the glory thine!

Send forth, LORD, thy servants, to the work of the ministry; and may they prove that they are thine, and sent by thee, in passing

through evil report, as well as good report. Oh! the blessedness, amidst the strife of tongues, to have the SPIRIT'S testimony, that they have not run unsent, nor labored in vain. GOD the HOLY GHOST speaking in them, and by them, to the hearts of his people.

Chapter 11

Summary

The Apostle in this Chapter, is defending himself, and his Ministry, against some that opposed him. He modestly speaks of his Trials, and Afflictions.

Reflections

READER! who can behold the warmth and zeal of the Apostle in his godly jealousy over the *Corinthian* Church, in their espousals to CHRIST, without feeling an anxiety and jealousy over our own hearts, in relation to our own? Shall not you and I be very earnest to know ourselves betrothed as chaste virgins to CHRIST? Hath JESUS indeed, notwithstanding all our poverty, loathsomeness by sin, and all the reproached state of the fall, married our persons, taken an interest in all our concerns, nourished us, cherished us, and with all *the* tenderness and love of the bridegroom, provides for all our wants, and for ever doing the part of the most affectionate husband; and shall we not feel our attachment to One who hath so loved us, as to give himself for us? Shall *Satan* beguile our hearts as he did *Eve*? Shall any temptation lead away from the beautiful simplicity that is in CHRIST?. Oh! thou glorious and all-sufficient SAVIOR! In thee is a fulness and an all-sufficiency of the most compleat salvation! In thee GOD is well pleased t. So LORD may be all thy people.

And if any come and preach another JESUS! if any speak of another SPIRIT, another Gospel, Oh! may the LORD silence all false teachers, all false Apostles. LORD, in compassion to the souls of men, stop the mouths of those, which run unsent of thee. And whatever specious garb they come under, though transformed as angels or light; yet, whatever tends not to honor CHRIST, let all thy faithful servants be kept from their delusion, and be enabled to resist their deceitful wiles. If any man love not our LORD JESUS CHRIST, let

him be *Anathema Maranatha!* Oh! for grace to be kept from all evil, and all the malice of the foe, as *Paul*, let down by the wall, and escaping their hands. And, oh! for grace in spirituals, to be kept by the power of GOD, through faith unto salvation.

Chapter 12

Summary

Paul is here speaking of Visions and Revelations, with which the LORD favored him. He speaks of his Infirmities.

Reflections

READER! let us pause and contemplate the highly favored state of the LORD's faithful servant, thus admitted to visions and revelations of GOD. No doubt, the very recollection warmed his soul in all the after stages of life. *Paul* felt the blessedness of them, and, like *Peter*, well knew, to his soul's joy, that he had not followed cunningly devised fables, when was made known unto him the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, but was an eye-witness of his majesty. Reader! though the manifestations the LORD JESUS now makes to his people are not so splendid, for they are not now so necessary for confirmation to the Church, yet are they equally sure for the private consolation of every child of GOD. When GOD the HOLY GHOST in regeneration, calls his redeemed from the *Adam*-darkness of nature to the light of life in CHRIST, not unfrequently, his manifestations are so sweet and gracious, that their remembrance becomes a comfort, through all the after parts of life. Yea, many a child of GOD in a dying hour, like *Jacob* in recollection of his *Bethel*, and *Moses* of his *Bush*, hath found the cold, clammy sweat of death unable to destroy the warm fervor of the precious remembrance! Oh! for grace for the soul to live in the enjoyment of CHRIST; and, sure I am, CHRIST himself will be the enjoyment of the soul in death!

Reader! do not overlook the personal interest which every child of GOD hath in the LORD JESUS'S sweet answer to *Paul*: *My grace is sufficient for thee!* Messengers of *Satan*, thorns in the flesh, infirmities and reproaches, these all belong to the present time-state

of the Church. There is a needs-be for them. The Church of GOD is passing through a wilderness, and cannot get to heaven without them. But JESUS knows them all, permits them all, overrules them all, sanctifies all. And JESUS hath, from all eternity, the very portion of grace to bear up all his members under all, as is exactly suited to all, and will assuredly give it out to each, and to all in the hour of need. Precious LORD JESUS! may I never lose sight of this! my GOD, my SAVIOR hath the very portion of grace I require for this and that occasion, and I have nothing to do but to ask it from him as oft as that occasion shall require. Amen! My GOD will then suit His strength to my weakness, and *bruise Satan under my feet shortly!*

Chapter 13

Summary

The Apostle in closing his second Epistle, refers the Corinthians to the Testimony of the threefold Witness, in Confirmation of the Truths he had written to them, and ends with his Apostolical Blessing.

Reflections

My soul! my Reader! let us both pause, and ponder well the sacred and sweet contents of this closing chapter of the Apostle. It opens with the assurances of two or three witnesses establishing every word. An, you and I, have the Three heavenly witnesses bearing record, that eternal life is in GOD'S SON. And the chapter ends with the blessings of those heavenly witnesses, in their grace, and love, and communion with the Church while upon earth; thus confirming the whole in personal proof. Reader! what say you to such decided records, *to the truth as it is in JESUS*. Oh! for grace, seeing we are encompassed with such witnesses, *to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith!*

Farewell *Paul!* farewell for the present, while we thank thee, as the LORD's servant and minister, for those labors of love, with which, not only the Church at *Corinth* were blessed, but the Church of GOD, in all ages since, have been benefited, under the teaching of the

Almighty Author of all scripture, GOD the HOLY GHOST. Oh! for ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, and the faithful in every true Church of JESUS to be taught from those holy scriptures, by the continual unction of the HOLY ONE, and to know all things? May it be the one language of the whole Church of GOD, in the common salutation of all saints: Brethren! the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all.

Amen.

GALATIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

GALATIA was a province of the lesser Asia. Here, the Lord had a people, whom he was pleased to call by sovereign grace; and principally, it should seem, under the personal ministry of the Apostle Paul. See, in confirmation, Acts 16:6. and 18:23. Galatians 1:8, 9. and chap. 4:13, &c. The church so formed, was made up, as might be expected, of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Hence they brought with them into the church their several distinct prejudices, according, to their former attachments. And this explains, in a great measure, certain expressions, here and there, which we meet with in this Epistle, in the apostle's teaching. But the leading feature of the whole, and for which *Paul* here wrote to the *Galatians*, was, to set forth the way of justification before God; which the apostle decidedly shows, under God the Spirit's inspiration, to be solely in, and by, the Lord Jesus Christ, without the smallest mixture of the law.

The *time* in which *Paul* wrote this Epistle is variously dated by different writers, Some make it as early as Anno 55: others, as late as 59, in the fifth year of the reign of *Nero*. The *place* also, where the Apostle, wrote it, is no less uncertain. For though in the close of it, the signature, is said to be from *Rome*, yet this doth not mean, that *Paul* wrote it there. However, these points are not material. The great object in which we are concerned is, the assurance that the writing is by the Holy Ghost. And the Lord's seal to this appears, in every Chapter. Indeed, the whole Epistle brings with it, what *Paul* calls the threefold witness; 2 Corinthians 13:1. God the Holy Ghost the Author: the sacred inspired word itself: and the heart of the child of God, in whom the truth of it is written.

I think it unnecessary to detain the Reader from immediately entering on the perusal of a Scripture, so sweet, and interesting; and shall only beg the Lord to direct and guide my heart and pen, in all

that shall be offered upon it, in this *Poor Man's Commentary*; that both Writer and Reader may be refreshed to their soul's joy, and the Lord's glory, in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Paul introduceth his Epistle, with a short Account of himself, and his Apostleship. He speaks of God's Love, in his Conversion: and awfully describes the State of those, who preach any other Gospel, than what the Lord sent him to preach.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET testimony to my Lord in the account here given by his servant, of his call to the Apostleship! No man could commission to the office, *Paul* knew. And it was *Paul's* joy to consider, that he neither received it from man, nor was called to it by man, but by God his Savior! Jesus! who miraculously called to him from Heaven, made him an Apostle, and sent him to preach his Gospel. Oh! precious testimony, both to *Paul's* Apostleship, and to *Paul's* preaching; and to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Reader! listen to what *Paul* hath here again related, of his original state of nature, and unregeneracy. Oh! who to all appearance, more unpromising, more unlikely to be called by sovereign grace, when breathing out threatenings, and slaughter, against the disciples of the Lord! Listen to what he hath said of the Lord's call to him! See what God can accomplish, on the stoutest hearts of sinners! Behold him preaching the pure, unadulterated Gospel, of the Lord Jesus Christ! Ask *Paul*, from whence the wonderful change? A Persecutor, Blasphemer, Injurious! And now behold him, preaching the faith which once he denied. What cannot God accomplish? What will He not accomplish, to bring home his own to himself; and to rescue his whole Church from the hand of the enemy?

Reader! let you and I glorify God, in him, and for him, and for all the mercies and blessings the Church hath derived, and will derive from *Paul's* ministry, to the latest period of time. And, oh! for

grace to keep always in remembrance, as the conclusion of all *Paul's* discourses, which he himself made, as the end, and consequence of his conversion: *For this cause, (said he,) I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him, to life everlasting.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens this Chapter, about his Visit to Jerusalem. And then enters upon the grand Subject of his whole Epistle, of the Method of Justification, solely in, and by Christ.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass over every lesser consideration, of men, and things relating to the Apostles, and servants of Christ, to have our whole thoughts fixed and centered upon the Person of the Almighty Master. Precious Jesus! be thou the One glorious Object of all my meditation!

And, while I contemplate Christ on the cross, as *Paul* hath here set him forth; let me ask myself, whether like *Paul* I can say, I am crucified with him! Do I indeed know that Christ, in all his sufferings and death, was the Surety, Representative, and Head of his people? Was I, to all intents and purposes, in Him, represented by Him, and by his sufferings and death, in the name, and for his people, redeemed by Him; and the old man of sin, in my nature, crucified with him? And not only in the cross, but in his burial, resurrection, ascension, entrance into Heaven, and sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high; in all these, do I know Jesus as my representative? Did Christ buy out my redemption, on the cross? Am I buried with him by baptism, into death? Am I risen with him, by regeneration, through God the Holy Ghost; and do I see myself by faith sitting with Him, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus? Is He gone as my forerunner, to appear in the presence of God for me; and the life I now live in the flesh, do I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me? Oh! for grace, in

lively exercise, to be always realizing my personal interest in Christ! And may it be my daily portion, under the gracious teachings of God the Holy Ghost, to know, that such is the infinite dignity of Christ's Person, and the infinite preciousness of his bloodshedding, and righteousness, that Jehovah is more honored, and glorified, by his obedience and death, than he is dishonored, by all the sins of his people, during the whole time-state of the Church on earth! Yes! thou dear Lord! I do see, through God the Spirit's teaching, that thou art everything that is blessed, to thy Church, and people; and like *Paul, I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle is still prosecuting the Subject of Justification solely in Christ. He sweetly speaks of the Mediator, and the Blessedness at being in Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! the weakness of the *Galatians*, to be looking unto Christ only in part; and for a moment to fancy, that having began in the Spirit, they could be made perfect in the flesh. And is there no Church of Christ in the present hour, tainted with the same leaven? Nay, my soul! may'st thou not but too often detect thyself, in turning to somewhat of thine own, instead of living wholly upon Jesus. Oh! my foolish heart! what can prompt to the idea, or give the least encouragement, to look off from Christ, to look unto self, in any attainments. Lord Jesus! do thou help me to feel, my utter need of thee every moment, that to the last hour, I may come to Jesus, as I came the first hour; wholly wretched in myself, and altogether insolvent.

And, oh! the sweet thought to my soul: Under all the condemnation of the law, and the curses due to the breaches of it; Jesus is the Mediator, and the Fulfiller of the law, and the complete righteousness of his people. Be thou, my honored Lord, the glorious Head, and Husband, of thy whole family. Thou art indeed the all in

all, to the whole seed of *Abraham*; for in thee shall all thy people, in all nations, be blessed.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle here represents the Church as in a State of Childhood, While under the Law: and as having attained Manhood, in Christ. Grace, and Nature, illustrated by an Allegory.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a blessed thing it is, when an heir of God in Christ is got out of the tutorage of a bondage state, and is brought into the liberty, wherewith the Lord makes his people free? And what an unspeakable blessing it is, that God, in testimony of his children's sonship-character, should send forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, *Abba*, Father!

And, Reader! as the privilege is immense, if it be your happiness to know it so, oh! see to it, that you live up to it. *Thou art no more a servant*. A child of God is an heir of God, through Christ. Live suitably to your heirship. It is all *in* Christ, all *from* Christ, all *by* Christ; and therefore, let God in Christ have all the glory. And remember, you are not living in the family as an hired servant: You are not the son of the bond-woman. Shortly the time will come, when the bond-woman, and her son, will be cast out. *For the servant abideth not in the house for ever. But the Son abideth ever*. And, if the Son hath made you free, *you shall be free indeed!* Oh! the blessedness of this freedom! Oh! the unspeakable mercy, of being born of God! Now, brethren, we, as *Isaac* was, may all such say, *are the children of promise*.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle makes some very sweet Conclusions in this Chapter, from the Doctrine he had established, in the former. Towards the Conclusion, he draws a striking Contrast, between the Works of the Flesh, and the Fruits of the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET are the properties of a justified state in Christ. Lord! I would say, give me grace to stand fast in it. There is nothing changeable in my Lord. His Person, his love, his righteousness, his blood-shedding, his complete salvation; these are all the same; without shadow of turning. And wherefore then, should I turn aside and seek comfort elsewhere? Shall I not live upon Jesus? Shall ordinances, circumcision, or uncircumcision, prayers or tears, experience or unbelief, toss my soul about, as if righteousness came by the law? Oh! thou dear Lord! with these or without these, in means or without means, may I everlastingly know thee, live upon thee, rejoice in thee, as the Lord my righteousness!

And, oh! thou blessed Lord the Holy Ghost! cause me to enter into an apprehension of the Person, work, grace, and glory, of Jesus. Sweetly hast thou taught the Church, in this blessed Chapter, that it is through thee, the Church are to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. Lord! cause my soul daily, hourly, to wait for that everlasting establishment in Christ, which doubts no more. Lord! on this Rock fix my soul! In Christ's Person, may my whole confidence centre. With the Person of Jesus, do thou, O Lord, cause my soul to be so enamored, that I may behold in him a greater, and more perfect righteousness to make me perfect before God, than all the righteousness of the whole creation of God. Let this view of Jesus, give a firmness to my faith, which nothing can shake. And, while the Lord the Spirit enables me to mortify the flesh with its affections, and lusts; let all the fruits of the Spirit testify, whose I am, and to whom I belong, as sweet testimonies and effects, while Christ alone is the cause, of all my salvation, and all my desire.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Apostle concludes his Epistle. He exhorts the Church to Brotherly Affection, and bids them to rest in Hope, assuring, them, that in due Season, they will reap to the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

Everlasting praises to God the Holy Ghost, for his mercy to the Church, in the gift of this sweet and precious Epistle! God be thanked for the ministry of his servant in it! And God be praised for every single instance of mercy vouchsafed the Church, by it.

We here behold, very clearly, the free, and full justification of Christ's Church, in Christ's Person; and by the sole righteousness of Jesus Christ. In Christ may all the Lord's people be found; and never seek salvation by the works of the law, but solely in the Person, and by the righteousness of Christ. And, oh! for a portion of the same Spirit, which actuated *Paul*, when he determined to glory only in the cross of Christ; convinced, that nothing, short of a new creature, can give confidence before God.

After having blessed the Lord the Spirit for this sweet Scripture, we would look with affection to *Paul*, as the highly favored servant of it. Surely, it is profitable to bless God, in, and for, the ministry of his servants; and, therefore, we love the Apostle, for his love to his Master, and zeal in his service. Farewell for the present, *Paul*! Who but must love thee, and desire to follow thee, as thou hast followed Christ? Shall we not by and by, meet thee before the throne, and bless our Covenant God together? Even so, Amen. Reader! the grace of our Lord Jesus be with the whole Israel of God! Amen.

EPHESIANS

General Observations

WE here enter upon a portion of the Inspired Writings, in which God the Holy GHOST, by his penman the Apostle, hath brought the Church into an acquaintance with the deep things of God. Every chapter, more or less, brings with it such sublime discoveries, as none but God the Holy Spirit could have indited, and none but his blessed teaching can give the ability to apprehend. Every child of God, under the LORD's instruction, cannot but be constrained, as he passeth through the several chapters, to remark these things, and to be convinced that the mind of the Apostle must have been carried out in a most eminent manner, in spiritual enjoyment, at the time God the Holy GHOST put the pen into his hand, and such a fullness of grace into his heart, when he caused him to write his Epistle to the church at *Ephesus*.

The Reader for the better apprehension of the distinguishing mercy manifested by the LORD's people among the *Ephesians*, should connect with this Epistle, the history in the formation of the Church at *Ephesus*, as related in the Acts of the Apostles. The establishment of the Gospel, among a people like the *Ephesians*, is among the world's wonder. Here was erected the magnificent building dedicated to the dunghill idol *Diana*. The city itself, like another *Athens*, appears to have been wholly given to idolatry. It was a place of much pomp, luxury, and pride in human learning, if we may judge by the destruction of the books of curious arts, which were destroyed when some were converted to the faith in Jesus. See Acts 19. throughout. But here also CHRIST had a people. And, hence, according to Covenant Promises, the Holy GHOST gathers out his redeemed, to shew forth JEHOVAH'S praise. JEREMIAH 32:37-38. EZEKIEL 34:12, &c. and 36:24, &c. Hence *Paul* was sent to *Ephesus* to raise a Church. And, hence, for the confirmation of the Church in the faith, he was afterwards directed to send this Epistle.

But we must not stop here. It was not for the Church at *Ephesus* only that this most precious portion of the divine word was sent, but for the church of God in all ages. Thou sands and tens of thousands, who never have seen, or will see *Ephesus*, have found cause to bless God the Holy GHOST for *Paul's* ministry and writings to that people. Yea, ages yet unborn, will find motives of praise for the same!

Concerning the date of this Epistle, writers are divided. Some place it so late as the year 59, corresponding to the 5th year of *Nero*.

I do not think it necessary in this place, to give an account, however briefly, of the great and essential doctrine of which this Epistle treats. These will meet us in their proper place. The chief features of God the Father's eternal love, it the choice of the Church in CHRIST, and to unspotted holiness in him, the full, free, and complete redemption by CHRIST, in the time-state of the Church, and the regenerating grace of God the Holy GHOST, with his several offices and characters; these are opened to us in all their glory, as we pass through the several chapters, and which supersede the necessity of enlarging upon them here.

It may serve, indeed, a good purpose, under God's grace, to endear this Epistle to us still more, and to induce us to receive it with the greater reverence and godly fear, if it be just remarked, that the Church of *Ephesus* is now no more. The LORD hath fulfilled what he threatened, and long, long since, removed her candlestick out of its place, Revelation 2:5. And it becomes a loud admonition to our British *Ephesus*, in the present awful hour! If God spared not a city so once blessed, take heed lest he spare not thee! The Church of God must stand, and will stand, till time shall be no more. But the Candlestick is a moveable part of the furniture in the house. The LORD may remove this to other nations, as he did by *Ephesus*, while his Church is the same upon earth, till time shall be no more.

Reader! pause at the threshold of this most blessed scripture, and let us both beg the Almighty Giver of it, to unfold to our spiritual apprehension, the gracious contents of it; that CHRIST, who is the great *object* of all contained in it, and the *subject* of all treated of in it, may appear to us in all his, fullness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency; that *in* him, and *of* him, and *through* him, we may find cause continually, through every part of it, to bless JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Person, for all our blessings in Jesus Christ. Amen!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens the Epistle with his usual Salutation. He then at once enters upon the great Subject he had in View, and traces all the Mercies of the Church, to God's eternal Purpose in CHRIST, before the Foundation of the World.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! look up for grace, as *Paul* did, to bless God, even the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, for the wonders of divine love, as set forth in this precious Chapter from whence flow all the mercies to the Church, in time; and to all eternity. Behold! my soul, what method the LORD was pleased to make use of, among all the stores of his Omnipotency, to make known his love to the Church! In the Person of his clear Son, he caused the whole to center. And the LORD was pleased, to render the whole ten thousand times more blessed, in making all to flow in, and from, and through, a nature like our own, in the Person of the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. Pause, my soul! admire, and adore each glorious Person, in their Office-character, *in* this vast concern. Bless God the Father, for his love, *in choosing, predestinating, adopting, and accepting*, the whole body the Church, in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world! Bless God the Son, for that love of his, in *marrying* the Church from everlasting; and for *redeeming* her from the ruins of the fall, during her time-state upon earth. And bless God the Holy Ghost, for having *abounded toward the Church in all wisdom and prudence, in making known the mystery of his will*, and in all his *regenerating* grace and mercy. Yea, blessed for ever be JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, for CHRIST, and all blessings in CHRIST, temporal, spiritual, end eternal blessings, for ever!

LORD! enable thy Church, to be looking forward to that glorious day of God, when the fullness of times being come, all things shall be gathered in CHRIST. What a gathering of thy people will this be, in glories unspeakable? What a dispensation of terror to thy foes? Precious, precious JESUS! how sweet is it to my soul, the assurance, of being now gathered unto thee in grace, as the earnest, and pledge of being then gathered unto thee in glory. LORD! fill my poor soul with

thy fullness; and manifest daily to my joy, and thy praise, that thou art indeed my Head, and *the fullness, which filleth all in all!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Church is reminded of her original State of Nature, in being quickened in CHRIST. The Apostle extols the Triumphs of Grace. The Chapter closeth, with showing CHRIST to be the Foundation of his Church.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you, and I, hear what God the Spirit hath here said, to the Church at *Ephesus*; can we both, from the same divine assurance, say: the LORD hath quickened us, who were by nature, *dead in trespasses and sins*? Can we look back, and remember, how *the prince of the power of the air*, once wrought in our mind, as he doth now, *in the children of disobedience*? Had we our conversation in times past with such, and when we were dead in sins, were we quickened together with CHRIST? Oh! what a melting sense ought we to have, of divine mercies, in calling to mind, what we once were; and what, through grace, we now are? Oh! the blessedness of ascribing all to grace, and giving to God all the glory. And, must it not be God's workmanship, and not our's? Hath not God ordained all our works in us, and made both the preparation, and the performance of them, his own? And shall we seek acceptance in them, when they are not our's; or expect to be saved by them, when we are wholly saved in the LORD?

Precious LORD JESUS! It is thou, and thou alone, which hast brought us nigh by thy blood, when we were afar off, and enemies to God, by wicked works! Oh! LORD, keep us ever nigh, by thy power; that through Thee, we may always have access, by One Spirit unto the Father!

LORD! bless thy whole building the Church, in heaven, and earth; all founded on CHRIST, and all one in CHRIST. Dwell in thy mystical

body thy temple, and make it by grace, a suited habitation for thy self: Father, Son, and Spirit, both here, and hereafter! Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle in this chapter, makes a particular address to the Church at Ephesus, as a Gentile church. He shows the gracious design of GOD from the Beginning, to the Gentiles, as one with the Jews in CHRIST. He closeth in Prayer.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT cause of thankfulness hath the Church of God to offer, that the gracious purpose of JEHOVAH, hid in his breast from the beginning of the world, unknown to Angels, and principalities, and powers; should be so fully and openly revealed to the LORD's people; yea, while the world knoweth it not, because it knew him not in whom it is hid; is made known to the saints and household of God! Oh! the blessedness of being made acquainted with the love, the everlasting love of God the Father, in his counsel, purpose, and will, in his grace to the Church! And, oh! the blessedness, that all the revelations of his love should be made known to us in the Person, and flow to us from the mediation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, through the Spirit! Surely, every mercy becomes a tenfold mercy, coming to the Church, as the whole doth in, and through CHRIST. LORD! give all thy redeemed grace to bend the knee, as *Paul* did before the God and Father of the whole family, that we *may be able to comprehend with all saints*, all the vast dimensions of *the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Apostle considereth the Oneness and Unity of the Church in CHRIST. He sweetly sheweth how, as one Body, the Church is supplied with every suited Grace to each Member. He closeth in an Exhortation to Love and Concord.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over the very blessed things contained In this Chapter, in setting forth the oneness and unity in CHRIST, and his Church. And then say, what powerful persuasions are continually arising from thence, that there should be one heart, and one affection, in everything which can contribute to the spiritual union, among the people. If one God and Father, one LORD JESUS CHRIST, one Holy Ghost, one Church, one faith, one baptism of the Spirit; how can it be otherwise, while under the sweet and gracious influences of those principles, but that oneness of affection, like a golden chain, must link the whole together; and the whole Church of God, be as *brethren, dwelling together in unity!*

Blessed be the glorious Head of his Church, who hath sent down his ascension-gifts upon his Church, and thereby manifested the fullest assurance, that redemption-work is finished. God the Father hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand: and sent down, according to his own most sure promise, the Holy Ghost, And God the Holy Ghost hath graciously given his gifts, to every man, severally as he will! LORD! let the whole manifestations, whether to Apostles, or Prophets, or Evangelists or Pastors, or Preachers, be accompanied with thy blessing! Let the work of the ministry, and the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of CHRIST, be carried on in the earth, until the whole Church be brought home to JESUS our perfection! And do thou, blessed Spirit, for to thee the blessed work belongs, do thou put off the *old man*, in all the LORD's redeemed ones, and put on the *new man, which after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness; for then shall we speak every man truth with his neighbor.* Then shall we not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption;

but walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved us; and forgive one another, as God for CHRIST's sake, hath forgiven us.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle is still prosecuting the same Subject, as in the former upon the Church to follow God, under the Character of dear Children. He closeth his subject, in a most beautiful Representation of CHRIST, as the Head, and Husband, of His Body the Church.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST numberless blessed things, for raising reflection of a sweet, and spiritual nature, contained in this Chapter; I would beg of God the Holy Ghost, for grace, to fix my mind upon God the Father's love, in that, the Church is called by him *dear children!* Oh! for grace to consider the blessedness of such a name, and the proof, that all his redeemed are, indeed, dear children in his Almighty view. For He hath chosen them in his dear Son, given them to his dear Son, and given his dear Son for them, and chosen them to himself, as his adopted children in CHRIST. Oh! who that is enabled by grace, to enter into an apprehension of the unspeakable, mercy contained in such a relationship, but must cry out, with the Apostle: *Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God!*

In like manner would I beg of God the Holy Ghost, to fix my mind upon God the Son's love, who hath so loved his Church, as to give himself, an offering, and a sacrifice, to God, for a sweet smelling savor. Oh! thou dear *Emanuel!* let the rich savor of thy blood, which hath perfumed heaven for ever, sweetly cleanse my soul, from the savor of all uncleanness!

And no less would I beg of God the Holy Ghost, to fix my mind upon his own glorious Person, and Godhead; and that, in the fruit of the Spirit, *in* all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, I may be a follower of God, as one of his dear children, and walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved me, and given himself for me! Oh! for grace,

to be walking in the light, as children of the light, and as the members of CHRIST'S body, his flesh, and his bones. Shortly, JESUS will bring home his Church; and all the great purposes of his mystery, will be accomplished. His people shall then *see him as he is, and know even as they are known!*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Epistle is closed: and a blessed Close is made: Paul bids the Church to entrench themselves, in the holy Armory of God. And he seals up all, with an Apostolic Benediction.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let us pause over the close of this Epistle, and, as we look back, and review the wonderful contents of it, may both the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, bow down before the throne of a Covenant, God in CHRIST, for so rich a portion of divine revelation of JEHOVAH'S love to the Church! Oh! God the Spirit grant to us, if it be thy blessed will, *a spirit of wisdom and revelation*, in the apprehension of those divine truths, and that they may be *the engrafted word* for the salvation of the soul.

Blessed LORD JESUS! we praise thy holy name, for thine unceasing mercies over thy Church, that amidst all the ravages of time, and all the revolutions of men and things; thy Church remaineth, and ever must remain, as long as the moon endureth, from one generation to another. And, although *Ephesus* is no more; the Church which was in *Ephesus*, and all the faithful in CHRIST JESUS, are the same, founded in Thee, the glorious Head of thy body; *the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*

Faithful *Paul!* our love to thee is great, in that the LORD counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. Thou wert indeed, as thou hast here said, an Ambassador, though in bonds. Blessed for the Church was it, that the LORD sent thee as his Ambassador. And what art thou now, since like an Ambassador returned to his Master's royal Court, thou hast given in thy report to the King, and hast entered into the joy of thy LORD! Almighty Head of thy Church and

people! bless all thy redeemed here below, who like *Paul*, love thy appearing in the regenerating of sinners, and comforting of saints, and who are looking forward for thy appearing, when thou shalt come to be glorified in thy saints, and admired in all them that believe! In that great day of God! thou wilt give to every one of thine, the crown of righteousness, which fadeth not away. Then will the whole Church shout for joy, and everlasting praises will be heard, from all the ransomed of Zion, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through endless ages. Amen.

PHILIPPIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

PHILIPPI was the chief city of *Macedon*. It took its name from *Philip*, the father of *Alexander the Great*, so called by a misnomer. For characters of his description must be *little indeed*, according to the testimony of scripture: *for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God!* It was near this city (as Profane Writers tell us) was fought the battle between *Antony* and *Brutus*. Names, which but for their connection with the history of the Church of CHRIST, like those of more ancient date, the *Sennacheribs*, and *Nebuchadnezzars* of old, would have been but little known, but *their memorial have perished with them*. And however mortifying to the pride of human nature it may be, to the ungodly of every age, whether ancient or modern, certain it is, that the whole memoirs of such characters, with their rise and fall, in all the revolutions of kingdoms and empires, are intended no further than as they minister to the Church of CHRIST. Although *they think not so, neither do they intend it*; yet to this one purpose the whole of their labors tend; and which, when accomplished, like the scaffolding to a building no longer useful, will be taken down and destroyed.

It was in this city the LORD erected a Church to his dear SON. And *Paul* was the highly honored instrument to the establishment of it. By a vision of the night the LORD directed him to go to *Macedon*. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, in the persons of *Lydia* and the *Jailor*, formed the Church, in these humble beginnings. See Acts 16. Afterwards, we find the Apostle made a second visit to the Church at *Philippi*, on his way to *Jerusalem*. Acts 20:6.

The Epistle is but short, though sweet. *Paul* wrote it while he was a Prisoner at *Rome*. It hath been observed, and well observed, that those scriptures have more than an ordinary savor of JESUS in them, which have been penned while the Writers of them were in

tribulation. *David* was in the wilderness when he wrote those golden psalms 63, and 142. *John* was in *Patmos* when he sent to the Church the book of the Revelations. And *Paul* in prison at the time he wrote this Epistle to the *Philippians*, and his second Epistle to *Timothy*. If men shut the LORD's faithful ones *in*, they cannot keep JESUS *out*. Sweet, and sure, is that promise, *I will be with thee in trouble!* Psalm 91:15.

The date of *Paul's* Epistle to the *Philippians* is differently marked by Ecclesiastical Writers. It could not be earlier, and perhaps not much later, than in the year of our LORD GOD 60: about the *fifth* year of the reign of *Nero*.

I have only here again, as in all former instances, when entering upon the perusal of those inspired writings, to call the Reader to join my spirit in prayer, at the mercy-seat, of GOD in CHRIST, for divine light, to guide both Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary* through the several pages, that that gracious promise may be ours. *All thy Children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children.* Isaiah 54:13.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, opens his, Epistle to the Church with his usual Salutation. He praiseth the LORD, for his Mercies towards them. In Allusion to his Prison State, he tells them of his Readiness to suffer in the Cause of CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST for his servant's gracious instruction in this chapter. How truly delightful is it to trace the ministry of *Paul* from such slender beginnings, in raising a Church to the LORD at *Philippi*, and then furnishing the Church, both at *Philippi*, and throughout the world, with this divine portion of the LORD's holy word, and his pleasure in the government of it. Surely, O LORD, the whole Church, in every age, both then and now, and during all the time-state of its continuance upon earth, must find cause to bless thee for such tokens of thy love over it.

Reader! let us both seek grace from the LORD, to improve what the HOLY GHOST hath here taught by *Paul*, of the confidence every child of GOD derives in regeneration, for the sure consummation of grace in glory. All that are new born in CHRIST, as well as *Paul*, may be confident *of this very thing, that He which hath began the good work, will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST. For whom the LORD called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

My soul! listen to what *Paul* saith. See that your whole conversation is corresponding to the whole character of a child of GOD. Prove thy right and freedom to the city, which hath foundation, whose builder, and Maker, is GOD), by the marks of citizenship. Let thy conversation be in heaven, from whence thou art looking for thy SAVIOR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And oh! for the constraining love of JESUS, to rejoice as saints of old did, when suffering shame and reproach for JESUS.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here one of the most precious Views of JESUS. Paul exhorts the Church by CHRIST'S Example. He shows the Blessedness of a Life of Faith and Humility.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to remark, both the nature of the arguments, and the affectionate claims of them, by which the Apostle aims to allure the Church to a oneness of mind and heart, to CHRIST and his people. What could he say more persuasively in those high claims than when recommending them by the consolations of CHRIST, the fellowship of the HOLY GHOST; and the bowels, and mercies, of GOD the FATHER? But, while I earnestly desire the Reader to remark this, as he goes, I beg him yet more particularly to attend to what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath recorded, in this most blessed Chapter, concerning the Person, GODHEAD, manhood, grace, and glory, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and the FATHER'S glory in Him. Reader! was there ever a more precious form

of words, brought together within the compass of a few verses, than what is here done, to exalt, and extol, to the Church's view, the personal dignity, and the personal humbleness, of CHRIST, in the accomplishment of the great purposes of revelation? Who that reads it, and reads it with an enlightened eye, but must feel his whole soul going forth in desires after CHRIST, to be able to comprehend with all saints, what is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge!* Oh! for grace, that the same mind may be in us, which was in CHRIST JESUS!

Reader! let us seek strength from the LORD, for every act of faith upon the LORD, that while both the LORD's word and our daily experience teach us, that it *is GOD which worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;* that *will* may be discovered by us, in leading us wholly to CHRIST; and that *doing*, may be made known to us, to be the LORD's *work* in us: *for we are his workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* LORD! I would beg for myself, and for all thy redeemed ones, to be so found, in the daily exercise of thy *willing*, and *doing*, in me, with an holy fear, and trembling, as those who had always before their eyes the infinite importance of their own salvation; while confident of safety, in the Covenant-promises of GOD my FATHER, and the complete, and finished redemption, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. LORD! grant, that I may have my whole conversation here below, while continuing in the present time-state of the Church, as the *blameless, and harmless sons of GOD, without rebuke; holding forth the word of life, and in the midst of a crooked, and perverse nation, shining as lights in the world!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the Apostle warns the Church against false Teachers. He as strongly points out, and that in his own Example, what are the infallible Marks of Grace in the Heart; namely, to win CHRIST, and be found in Him. He closeth the Chapter with the

solemn Account of the End of the Carnal, and the blessed Termination of the Life of the Godly.

REFLECTIONS

READER! is it your happiness, as I trust it is mine, to do as the Apostle commands, to rejoice in the LORD. And are we both the true circumcision, which worship GOD in the spirit, rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh! Oh! what dung, and dross, is all creature-righteousness. LORD JESUS! let it never be mine. May I be enabled, like Paul, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD. Oh! to win CHRIST; and to be found in him!

Do thou, Almighty GOD the SPIRIT, be unceasingly holding up to my view, the preciousness of JESUS; and warming my heart with his love. And cause me, like the Prophet, to be always on the watchtower, for my LORD'S return: that whether at midnight, or cockcrowing, or in the morning; I may be waiting his chariot wheels, that when he cometh, I may instantly arise to receive him. Oh! LORD! I shall see thy face in glory. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, Paul closeth his Epistle. It consists chiefly of Exhortations. The Apostle's great Joy at the Prosperity of the Church.

REFLECTIONS

READER! before we close our attention to this precious Book of GOD, let us bend the knee together, and unitedly look up to the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all our mercies in CHRIST. What an invaluable treasure, the HOLY SPIRIT hath here given to the Church, in this blessed portion of his holy word! Oh! what precious views of CHRIST! Oh! what encouragement, and comfort, in him, to all his people. LORD the SPIRIT, do thou, in rich, free, and sovereign

mercy, make the whole savor of CHRIST; which is in it, an engrafted word which is able to save the soul.

Faithful *Paul!* thou hast faithfully recorded, under the LORD's enditing, this sweet Scripture. The LORD counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. And the Church finds cause to bless a faithful GOD for thy faithfulness, in thy preaching, and writing. Thou hast found the blessedness long since, of the two great points, which in the days of thy pilgrimage thou didst pant after: to win CHRIST, and to be found in Him: And all the faithful in CHRIST JESUS seek the same for their portion. Blessed Master of *Paul!* give each of thine grace, so to win thee, and so to be found in thee here by faith, that, ere long, all thy Church together, may live on thee in glory forevermore. Amen.

COLOSSIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Some have thought, that Colosse was a city near to the island of Rhodes; where was placed a large statue called Colossus, and from whence this city took its name. But, it should rather seem, that Colosse was in Phrygia, the lesser Asia, near to the city of Laodicea. And this is certainly more probable, since Paul desires in this Epistle, that it should be read to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16).

It appears, from one or two passages in this Epistle, that Paul had never been at Colosse in person, for he saith, that he had not seen their face in the flesh (chapter 2:1), and had only heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, and love to the saints (chapter. 1:4). But we have reason to bless God the Holy Ghost, for directing the mind of the Apostle, to commit to writing, and cause to be handed to us, so precious a portion of the word of God.

Concerning the date of this Epistle, it is generally supposed posed to have been written about the year 60; nearly at the time as the Epistle to the Philippians; and to have been written at Rome, when Paul was a prisoner there.

The leading object of it, as most plainly appears, was, and is, to exalt the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Paul was highly taught concerning his LORD. And he well knew, that the most effectual way, under GOD the SPIRIT'S teaching, to establish the Church in the faith once delivered unto the saints, must be, in holding up to their view, the Person and glories of JESUS. And, it must be confessed, that he hath done it in this Epistle, most blessedly. Reader! let you and I, as we enter upon the perusal of it, and as we pass through the several chapters of it, beg of GOD the SPIRIT, who directed the Apostle's pen, to lead and direct our hearts; that, as he saith in one of the chapters, we may find CHRIST in all; and our hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and

of CHRIST: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle, after his usual Salutation, opens his Epistle, with giving Praises to GOD, for the Account he had heard of the Church, concerning their Faith in CHRIST. He prays for Grace for them, that they might know CHRIST, in the Glories of his Person. And he describes the LORD most blessedly, in his Person, Offices, and Character.

REFLECTIONS

Everlasting praise to GOD the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the gracious discoveries made to the Church in this blessed chapter of divine love, and for all the manifestations of Covenant grace and mercy, in the Person, work, and offices of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the Head and Husband of his Church from one eternity to another. Oh! what a glorious view is here given of CHRIST in this Chapter! LORD! be it my study, night and day, under divine teaching, to learn and *know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent!*

And, oh! thou blessed *Emmanuel*, GOD and Man in One Person! Oh! may I unceasingly meditate on the glories of thy nature and essence, One with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, GOD *over all, blessed for ever. Amen.* May I behold thee in thy Mediator glory, the image of the invisible GOD, the first born of every creature! And, oh! what glories do I here behold and contemplate in thy person, before that a single act of redemption-work was Wrought out by my LORD for his Church, in the time-state of her fallen nature; when as I here read, by thee all things are created that are in heaven and earth; all things were created not only by thee, but for thee, and thou art before all things, and by thee all things consist! Oh! the glories of my LORD, in creation, providence, grace, and glory! And when I call to mind thy wonders of love to the Church in time, thine incarnation, baptisms, temptations, sorrows, miracles, life, death, resurrection, ascension, return to glory, and the wonders of thine unchanging

priesthood! When I behold thee now still carrying on the same design, wearing our nature, appearing in our stead, taking up the Persons and causes of all thy people, feeling *with* them, and feeling *for* them, and wilt never cease, until thou hast brought thy blood-bought sons and daughters, with all thy royal family round thy throne, to be with thee for ever? Oh! for grace, until this great day of my GOD shall come, to love thee, and to live to thee, and to hail thy wonderous name! LORD! be thou my portion day by day, that by faith in this blessed hope, I may now live, and at length, in the full assurance of glory, die, and be one with thee for ever!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Paul is speaking very blessedly of CHRIST. He warns the Church against Philosophy and vain Deceit.

REFLECTIONS

What a lovely view doth this Chapter open with of *Paul's* love for the Church, in his soul exercises for their spiritual welfare. And, what a contradiction of sinners did CHRIST endure against himself for his Church and people, lest his exercised ones should grow faint, and be weary in their minds. Oh! thou unequalled pattern of every thing that is fair, and good, and lovely!

Oh! LORD the HOLY GHOST! let thy Church praise thee for the gracious remedy thou hast taught in this chapter against philosophy and vain deceit, the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world. It is, indeed, a sure relief, when a poor sinner is enabled, through all the time-state of the Church, to receive CHRIST as he first received him, when called out of darkness to light, and both to receive CHRIST, and to come to CHRIST, and to live upon CHRIST, from first to last, the same needy, helpless, self-condemned, self-loathing sinner still. LORD! be it my portion thus to receive CHRIST, and thus to walk in CHRIST, and to be rooted and built up in him, to the LORD's glory, and my joy.

LORD! keep thy Church from being beguiled with enticing words. Keep all thy redeemed from being vainly puffed up with a

fleshly mind. Ye Ministers of my GOD, hold up the glorious Head, from which all the body having nourishment ministered, and knit together, may increase with the increase of GOD. Ye fathers, to the children make known his name!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with very glorious and precious Views of the Church's Safety in CHRIST. And it is closed with suitable Exhortations arising therefrom.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou risen, and exalted LORD JESUS! send down thine ascension-gifts, and raise all my spiritual affections after thee, that I may no longer grovel here below, but seek thee, who art above! Didst thou not promise this, thou dear LORD, before thy departure; that when thou wert lifted up, thou wouldest draw all thy people unto thee? Oh! then, *draw me, that I may run after thee, for thou art the LORD my GOD!* Precious, yea, exceedingly precious, is that assurance to my soul, that the life of all thy Church is hid with CHRIST in GOD. And sure I am, that when JESUS shall appear, then will all thy redeemed appear with thee in glory.

And, oh! thou Almighty LORD the SPIRIT! do thou, by thy sweet influences, enable me to mortify all my earthly part. Grant, gracious GOD, that the flesh may be subdued by the spirit; and that by thy strength, I may mortify the deeds of the body and live. And, as the elect of GOD, may I find grace, to put on bowels of mercy, to the whole household of faith, while doing good to all men; yea, may the peace of GOD rule in my heart, always having in remembrance, how CHRIST hath forgiven me; may my compassions go forth, to all around, Oh! what are all the little quarrels of this dying world, to those who are conscious, of that deadly breach being made up, in the blood of CHRIST, which sin, and Satan, had made, between GOD and his people. May all the relations of life, in Wives, and Husbands, and Children, and Parents, and Servants, and Masters, be everlastingly looking to JESUS; that, while beholding him, all their

minds may be influenced into love and tenderness: and all their conduct regulated by his example. Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my GOD, my guide, and my portion for ever!

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

The Apostle prosecutes the same Subject of Exhortation, in the opening of this Chapter. He enjoins a Continuance in Prayer, with Watchfulness, and Thanksgiving. He concludes the Epistle with Salutations.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSING, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne; and unto the Lamb, forever and ever! What praise sufficient, or what glory equal, can the Church upon earth, and the redeemed in heaven, render, to the One glorious JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the unequalled love manifested to the Church, in JESUS CHRIST,! And what everlasting thanks-giving, doth the reading of those holy Scriptures call forth, in the daily use of them, from beholding, with what a world of grace, the precious records have been preserved, and handed down, from age to age, to the joy of the Church, and the glory of the Almighty Head of it. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou, in thine Almighty ministry, bless thine holy word to all thy sent servants, and the people among whom thou shalt send them, to minister, that both him that labors in the word and doctrine, and those among whom the ministry is exercised, may be blessed together.

We bless our GOD for the service of his Apostle, in this instance of his labors of love, in this Epistle to the Church; by which, *he being dead yet speaketh*. And our GOD will continue to bless its use to the Church to the latest posterity. May the LORD accompany the present perusal of it to the divine honor, and our furtherance in grace, through JESUS CHRIST,

Amen.

1st THESSALONIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THESSALONICA, the chief city of *Macedonia*, is said to have derived its name from *Philip*, king of *Macedon*, in consequence of a victory which he obtained in *Thessalia*. From such corrupt and sinful causes, do sometimes, and not infrequently, spring, the memorable records of men. It is indeed in correspondence with our fallen nature. Sin hath introduced all the baleful effects, which that nature, unregenerated by grace, is subject to in the multiform fruits of it, from the womb to the grave. And names of places, and monuments, to perpetuate what is called the splendid victories of heroes, both ancient and modern, perpetuate more generally their sin, and shame.

The city of *Thessalonica*, at the time when the Apostle wrote this blessed Epistle, was a large, flourishing, and much peopled place. Now, for many centuries past, it hath been overrun with the impostures of the false prophet; and is in the possession of the Turks. Here once, the LORD had a portion of his Church. But, as he himself said of other places, so here, he hath removed the Candlestick, Revelation 2:5. We have great cause to bless God for our mercies, in this review of the divine judgments. While we contemplate our high privileges as a nation, in this particular: we may hear, and ought to feel, the strong expostulating words of the Apostle: *Are we better than they?* And, with the immediate answer: *No, in no wise! All are under sin.* Romans 3:9.

The date of this Epistle is generally marked as early as the year 52; and as such, must have been the *first*, in point of time, of all *Paul's* writings.

The distinguishing feature which marks every Chapter, like all the Apostle's Epistles, and preachings, is CHRIST. And, oh! how sweetly, and blessedly, hath he held him forth to the Church, through the whole of it. Reader! what a mercy was it to you, to me, to the whole Church of the LORD, that the HOLY GHOST called *Paul* by a vision to visit *Macedonia*? *Acts 16:9* to the end, and *Acts 17*. And, what a mercy was it, for all the Church of GOD, that the HOLY GHOST prompted the Apostle to write this Epistle, and endited the blessed contents of it? And what a mercy, to preserve the precious records safe to this present hour, and cause them to be handed down to us? And, (shall I add,) what a mercy of mercies, in all these things, if the LORD hath given us the enlightened understanding, in the apprehension of them; so that, as *Paul* said to this very church, in the opening of this Epistle, our election of GOD is known, because *the Gospel is come unto us, not in word only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance!* Chap. 1:4, 5. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! direct, and guide the heart and pen, in this feeble work, of the *Poor Man's Commentary*, and cause it to minister *to the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle with his usual Salutations. He tells the Thessalonians, how earnest his Prayers were for the Church. And he teacheth them to observe the Marks of their Election, by the blessed Effects of it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! is it our privilege, like this Church, to give thanks to GOD always for the divine grace, and mercy, and love, bestowed upon us? Can it be said to you, and to me, as the Apostle did to the *Thessalonians*, in the remembrance of our work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the sight of GOD our FATHER? Can we with full assurance of faith, and in the enjoyment of the same testimonies as *Paul* here marked down, take up the well-grounded confidence of our election of GOD? Oh! then,

let us see to it, that our faith in JESUS is a working faith, working by love. That our hope is that hope founded in CHRIST, and his blood, and righteousness, which maketh not ashamed. That our patience is that which the Apostle elsewhere describes, and which worketh experience. And in the exercise of which, we wait for the return of the SON OF GOD from heaven, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come. This will be an honorable testimony to the SPIRIT'S work in our heart, and will most plainly show, in the midst of the awful day in which we live, what manner of entering in the word of grace hath had in our souls; and how, through the regenerating power of the SPIRIT, the LORD hath turned our hearts from idols to serve the living and true GOD. Blessed be the electing love of GOD the FATHER, the redemption by CHRIST, and the quickening of GOD the HOLY GHOST!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

In this chapter the Apostle dwells chiefly upon his Labors among them as a Minister of CHRIST. He strongly expresseth his Affection for the People.

REFLECTIONS

LET as many ministers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST as read this precious chapter, beg for grace, to be enabled to follow the Apostle's example in their ministry, and humbly pray for the same success. Oh! what an arduous undertaking, what a solemn trust, what distinguished honor, and what vast responsibility. Who that considered it as he ought, but would rather shrink from the high calling, than run unsent! But let every faithful servant of JESUS not despond. JESUS is the all-sufficiency both of his ministers and people. And be that looks wholly to JESUS, and draws all his resources from Jesus, whether minister or people, will never fail of finding an all-sufficiency for his own soul, and for his labor among others. Where GOD the SPIRIT ordains, he will give the suited supply. And those words of the LORD are sufficient to carry the servant through the whole of his labor. *Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world!*

And no less, ye people of GOD! do you hold up the hands of the LORD'S servant, who goeth in and out before you by the LORD'S appointment, by prayer and supplication, for a blessing on his labors. It is a sweet encouragement to the faithful laborer in the LORD'S vineyard, when he knows that his people go before with their prayers to the LORD for his blessing, and follow him for supplications for pardon to all his imperfections. And where the LORD hath blessed a Church with a faithful servant, who taketh the oversight of the Church of CHRIST, *not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*: what may not be hoped for from the divine blessing on such a congregation, both of minister and people! LORD, the SPIRIT! send *Pastors after Mine own heart, which shall feed thy people with knowledge and understanding!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This is a short but interesting Chapter. Every Verse is expressive of the Apostle's Love for the Church. Amidst his sufferings, he finds Comforts in their Soul-prosperity.

REFLECTIONS

Who can behold the affection, manifested by the Apostle to the Church, as set forth in this Chapter, without being struck with the conviction, that there is, there must be, in every faithful minister of CHRIST ordained, and sent forth, as *Paul* was, by the HOLY GHOST, somewhat of the same love and affection. How is it possible for that man to be earnest in the service of souls, whose own soul is not melted by grace, into an ardent desire, for their everlasting welfare? Coldness, deadness, and an indifferency, argue, yea, prove, an unsuitableness for the ministry. And, whatever gifts and talents of the head a man may possess, in the mere letter-knowledge of the truths of GOD; he will never enter into the ministry with an earnestness to win souls, except a sense of his own salvation, makes him feel for others. Blessed *Paul* counts it *his* life, while the Church lived. The salvation of the people, was his hope, and crown of rejoicing. And hence, he could, and did say: *as you have*

acknowledged, so we trust you shall acknowledge even to the end, that we are your rejoicing, as ye also are ours, in the day of the LORD JESUS. Reader! it will be your happiness, and mine, to discover our hearts brought into the same oneness of spirit, in CHRIST. His is the glory, and ours is the happiness. And, while both minister and people, are established by his grace, in him; we shall then be accepted, unblameable in holiness in him, before GOD, even our FATHER, at the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST with all his saints.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here exhorting the Church, to the blessed Fruits, and Effects, of Regeneration. He sweetly comforts the LORD's People, on the Subject of the Body sleeping in JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a blessed consideration is it, to the renewed soul in CHRIST, that He who is made of GOD to us wisdom, and righteousness; is no less our sanctification, and redemption? And, it is among the most blessed of all thoughts, and which GOD the HOLY GHOST is forever impressing on the minds of his people, that our oneness and union with the LORD JESUS, brings up after it, an interest, in all that belongs to him as CHRIST. Our union with his Person, gives a security to our life in him, our graces from him, and our everlasting happiness *with him*; for assuredly, where He is, there must his members be. Precious JESUS may I never lose sight of those gracious assurances of thine. *Because I live ye shall live also.*

Blessed LORD the SPIRIT! thanks to thee, for sending thy servant to teach the Church, how to regulate our sorrows, when under bereaving providences. Never let my soul mourn any more when any die in the LORD. Tears may fall. Yea, JESUS will not be displeased when they fall. It is the funeral of nature. And JESUS, who wept himself at *Lazarus's* tomb, will not be angry if any weep at mine. But grace triumphs. It is not death, but sleep, yea, a sweet refreshing sleep, when JESUS calls home his members. But while we hear the voice which *John* heard, we may write it as the inscription

on the graves of the saints. *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD!* And, as sure as they sleep in JESUS; so sure GOD will bring them with Jesus in that day when he comes. And ye members of CHRIST, who are yet unborn, whom JESUS shall appoint to be alive at his coming; ye also shall partake in the triumphs of his coming. Though ye go not down to the grave, yet will the LORD change your vile bodies, under which ye groan, and fashion them like unto his glorious body; according to the power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. LORD! give grace to thy Church, that amidst all the dying circumstances of thy people her below, we may be able *to comfort, and to exhort one another with these words!*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle closeth his Epistle in this Chapter. He describes the striking Difference of the LORD's coming, as he will appear to his church, and to the Ungodly. He again exhorts the Church to be comforted: and closeth the Epistle with his Apostolic Blessing.

REFLECTIONS

READER! here is a Chapter highly calculated, under GOD, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: While the ungodly are scoffing at the threatened judgment of the LORD's coming, behold with what awful and alarming account it is said that day will be known. As a thief in the night, so sudden, so unexpected. And, while the graceless will be thus surprised, both with the greatness and unlooked for horrors of that day; the prospect, like the Cloud in the camp of Israel, while dark with the blackness of despair to the enemies of our GOD and his CHRIST, will be bright and shining to all the LORD's people, who are the children of the light, and of the day. Oh! the blessedness of that assurance, GOD *hath not appointed us unto wrath, but unto salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD!*

Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for commanding his Scriptures to be read unto all the holy brethren. A plain proof of the sin and folly of that class of men, who would shut up the word of GOD from the common people. GOD be blessed for his mercy to this land, in

that we have the Scriptures open to us, *which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* And blessed be the LORD for the ministry of his faithful servant *Paul*; in this very sweet Epistle, and for all the inspired writings which GOD the SPIRIT taught him to send to the Churches! Ere long, the Church will meet with him, and all the faithful servants of the LORD, in every age of the Church, which have ministered in the name of the LORD. In the mean time, may GOD the SPIRIT cause his unction to enlighten all his people in the reading of them. And while the grace of GOD is directing the Church upon earth, may both the Church in earth and heaven be continually ascribing glory to the united source of all mercy, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and forevermore. Amen

2nd THESSALONIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IT is more than probable, that this *second* Epistle to the Church of the *Thessalonians* was written not a longer space after the first, than *two years*. The chief scope of it seems to have been by way of fortifying their minds against the assaults of persecution, which ran very high at that time. It should seem also, that the Church of GOD in *Thessalonica* had conceived the day of judgment to be at hand. And, if one may conjecture from what the Apostle hath said in various parts of this Epistle, many of the people were tempted therefrom to neglect the honest attention to their calling, and the care of their families. But while *Paul* sets himself in this Epistle to correct these things, he doth not lose sight of making JESUS the grand feature of this, as well as his other writings and preachings.

I do not think it necessary to make any further detention by way of Preface, to the immediately entering upon the Epistle itself, only first to beg the Reader to bend the knee in prayer with me before the Almighty Author of it, the HOLY GHOST, to bless it to the Church in every age, till time shall be no more.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle with his usual Benediction, He desires to bless GOD for the Prosperity of the Church at Thessalonica. He comforts the People under all their Trials, with the assured Prospect of CHRIST'S coming.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it were well, if truly regenerated souls would frequently, and with a suitable solemnity of holy joy, contemplate the great day of CHRIST'S coming, which the Apostle here proposeth to the Church, as the sure support to all the exercises and trials of life. For what damps the highest prosperity of sinners, becomes the richest encouragement to comfort, under all the pressure of evil, to the saints. And, if the people of GOD would learn, under grace, to connect with their prospect of CHRIST'S coming, their union and interest in that glory in which he comes, what a joy unspeakable and full of glory would this bring with it to their souls. And, as the human nature of CHRIST united to his divine, gives a right and interest in all that is divine, and the glory of the GODHEAD is communicated to the human nature, and dwells in it; so our union with CHRIST gives a right and interest in all that belongs to CHRIST, as CHRIST, for communication in all that is communicable, and we derive out of his fullness, grace here, and glory hereafter. This was the very end for which the Church was predestinated, that we might be conformed to his image. May the LORD, give to all his redeemed ones, grace, so to contemplate CHRIST, and so to wait for his coming, that his precious name may be glorified in his people, and they in him, *according to the grace of GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle forewarns the Church in this Chapter, of a falling away of Professors. He very awfully describes the coming of Antichrist, before CHRIST'S appearing. And takes occasion therefrom to bless GOD, for the Church having been chosen to Sanctification from the Beginning.

REFLECTIONS

Who that reads the solemn account of the great day of CHRIST'S appearing, but must stand with astonishment, in beholding the awful end of the ungodly, and the everlasting happiness of GOD's people!

Reader! think what an awful account is here given, of *the man of sin*, and the *son of perdition*! Oh! what deplorable consequences would follow, if ever again the *mystery of iniquity*, and that *Wicked*, should be revealed in this our land. And yet is there not, in the present hour, him, whose coming is after *Satan*, in what the Apostle calls, *the deceivableness of unrighteousness*!

Blessed be GOD for his Church! It is still as the remnant of *Jacob*, in the midst of many people, a dew from the LORD. And GOD hath from the beginning chosen it. And GOD to the present hour doth choose it, and so He will to the latest posterity, *to salvation, through sanctification of the SPIRIT, and belief of the truth*. May the LORD be the strength of his people, to help them to stand fast in his name. And may our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and GOD, even our FATHER, comfort and stablish all his redeemed to the end. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. He takes an affectionate Leave of the Church, begs an Interest in the Prayers of the People, and prays the LORD to bless them.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be the LORD JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Persons, for all the mercies, grace, and love, manifested to the Church of GOD, in JESUS CHRIST. And blessed be the LORD the SPIRIT, for this precious portion of his holy word, from the ministry of his servant the Apostle. Add to it, LORD, the blessing of making it life, and spirit, to the souls of all thy redeemed: and do thou, blessed GOD, for it is thine own sweet office-work alone to accomplish it, *direct our hearts into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST*.

And, oh! thou Almighty Minister, under whose government the entire welfare, and prosperity of the Church depends; do thou watch over all the congregations of the faithful, that idleness, and disorderly conduct, may find no shelter; neither the poor of thy people be neglected, in the daily ministration. LORD, the work is

thine, and thine alone the glory. Make thy ministers faithful: and let the Church be blessed. Farewell Paul! the Church of the *Thessalonians* have praised GOD for thy labors of love: and all the Churches, to whom thy writings have been sent by the HOLY GHOST, have blessed, and do bless GOD, for calling thee to the ministry. But oh! thou glorious Head, and praise of all thy saints, be thou eternally loved, and adored, for all the *Pauls*, and the Pastors, of thy Church! All is thine, Almighty JESUS! And for all we praise thee! Amen.

1st TIMOTHY

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

WE here enter upon the further labors of the Apostle *Paul*. The foregoing Epistles were all directed to the Churches. This, and the second Epistle, together with the two following, to *Titus* and *Philemon*, are to persons. But the subject manner of the whole is the same. All *Paul's* preachings, writings, and ministry, treat of nothing but CHRIST. CHRIST is *Paul's* text, sermon, and application.

Timothy, to whom *Paul* here writes, was of jewish descent by the mother's side, but his father was a *Greek*. It was *Timothy's* mercy, that he had been early taught the Scriptures. And the LORD, in his providence, brought him under the Gospel while a youth, in the Acts of the Apostles we meet with the first account of him at *Lystra*. After which we read frequently of him as *Paul's* companion.

The subject of this Epistle need not further be noticed in this place. We shall discover the Apostle's design, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, as we prosecute the several chapters. It is said to have been written by the Apostle at *Laodicea*, and, probably, about the year 55, though some place it later. However, it carries with it marks of divine inspiration. I only detain the Reader in begging of him to enter upon the perusal with me in prayer, that the same Almighty LORD, which hath graciously given us this sweet Scripture, will as graciously give us the understanding heart to apprehend his merciful instructions in it, that it may be *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*, that as the children of GOD, we *may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle with the usual Salutation. He reminds Timothy of the Truth. He speaks very blessedly of the LORD'S Grace, and the exceeding Abundance of it in his Conversion.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the more we traverse the inspired writings of this great Apostle, the more we find cause to bless GOD for his ministry. What affection he here manifests, to the Church of CHRIST! What love to Timothy, as a minister in the Church! What earnestness he expreseth, that he should be found faithful! And what delight he takes, to go over again and again, the wonderful story of his conversion! No expressions can he find, sufficiently humbling, to set forth his own worthlessness: neither any sufficiently exalted, to praise the riches of GOD'S grace. Surely the HOLY GHOST intended, from the frequency of this record to be brought before the Church, to show poor sinners, that no state is too polluted, no life or sin too abandoned, to be out of the reach of CHRIST'S blood. Yes! Paul! thou art indeed a pattern of the exceeding riches of grace; yea, and abundant grace, to all that hereafter believe on the LORD JESUS to everlasting life. Oh! blessed JESUS! enable me in thy strtngh to hold faith, and a good conscience, in thee; and daily to cry out with Paul: Now to the, King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise GOD be honor and glory, forever, and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle is prosecuting the Subject of his Advice to Timothy; in this Chapter. He exhorts, that Prayers be made, that Women be adorned with plain Apparel. He closeth with a sweet Promise.

REFLECTIONS

IN the opening of this Chapter, we derive authority for the use of prayer, not only for the Church, but for the world: while the precept, which enjoins prayers for all men, plainly directs, to what the subject of those prayers should lead. And, while the Church becomes a blessing, as a dew from the LORD, in the midst of many people, to keep the whole community from consuming drought; the Church derives protection, in temporal quietness, from the prosperity of the nation where it dwells.

Blessed Mediator of thy people! Every renewed view of thee, is refreshing to the soul! LORD! let it be testified in due time, to all thy blood-bought children, the infinitely precious ransom, which thou hast given of thyself, to redeem them from all iniquity. And oh! let the sweet assurance of salvation, in the child-bearing, when our great Emmanuel was born of a woman, open an everlasting source of consolation, to all his faithful seed. And if it please our GOD, let all the faithful daughters of thy chosen generation, while partaking in the Eve-fruit of transgression, in passing through the hour of sorrow, partake also in this sweet promise in thee; and cause them by thy HOLY SPIRIT, to continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle here enters upon the Subject of the Ministry. He shows how the Office should be sacredly observed: with their Connections. The Chapter closeth most blessedly, concerning the great mystery of Godliness.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou in mercy to the Church, ordain Pastors after thine own heart: and make all such, as thou hast called to the ministry, however known, or distinguished among men, more anxious to win souls, than to gain kingdoms.

Precious JESUS! let the mystery of thine incarnation be the constant, unceasing subject of my meditation! Oh! the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge! Didst thou, dear LORD, who when rich beyond all the calculation of riches, condescend for our sakes to be made poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich! And, oh! the sweet testimony of GOD the SPIRIT, in justifying all the works of CHRIST, both to the Person of CHRIST, and in the heart of his people, in his finished salvation. Angels, behold; Gentiles, believe; yea, my poor blind and stony heart is made willing in the day of GOD's power. And GOD the FATHER hath given assurance unto all men of the mystery of godliness, in having raised CHRIST from the dead, and received him up into glory. Blessed, blessed forever, be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

GOD the HOLY GHOST is here introduced as speaking expressly of the Latter-day Heresies. Paul cautions Timothy to be on the look-out with the Church against the Times of such Peril.

REFLECTIONS

O LORD the SPIRIT! let thy Church have grace to praise thee, for the love manifested towards it, and thy watchful care over it, through all generations. Yea, blessed LORD, we have to thank thee for the gracious warnings, which thou hast expressly spoken of concerning the awful heresies which will beset the church from the world. Truly, LORD, there are already many Antichrists, by which we know it is the last time. O do thou help thy truly regenerated ones to resist all and every one of them, whether seducing spirits, or doctrines of devils, and be stedfast in the faith: and when at any time the Enemy cometh in like a flood, do thou, Almighty SPIRIT; lift up a standard against him!

Be gracious also to the Ministers, and Stewards, of thy mysteries. Cause them to put the brethren in remembrance of all the great and glorious truths of our most holy faith; that they may prove themselves good ministers of JESUS CHRIST, nourished up in, the

words of faith, and of good doctrine; refusing profane and old wives' fables, and exercising themselves unto godliness.

And, dearest LORD JESUS! we praise thee for thy upholding, and preserving providence, over all men; and specially for thy saving health unto thy people. Here we learn, O LORD, how it is for thy sake the world standeth; and while thou art carrying on thy salvation, the ungodly remain. And until thou hast brought home thy redeemed to glory, the seed time and harvest, the tares and the wheat, shall not cease. Oh! let thy children learn to whom the whole difference is owing. And while they enjoy thy distinguishing race, often may they hear the voice: *Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it!*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here instructing Timothy; as a Minister of CHRIST, how to conduct himself in the Church of GOD: and especially towards Elders, aged Women, and younger Persons.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold how venerable, in the sight of GOD the SPIRIT, are the hoary saints considered, when we see such a charge given concerning them. Blessedly GOD hath said, *even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you!* And, therefore, the LORD, who watches over them himself, will have no rebuke given them from others. Our fathers in the Church, and our mothers in Israel, are counted worthy of double honor, when the hoary head is found in the righteousness of CHRIST.

And blessed are those Ministers and Stewards of GOD's mysteries which labor in the word and doctrine, who do nothing by partiality, but view all the members of CHRIST'S mystical body, equally entitled to their good offices, and to their affection, without preferring one before another. LORD make all thy servants faithful, and let thy people praise thee, that GOD in all things may be glorified in, and through JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Apostle is prosecuting, in this Chapter, his Exhortation to Timothy concerning Church government. And having noticed several wise Regulations on this Subject with others, closeth his Epistle with praying for Grace to be with him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think what a lovely family that is of the all lovely, and all loving JESUS, which considers all the members as mutually engaged, and everlastingly supposed to be actuated by one spirit, for the general and complete happiness of the whole. Oh! if masters would thus consider servants, and servants masters, there could be no schism of the body, but all would study each other's happiness, and have the same care one for another. And, surely, if anything under grace can tend to the promotion of this great end, the consciousness of a dying, sinful, sorrowful world, from which we are hourly departing, and from which as we brought nothing in, we can carry nothing out, would be enough to induce these blessed effects.

But, oh! precious JESUS! It is thou LORD who must both go before, and guide in this, and every path, which thy redeemed have to follow. Blessed and glorious Potentate! Oh! what a good confession didst thou witness before many witnesses! LORD! grant to all thy servants to keep the commandment of the same confession, without spot, and unrebukable, until thy appearing. JESUS will shortly come. He, and He alone, will show, as the only visible JEHOVAH, who is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and LORD of lords! Till then may every knee bow, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.

2nd TIMOTHY

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IT hath been the generally received opinion in the Church in all ages, that this *second* Epistle to *Timothy* was the last the Apostle ever wrote. And, from that memorable expression, in the last Chapter of it, where he speaks of the time of his departure being at hand; Chap. 4:6. it certainly becomes highly probable. It is supposed to have been written after an interval of full nine years, from the former: and bears date, Anno 64.

We are more interested to ascertain the characters of inspiration in it than to be particularly anxious in ascertaining the date. And this divine mark is in every Chapter and verse, more or less. Very plain and positive proofs we have, that He who guided *Paul's* tongue to preach CHRIST, here guided his pen to record him. I do not think it necessary, in these general observations, to go over the outlines of the Epistle, being in itself so short. But I cannot enter upon it, without first begging the LORD the SPIRIT, to open and explain all the blessed contents of it to our hearts, that our, faith in Him, may not be founded *in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD.*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Paul Opens his Epistle in his usual Manner professeth his great Love to Timothy: admonisheth him on the great Offices of the Ministry; and treats of many blessed Truths of the Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a lovely representation Paul hath given in this Chapter, of the Covenant love, and faithfulness, of GOD the FATHER, in the promise of life which is in CHRIST JESUS! And how sure is it made, in having saved his people before calling them, and then calling them with an holy calling; not of their holiness, or of their works, but his own purpose, and grace. Oh! the faithfulness, and love, of a faithful Covenant GOD and FATHER, in CHRIST JESUS!

And no less blessedly doth Paul speak, of his adorable LORD and SAVIOR. He it is, saith Paul, which hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, through his Gospel. Who then, with such views, can doubt salvation, while knowing whom he hath believed? Who can fear, but in the end, to be everlastingly happy in CHRIST; while living to CHRIST, and having communion with CHRIST; being persuaded, that He is able to keep that which the soul hath committed unto him against that day!

And, with equal joy we behold, how Paul triumphs, in the love, and favor of GOD the HOLY GHOST; (and so may all truly regenerated believers in CHRIST,) conscious of that good thing, committed to them by his Almighty Power! Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, for these unspeakable mercies! LORD! let my poor soul, never be ashamed of the LORD's testimony; nor of the golden chain, of being CHRIST's prisoner!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle is exhorting Timothy in this Chapter, to Firmness, Constancy, and Perseverance. He useth several very beautiful Figures, in the Recommendation of those Graces.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS how sweetly hath thy servant taught the Church, and every humble member of it like myself, to seek

strength only in thee, and the grace in my LORD; and not from anything in our own attainments. Oh! for grace in a daily, hourly communication from CHRIST to be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS, that I

may abide in thee, as thou hast said, convinced that without thee, I can do nothing. And may GOD the SPIRIT continually teach me my need, then lead to thee for a supply; then open a communication between my full LORD and my empty soul; and then keep it everlastingly open, to my joy, and my LORD's glory.

Glory to a faithful Covenant GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS! may my soul never for a moment lose sight of thy faithfulness, amidst all my unbelievings. Oh! the preciousness of that scripture. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself:* LORD I see nothing but evil, unbelief, and emptiness in all I do or say. I am content that it should be so. I am nothing, yea worse than nothing: that my poverty may make me hunger more for the riches of thy grace. Oh! to be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meat for the master's use, and prepared by grace forever good work.

LORD the SPIRIT! do thou seal my soul, unto the day of eternal redemption. This will ferm a blessed *nevertheless* to all my unworthiness. *The foundation* of GOD *standeth sure*. And in proclaiming this foundation, and this assurance, let all thy sent servants show themselves approved unto GOD; and workmen which need not to be ashamed; and let all thy people *follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the LORD, out of a pure heart.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle in this Chapter, foretells of perilous Times. He speaks of certain Enemies of the Truth: and closeth with a warm Recommendation of the Holy Scriptures, as making wise unto Salvation.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while the Apostle is thus speaking to the Church, of the perilous times that should come, may we not say with John: *Little Children, it is the last time. And as we have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that, it is the last time.* But, Reader! who can hear what the beloved Apostle hath added to this solemn scripture, without the most painful concern? *They went out from us, but they were not of us!* It is distressing enough to be told by the SPIRIT in prophecy, that the Church shall be assaulted by heresies, in the latter day dispensation; and that we are of those latter ages in which those heresies appear, but to be told, that even in the Churches, where the truth as it is in JESUS is professed, men shall arise *speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them*; these are trembling dispensations indeed. But, Reader! do not overlook the security of the faithful. That unction from the HOLY ONE, which all truly regenerated children of GOD in CHRIST possess, teacheth all things, and will keep the LORD'S people; and the wicked one shall touch them not. This is our promise. And blessed promise it is, in this present evil day.

And shall not you and I bless GOD the SPIRIT both for the information, and the means of security? Do we not behold in this chapter, sufficient marks of character, for discerning the signs of the times, to judge faithful servants of the LORD, from time-pleasers? Where we behold men lovers of their own selves, proud, boasters, and the like; and a leanness of soul among the people, who are content with the form of godliness, but deny, and are ignorant of the power thereof: and when we contrast such a state, with that which Paul describes of himself, (and which more or less must distinguish all like Paul), whose doctrine and manner of life cannot but beget hatred, evil speaking and persecution; from all Pharisees, and mere nominal Professors of religion; are not the different characters as clearly defined, as if drawn by a sun-beam? Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for his gracious foretelling of those perilous times; and for his divine teaching of his people to try the spirits, and to discern them. Reader! let us be waiting at wisdom's gate, in these awful days of heresy. And let us behold and see, how evil men, and

seducers, among Pharisees, and mere Professors, wax worse and worse; more wretched, more lean of soul, deceiving men like themselves, not GOD's people, and being themselves deceived. And let those holy scriptures of our GOD, which are profitable for all things to the man of GOD, be daily in our hand, while GOD the SPIRIT is instructing our heart; that we may be found of that happy number, made strong by grace, in the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here closing his Epistle, and, therefore, impresseth his Exhortations on Timothy, with the tenderest Affection. He speaks of several who were Enemies to the cross; and sends his Salutations to several, who were Friends: and concludes with his usual Apostolic Blessing, in praying for Grace.

REFLECTIONS

ALMIGHTY GOD and FATHER! may all, whom the HOLY GHOST hath made ministers in the service of the Church of JESUS, hear the solemn charge of Paul to Timothy, to prompt to faithfulness in their high calling. And, no less, Almighty JESUS! may the sure expectation of thy appearing, and thy kingdom, to judge the quick and dead, awaken such, to be diligent in thy service to thy coming. LORD! give them grace to preach the word, and to be constant, in season, out of season; and especially in these awful times, when the way of truth is evil spoken of, and men will not endure sound doctrine. And, oh! thou blessed, and Almighty SPIRIT of all truth, do thou guard, and guide, lead, and instruct all thy family; that the hearts of thy people, may not be turned unto fables.

Blessed be a faithful Covenant-GOD in CHRIST, for the fulfillment of his faithful promise, in the instance of Paul, in giving such a pastor, after his own heart. The Church of GOD bless the LORD for this man's services, in all his past labors; and in all his future usefulness. Oh! grant, LORD, that all thy faithful,

whether ministers, or people, may like Paul, and from the same cause, live and die, in the full assurance of faith, in expectation of the crown of righteousness, which the LORD the righteous Judge, will, give at that day to all them that love our LORD'S appearing!

Praises to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, for this, and all the other precious portions of GOD'S word; to make the Church, under divine teaching, more and more acquainted with the Person, and glory of JESUS, for the happiness of the life that now is, and that which, is to come. Amen.

TITUS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THIS Epistle of *Paul* to *Titus* is but short, though highly interesting, and we have much cause to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for it very clear marks of the LORD'S inspiration are discoverable in it.

It is supposed by some to have been written from *Rome*; and others have thought that *Paul* wrote it from *Ephesus*. In either case the time must differ, though it generally bears the date of our LORD GOD 55.

The Person to whom *Paul* wrote it, is in several parts of the Apostle's other writings spoken of in very high terms of affection. *Paul* calls him *Titus* his own son, and his brother and partner and fellow helper; and as one who walked in the same spirit; and in the same steps. 2 Corinthians 12:18. see also Galatians 2:1-3. 2 Corinthians 8:23. So that he was evidently very dear to *Paul*.

The subject of the Epistle is generally concerning the blessed doctrines of the Gospel; and directions to *Titus* concerning the ministry. I beg the Reader to enter upon the perusal of it, on the knee of prayer, that the Almighty Author of his written Word, may lead the souls of his people by it, to the uncreated WORD, and bless it in JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle, with his usual Benediction. He points out to Titus the Qualifications for the Ministry. He

gives a sad Account of the Grecians, among whom Titus dwelt; and concludes, the Chapter with the same.

REFLECTIONS

I desire to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, for all his abundant mercies in his divine teachings, and his holy scriptures of truth. And beg his grace, to give me a right understanding in all things, that my faith, may be the faith of GOD's elect. None but this, I am well assured, can come up to the standard of *the truth which is after godliness*. And whatsoever is not of this faith, is sin. Precious LORD JESUS! thou great Author, and finisher of faith, increase my faith!

And do thou, Almighty FATHER of mercies; confirm, and establish my soul, in this blessed hope of eternal life, founded in thine everlasting love; and secured in thine unchangeable promise, given in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. Oh! the preciousness of this life, which is eternal; confirmed by covenant engagements; revealed in the holy scriptures; and resulting from free, unmerited, unsought for, yea, unthought of grace!

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! distinguish thine ordained servants in the ministry, by the special marks of thine own ordination. They, whom thou hast sent forth, will, through thy grace, be found blameless in CHRIST, as the stewards of GOD. But, LORD! stop the mouths of those, who run unsent of thee. The pure in spirit, by regenerating grace, will be pure. But to the unregenerate, who are still in the old unrenewed nature, nothing is pure. Praises to our GOD in CHRIST, for discriminating grace!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle is following up the same Directions to Titus, in this Chapter, as the former. His Doctrine, and Commands to the Aged, and Youthful, and Servants, are dwelt upon. The

Apostle, blessedly speaks, of the Grace of GOD in CHRIST, and the Design of its appearing.

REFLECTIONS

READER! is there not renewed occasion at the close of this, and every Chapter, for all the marked attention, GOD the HOLY GHOST hath shown the Church, in watching over the interests, and happiness of his people, that both *young men and maidens, old men and children, may praise the name of the LORD: for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth?* And what a lovely family of the LORD'S would it be, if all were sound in doctrine, sound in faith; and *all adorning the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOR in all things!*

Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, that the grace of GOD that bringeth salvation, hath appeared. And blessed be the LORD, that He hath both taught his Church, and given her members ability, by a life of faith, upon the SON of GOD, to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts; to put off the old man, which is corrupt; and to put on the new man, which, after GOD, is created in righteousness, and true holiness. Oh! for grace, to be always on the lookout, for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of JESUS. LORD! we groan being burthened, under the weaknesses, and unworthinesses of our vile body. Haste, haste my Beloved, and bring on that blessed day, when *thou wilt change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto thy glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby thou art able even to subdue all things unto thyself.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with a Continuation of Exhortations. The Apostle blessedly speaks of the Doctrine of Regeneration. He closeth the Epistle with Directions, and his Apostolical Benediction.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I would pass by all observations on men and things, while reading this sweet scripture, and beg for grace to have all my thoughts directed to that one, glorious contemplation, brought before the Church in this Chapter, namely, the kindness and love of GOD the FATHER toward man, in his original, and eternal purpose, concerning the Church in CHRIST; JESUS's mercy, in betrothing, and redeeming his Church; and GOD the SPIRIT, pouring out his regenerating, and renewing grace, which he hath shed abundantly on the Church, and is forever shedding, on all the members of the body, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being justified by the LORD's grace, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life!

Blessed SPIRIT of all Truth! praises to thine Almighty name, for this precious portion of thine inspired scripture, through the ministry of thy servant *Paul*. The memory of all the *Paul's*, and *Titus's*, which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath raised up as servants in his Church, is precious; and thy faithful, desire grace to bless the LORD for their labors of love. But, oh! thou HOLY LORD the Comforter! what praise shall we offer thee, for thine Almighty Ministry, in the glorifying our dear Redeemer, the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Glory, praise, and power, be unto our Covenant GOD in CHRIST, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and ever. Amen.

PHILEMON

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This short, but lovely Epistle, must have been written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome: and at that time when he had liberty to receive in his own hired house, all that came to him. Acts 28:30. This seems evident, because Onesimus, on whose account the Apostle wrote to Philemon, then attended Paul's preaching, and the LORD blessed the word to him. Hence the probable date was Anno 60, though some place it later.

The design of this letter seems to have been, to reconcile Philemon to his runaway servant, Onesimus. The outlines of the subject is in the Epistle. It will not be necessary, therefore, in this place to enlarge upon it. As the Holy Ghost hath classed it among the writings of his inspiration, it will be proper to enter upon the perusal of it in prayer. May the Lord bless it to the glory of God, in our edification, through Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

The Apostle very affectionately addresseth Philemon, on the Subject of his receiving back his Servant Onesimus, and forgiving him all Wrongs. He opens his Epistle, with his usual Salutation, of Grace, and Peace; and closeth with the same.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to observe in this short Epistle, short as it is, the wonderful ways and works of God. In the family of *Philemon* under all the means of grace the heart of *Onesimus* remains hardened But after his departure and unfaithfulness to his Master the grace of God meets him elsewhere, and the Lord changeth the heart of stone into an heart of flesh. And who of God's redeemed Ones but can say the same? Blessed Jesus, thou art the Brother born for adversity. Do, thou, Lord receive all thine as those for whom thou

hast answered. Praised be a Covenant God in Christ for all his mercies. Amen.

HEBREWS

General Observations

I would seek grace from GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of this blessed portion of his holy word, to enter upon the perusal of it, with the most earnest prayer, and praise; and with the most profound humility and joy. No part of the word of GOD hath in it more blessed views of the glory of CHRIST'S Person, and GODHEAD, and Offices, and Character. And none, which more blessedly brings him home to the affections of his people, under all the endearments of union and interest, as the LORD our Righteousness. Oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST may glorify Him, to his Church's apprehension, under all and form him, in every heart of his redeemed, *the hope of glory*.

There have been doubts in the minds of some, whether the Apostle *Paul* was, or was not, the Pen-man GOD the SPIRIT made use of, for writing this Epistle. But none of the faithful taught of GOD, ever doubted that the Epistle itself, was the immediate work of divine inspiration. Indeed every age of the Church, hath furnished witnesses for GOD, in confirmation of its divine authority. The seal of the SPIRIT, in the heart, to the truths of GOD, written there, becomes an infallible testimony. Hence the royal Psalmist exclaimed: *I shall never forget thy word, for by it thou hast quickened me*, Psalm 119:93. And whoever reads the book of the Hebrews, with an enlightened eye, under the leadings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of it, will not fail to discover, that the Apostle *Paul*, is evidently the inspired Penman of it. What he saith of *Timothy* in the last Chapter, verse 23 (Hebrews 13:23), when it be considered, that *Paul* wrote it from *Rome*, and the probable date of it also, Anno 63 or 64; form a correspondence, to the Apostle's then imprisonment. And yet more decisive is *Peter's* testimony. For *Peter's* Epistle was written to the strangers, (that is, the ten tribes of the *Jews* or *Hebrews*,) scattered at that time,

throughout the lower *Asia*. 1 Peter 1:1. In this Epistle *Peter* refers to this book of the *Hebrews*, when he saith to them, *our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you*, 2 Peter 3:15. Now no part of *Paul's* writings but this Epistle was written to the *Jews*. All his other Epistles were to the *Gentile Churches*, and to particular persons, as *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon*. And this also explains the cause wherefore the Apostle did not begin this Epistle to the *Hebrews* with his usual salutation.

I do not think it necessary in this place, to enter into a large and circumstantial account, of the Contents of this blessed Epistle. All the interesting particulars will meet us in their proper place. It will be sufficient here to observe, that the one, great, and leading design, of the whole is, to exalt the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Hence his Person, as GOD, and as GOD-Man; his offices, characters, relations; his royal, prophetic, and priestly offices; are most blessedly set forth. And what is worthy of most especial notice is, that the human nature of CHRIST is displayed in so dear, and interesting a light; and the precious consequences resulting from it to his people, so enlarged upon, and recommended to their tenderest regard as is not perhaps so fully inculcated in any other of the Apostle's writings. So that upon the whole, the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is a most blessed part of the divine Word: and for which the Church of the faithful, can never be sufficiently thankful to GOD the HOLY GHOST. I will no longer detain the Reader from entering upon its perusal, than only first to look up with prayer, to the Almighty Author of it, that while passing over it, he will be pleased, mercifully to shine on the heart, of both the Writer, and the Reader, (if it be his holy will,) of this *Poor Man's Commentary*. And from hence, that the LORD JESUS, who is the whole sum and substance of its contents, may be made manifest in every part of it; so blessedly seen by faith, and enjoyed in hope, as to be glorified in the heart; and GOD *the FATHER glorified in his dear SON*. Amen.

Chapter 1

Summary

GOD is declared in the opening of this Chapter, as speaking to the Church, by his SON. Then follows a short, but exalted Description, of the Glories of CHRIST'S Person and Character.

Reflections

PRAISES to the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the eternal purpose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS our LORD! And praises to his holy name, that he hath been pleased to make known the fellowship of the mystery, hid in GOD from the beginning of the world, which in times past was opened in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets; but now, in these last days, fully, and completely made known to the Church, in the Person of his dear SON! LORD JESUS! we hail thy glorious appearing, in all the revelations thou hast made! We adore thee for thy *natural*, and *essential* glories, as One with the FATHER. We adore thee in all thy *mediatorial* characters, as GOD-Man, *heir of all things*! And we would desire grace to praise thee, love thee, delight in thee, for all thy finished redemption-work, and grace, manifested to thy Church, and People; that when by thyself thou hadst purged our sins, thou didst take thy seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Oh! the rapture and the joy, that JESUS, by inheritance hath obtained a more excellent name than angels; and that his people, his fellows, by their union with him, and their right in him, are begotten to the same heritage, and will enter into the joy of their LORD. Oh! that GOD the SPIRIT, who in grace and love, hath brought the Church acquainted with these precious things, may daily, by his quickening, and renewing influences, anoint all the fellows of CHRIST, with the same oil of gladness, as their glorious Head. And while our GOD and FATHER saith unto his dear SON, *Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever*; all his adopted children may know their oneness and interest in CHRIST, and in that kingdom, which cannot fail!

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle is prosecuting the same blissful Subject in this Chapter as in the former, in speaking of the Glories of CHRIST. His Love to the Church, in taking our Nature: and the Blessedness it brings to all his People.

Reflections

Oh! for grace to take heed to those things, which I have heard of GOD's covenant love and salvation; that, through the sweet office of GOD the HOLY GHOST, as the Remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS, I may never let them slip. And do thou blessed LORD, put such an holy jealousy and fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee, nor neglect so great salvation.

Praises to my gracious GOD and SAVIOR! who in his great condescension for the sufferings of death, was made a little lower than the Angels; and yet was then, and is now, and eternally must be, the LORD both of Angels and Men. And oh! what a thought! He who is the High and Lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, is also the same moment, in his human nature, one with his people. *For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one.* And is it so, (oh! thou blessed LORD,) that thou art not ashamed to call thy people brethren? LORD! grant that I may never feel that false pride, and be ashamed to call thee so! Surely I will tell all the world, whose I am, and Whom I serve; and say to all I meet, JESUS is not ashamed to call me brother. And shall I not say to thee with delight, and joy, in the language of thy Church of old: *Oh! that thou were as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother: when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.*

Reader! do you know the LORD? If so, think of your mercies, and rightly make use of them; amidst the present sinful and adulterous CHRIST-despising generation! Will you be cast down, because of the temptation, and have your soul discouraged by reason of the way? Oh! blessed be the way, however tempted it may be, if it thereby leads the soul, more frequently, more closely, to JESUS. Darkness is a mercy, if it drives me to JESUS the light. Poverty of soul is true riches, if my pinchings endear his enlargements! It is blessed to

know, and blessed to feel, all spiritual wants; to make the soul more sensible, that there is no fulness, but in JESUS. LORD the SPIRIT! cause my soul then to live upon CHRIST!

Chapter 3

Summary

The HOLY GHOST is here still preaching CHRIST. The LORD, the SPIRIT, calls upon the Church, to pause, and contemplate, the Person of JESUS. He draws a Comparison between CHRIST and Moses. He shews the awful State of Unbelief!

Reflections

PAUSE, my soul, and cheerfully obey, the LORD the SPIRIT, and consider, as thou art commanded and hast such abundant reason to do; consider, the Apostle and High Priest of thy profession CHRIST JESUS! Yes! thou glorious GOD and SAVIOR! I would desire to contemplate thy Person, character, offices, and relations! I would desire grace, and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of thee, to behold thee in all that concerns thy Mediatorial glory, in thy faithfulness to thy FATHER, and to thy people. I would gaze on thee, until my whole soul was swallowed up in the contemplation; and until that I found myself one with my LORD in that house, over which, as his own, CHRIST is the rightful owner; and which house, is CHRIST's body the Church, and He *the fullness which filleth all in all*.

And do thou, Almighty GOD the HOLY GHOST, give me continual grace, to keep in remembrance thy precious exhortation to thy people. LORD! let nothing of sin cleave to my poor fallen nature; neither suffer me to be at any time hardened with the deceitfulness of it. Oh! the long suffering of my GOD, to the forty years provocation of the people in the wilderness! Oh! the numberless years of the LORD's long suffering now! Cause me, O LORD, to mark that grace which kept back thy people from murmuring *then*, when the LORD brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* by *Moses*; that though *some*, (even the *Israel* after the flesh,) when they had heard, did provoke; yet not *all*, (even those whom grace restrained.) They fell not after

the same example of unbelief. And cause me, O LORD, to know now, that it is grace, and grace alone, by which any are kept *by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation*. Do thou, O LORD the HOLY GHOST! who here so sweetly holds forth our great and glorious Apostle, and High Priest, JESUS CHRIST, to thy Church's view, give grace to the apprehension and knowledge of Him; that through thy blessed influences thy people may all rejoice in him, to the praise of the glory of His grace, who *hath made us accepted in the Beloved*.

Chapter 4

Summary

The same precious Subject is continued through this whole Chapter: The LORD's People are here shewn, that CHRIST is their Rest. CHRIST having passed into the Heavens, is made an unanswerable Argument, to come unto him boldly.

Reflections

How shall I properly prize my mercies, in the grace the LORD gives me, to receive and believe in JESUS; when I am told, as in this Chapter, that the *professing Israel* of old, to whom the Gospel was preached, found no profit, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*. Oh! how plain and evident it is, from the experience of mankind in all ages, that grace makes all the difference between *him who serveth GOD, and him who serveth him not*. LORD! cause thy Church, thy people, thy redeemed, to rest in CHRIST and his finished work, as GOD in creation, and CHRIST in redemption, rested from theirs. Oh! the sweet thought! There is a rest, and CHRIST is that rest, *which remaineth for the people of GOD*.

Oh! thou uncreated WORD! let my soul be always under thy soul-warning, and spirit-comforting power. And, as all things are naked, and open to thine all-piercing sight, do thou, LORD, impart the very grace thou seest to be needful for me. Oh! thou risen and exalted SAVIOR! Thou art indeed passed into the heavens. Thither would my soul by faith and love follow thee. JESUS knoweth me, feeleth for me, is sensibly touched with the circumstances of my infirmities. Surely, JESUS can, and JESUS will, impart all necessary strength, and

my GOD and SAVIOR will make me more than conqueror, through his grace helping me!

Chapter 5

Summary

The same most precious Subject, as in the former Chapter, is carried on in this. Melchizedek is spoken of. Precious Views of CHRIST.

Reflections

Precious great High Priest of thy people! LORD! I would hail thee as both my Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice. Thou wert indeed taken from among men: for in thy human nature, thou wert alone suited for the high office. Who, like JESUS, could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way: from a knowledge, like JESUS, of the infirmities of our nature, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin? And who like JESUS, could be begotten to the Sonship of his holy nature, and be sworn into the office of an high priest for ever, after the order of *Melchizedec*? Surely LORD, none but JESUS could offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins. Neither could there be any thing short of thy divine nature, to offer gifts and sacrifices *upon*, and to give acceptance and efficacy to all offerings, but the Person, blood, and righteousness of GOD's dear SON? And oh! what everlasting efficacy, hath the one offering of my GOD and SAVIOR wrought; and his everlasting unchanging priesthood, made secure, to render both his priesthood and his sacrifice of eternal duration, confirmed also by the oath of Him, who hath sworn, and will not repent; *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek!*

Oh! for grace from GOD the SPIRIT, never to lose sight of the mercy-seat itself, that the whole purpose, for which it is erected is for mercy. There would have needed no mercy-seat, had not CHRIST's children been sinners. Neither would GOD the FATHER have constituted his dear SON, as high Priest, and formed him in our nature in this office, but that he might have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. The very office itself, and the conscious sense of Him Who sits there, are full to this

purpose, that GOD hath chosen JESUS expressly with this view; and JESUS hath infinite dimensions of love, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest, in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. LORD! may I never lose sight of these things! May I always have in contemplation thy Person, and thy high priestly office; and by faith, behold my LORD, still, clothed in a vesture, dipped in blood, as if to tell me JESUS wears these robes, in proof of his unceasing office. Let me day by day, come boldly to thy throne, and *find grace to help, in all time of need.*

Chapter 6

Summary

The Hebrews are exhorted to Perseverance in the Faith. The Case of the Unregenerate is considered. The Chapter ends, in a very blessed Manner, in relating the Will of JEHOVAH, that the Heirs of Promise, should be shewn his unchangeable Counsel concerning them!

Reflections

CALLED upon as the Church is, in this Chapter, to leave behind first principles in the awakening of the soul to the convictions of sin, and having then but slight views of CHRIST, let us seek from GOD the SPIRIT, that growth in grace which marks those who have long known the LORD, and long found our own nothingness in everything out of CHRIST; that we may discover that life, and light, and joy, are only in CHRIST; while deadness, darkness, and sorrow, are in all we say or do.

But, Reader! while divine teaching infallibly leads every child of on into this conclusion, sooner or later, let no child of GOD be led away, from the features of character GOD the HOLY GHOST hath here drawn of hypocrites, to fancy that such distinguish him also. They differ as wide as the east from the west. GOD's children are indeed full of defects and unworthiness, and undeserving; nevertheless, they are still children. The new spiritual life imparted to them in regeneration, however, to their view, at times appears hardly

discernible, is in them a *well of water, springing up to everlasting life*. But, the unawakened nature of the hypocrite, amidst all appearance of plentiful showers, is all outward and forming pools only, like *Job's* friends, prove deceitful, as the brook which in summer seasons dry away.

Reader! if so be the LORD hath caused you to know his grace, and by regeneration you are led to the precious discovery of being an heir of promise, see here the unspeakable love of GOD, and his willingness more abundantly, that his children shall live upon, and rejoice in, the immutability of his counsel. Oh! the strength of that consolation, founded in GOD the FATHER'S will! JESUS's person, blood, and righteousness, and the HOLY GHOST's regenerating, sanctifying, and renewing mercy. JESUS! be thou the anchor of my soul, both sure and stedfast! Not like the mariner's anchor beneath, but above; not founded on any thing breakable, but in things which are eternal. Not formed by the wisdom of men; but in the power of GOD. Precious, precious JESUS! thou art the Rock of ages! Thy work is perfect. Blessed, for ever blessed, be GOD, for JESUS CHRIST.

Chapter 7

Summary

Some Account of Melchizedec. CHRIST blessedly spoken of, under His High Priestly Character, and the Excellency of his Person and Office.

Reflections

EVERLASTING thanks be given to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for this most sweet and precious Chapter. Never, surely, but for the Lord himself explaining to us in this portion of his holy word, what he had before related concerning *Melchizedec*, in other parts of his revelation; should we have conceived suitable apprehensions on the subject. But now, by his gracious condescension, in saying so much as is here related, of that Priest of the Most High GOD, do we behold the wonders, of his Person, and Office, and the still greater Personage, to whom all that went before ministered. Hail! thou great, thou Almighty *Melchizedec* of thy People? Truly, LORD JESUS!

thou hast been sworn into thine office by JEHOVAH's Oath; and well therefrom do I feel confidence to come unto thee, as the LORD's High Priest, and my High Priest for ever. LORD! I desire grace, and power, to do what is here commanded the Church, namely, to consider, how great the *Melchizedec* was, whom *Abraham* saw; and therefrom to consider, how much greater my LORD JESUS is, to whom even *Melchizedec* acted but as a type and shadow!

Precious LORD JESUS! thou art a Priest upon thy throne! Thou hast an unchangeable priesthood! And indeed, and in truth, such an High Priest as thou art, my poor soul needed: One that can, and will save to the uttermost, all that come to GOD by thee; and One who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And, very sure I am, that though, in thy personal glory, all this, and more, is thine; yet, amidst all the exaltation of thy state, no change hath taken place in thy nature; JESUS, is JESUS still. The same lovely, and all loving JESUS. Here below, men that have infirmities are made priests; but our JESUS that is above, though touched with the feelings of our infirmities, yet, in himself, he is separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. He knows our frame by his own, though without sin; and his priesthood is for ever. LORD! take up my cause, for sure I am, I shall not then fail; thou art consecrated for evermore!

Chapter 8

Summary

We have more, and more precious Views of the LORD JESUS in this chapter. CHRIST the true tabernacle. GOD'S Covenant Love, secured in CHRIST, by Word and Oath.

Reflections

READER! is this indeed the sum and substance of what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath been blessing the Church with, in such gracious teachings concerning the LORD JESUS; that He is gone into heaven, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of Majesty: oh! then, for grace to follow him thither by faith! For, as sure as JESUS the SON of GOD is one there, so sure is He gone as the Head and Husband,

the Surety and Representative of his body the Church, *the fulness that filleth all in all*. Yes! He hath taken possession of heaven itself in their name. And all his redeemed ones may ready, by virtue of their union with Him, behold themselves by faith, *as raised up together with CHRIST, and made to sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS*. Oh! glorious JESUS! *Minister of the Sanctuary*, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD hath pitched, and not man!

And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for this precious scripture! We now see, through thy divine teaching, how needful it was for our LORD to go away. Had he remained on earth, though he had made his soul an offering for sin, yet could he not have been a priest. Yes! thou dear LORD, it was necessary that thou shouldst priest it also for thy redeemed in heaven. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! give us grace to be always following our JESUS by faith, and employing our great High Priest with our daily prayers and praises, until we come to see him, as He is, and dwell with him for ever.

Praises to our GOD and FATHER for his covenant CHRIST. Oh! may GOD the FATHER be to me a GOD in CHRIST, and make me his among his people. Oh! that JESUS, my Husband, may be to me my unceasing High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, my Teacher, and the Glorifier of JESUS unto the day of his coming!

Chapter 9

Summary

We have in this Chapter some Account of the Furniture of the Old Tabernacle in the Wilderness. To this succeeds a most blessed Account of CHRIST, whom the HOLY GHOST meant to prefigure by this worldly Sanctuary.

Reflections

Oh! the distinguishing mercy, to which, by the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Church is brought, in exchanging a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances; for the open displays of grace, in the Person, work, blood-shedding, and righteousness of our adorable High Priest, who is the whole sum and substance of every thing

blessed; and having, by his own blood, obtained eternal redemption for us, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. Precious LORD JESUS! thou art indeed the Testator of the New Testament in thy blood. Thou hast ensured all the blessings of the New Covenant to thy people. And blessed be the HOLY GHOST, in his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, for all his divine teaching, both of the old Church, in type, and figure; and the new dispensation, in sum and substance; and all of CHRIST JESUS.

LORD JESUS! let thy sweet supper for ever refresh the souls of thy redeemed, in the celebration of the New Testament in thy blood. Let it be a continual feast upon that one all-sufficient sacrifice, whereby thou hast perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Oh! let the consciousness of thy continually appearing for us, in the presence of GOD, keep our souls alive, in the expectation of thy coming, that we may look for thee the second time, without sin unto salvation.

Chapter 10

Summary

In this Chapter the Inefficacy of the Law, and the Sufficiency of the Gospel are stated, The LORD JESUS, is most blessedly represented, under the SPIRIT of Prophecy, as coming for the Salvation of his People. The gracious Encouragement, of drawing nigh by his Blood.

Reflections

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! how blessedly hast thou manifested in thy Person, blood-shedding, and righteousness, that thou art the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believeth; and that the law was but a shadow of good things to come, which never could, neither ever was designed to make the corners thereunto perfect. Oh! for that sweet voice, *Lo! I come!* to be heard daily, hourly, in my soul, by the ear of faith, until I see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever. Come, LORD, in thy SPIRIT, in thine ordinances, thy means of grace, and open my soul to receive thee. Come, LORD, continually in the love-visits of thy mercy, until thou shalt come in the glory of thy Majesty, to take me home to thyself,

that I may dwell with thee for ever! Praised be GOD the HOLY GHOST for the many blessed things contained in this delightful Chapter. Yes! LORD! through thy grace enabling us, we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of JESUS. And under thy leadings and influences, thy people, are hereby distinguished, from those awful characters, in this CHRIST-despising generation, who tread under-foot the SON of GOD, by denying his GODHEAD, the efficacy of his atoning blood, the blood of the Covenant; and do despite unto the SPIRIT of grace. LORD! comfort thy poor little ones, in the faith, in giving them to see, their adoption-character, and that they are not of them *that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul,*

Chapter 11

Summary

Here is the Record of Old Testament Saints, who lived and died, triumphant in Faith. The sweet Assurance to New Testament Believers that they, and all the Faithful, will together be made perfect in JESUS.

Reflections

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of his sacred Word, for this precious Chapter, which he hath so graciously given to the Church Of GOD! for the LORD the SPIRIT, who hath so freely caused such illustrious acts of his people to be recorded for the consolation of the faithful, to bless it to the faithful, whenever, and wheresoever the LORD causeth it to be heard, or read, in all the Churches of the saints. And oh! that amidst all the awful circumstances of the present awful day, when, if the SON of GOD should come, the question of our LORD might be put forth, with trembling apprehensions for the answer; *will He find faith in the earth?* oh! grant that there may be known by our LORD, though hidden from our imperfect view, *a remnant according to the election of grace, both sons and daughters, who do not bow the knee to the image of Baal!*

LORD JESUS! thou Almighty Author and Finisher of faith! do thou increase our faith! Surely , LORD! the gift is thine; faith is thine. As none can first quicken, so none can keep alive his own soul. And, as none can first create faith; so none can exercise it, but by thee. *All our fresh springs are in thee:* Yea, LORD! Is not faith itself thine act in the soul, and the whole result of thy grace upon the heart? Precious JESUS! make thy redeemed now strong in the grace that is in thyself; that we may be *the followers of them, who inherit the promises.*

Almighty FATHER! All the triumphs of faith begin in thy fatherly love. Thy choice of the Church *in* CHRIST, and thy gift of the Church *to* CHRIST, become the surest testimony of thine everlasting love, which time, or eternity can shew. Oh! then, let a sense of it silence for ever all the natural Atheism, and unbelief, thy children bring with them into the world, from the *Adam*-nature, in which we are all born. Oh! gracious GOD and FATHER! let thy children stand impressed with an unshaken, and steady assurance, that thou hast not called thyself I AM, for nothing; but that the very name, by which thou hast been pleased to be made known to them, becomes a confirmation of all thy promises. I AM will give both a being, and an accomplishment, to all he hath said. Amen. Oh! then, like those holy men in CHRIST gone before, grant that thy people may all live, and when called upon, all die, in the faith of GOD's elect. And both in life and death, in time, and to all eternity, bless the united Source of all their mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and ever Amen.

Chapter 12

Summary

The opening of this Chapter contains an earnest and an affectionate Exhortation to the Church, from the View of the Faithful, which had been given in the preceding Chapter, to be steadfastly looking unto JESUS. To this succeeds a striking Account of the Difference between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

Reflections

READER hear what GOD the SPIRIT saith to the Churches! Behold, what animating prospects are opened to New Testament saints, in the contemplation of Old Testament believers. And while we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, O LORD the SPIRIT! do thou give thy people grace, to pass on through all besetting difficulties, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! give thy people grace, to consider, and very blessedly to improve, under the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, in marking what a contradiction of sinners thou didst endure against thyself. LORD! who can faint when beholding the SON of GOD, in his unequalled conflicts? Surely, if JESUS learned obedience, by the things which he suffered, well may his brethren desire to be trained in the same school. Then will they know their sonship, and be sanctified under the hand of a tender FATHER. Let the *Esaus*, and the profane persons of every age, relinquish, as they always do, the blessing; but, LORD, let no root of bitterness spring up to trouble thy *Jacobs*, and the *Israels* thy people.

Blessed be GOD, that Mount *Sinai* is no more; but the Church is come to Mount *Zion*. There may thy people, O LORD, daily come. There are the firstborn. There the assembly of the faithful. There JESUS, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling. And there GOD the Judge of all. And, LORD, while through thy grace, thy people come to thee in faith; do thou help them to look forward to thy coming to them in glory. JESUS will shake both heaven and earth. But JESUS's redeemed belong to Him and in Him they receive a kingdom, which cannot be moved. Precious LORD! grant all thy grace, to serve GOD acceptably, *with reverence and godly fear*.

Chapter 13

Summary

The Epistle is here closed; and a Blessed Conclusion is made. CHRIST in his Person, Relations, and Character; the same for ever:

Several weighty Exhortations are used; and the whole is summed up in praying for grace to the whole Church.

Reflections

HERE let us pause, while reading the closing words of this most precious Epistle: and, as a man who hath been ascending an high hill, and is arrived at the summit of it, looks round, and takes a leisurely survey of the many beautiful prospects which come up to his view, from the rising ground he hath trodden; so may the Writer, and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, contemplate the unspeakable glories which GOD the SPIRIT hath presented before both, in this his Holy Scripture. Gracious LORD! I would say for myself, what praises do I owe thee, for the divine revelation herein contained? From the first opening of the subject, in the first Chapter, through all the portions of the sacred contents; what beauties, and glories, hast thou unveiled, of his Person, and Character, who is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! Beginning with the proofs of his GODHEAD, then of his Manhood, then of His glorious Person in union with *both*, as the GOD-Man-Mediator; how sweetly and blessedly hath my LORD the HOLY GHOST held him up to my view, and (shall I not hope) brought him home to my heart, in all his offices, characters, and relations, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people! Hail! thou Great, and glorious LORD JESUS CHRIST! thou *High Priest of thy people for ever, after the order of Melchizedec!*

Here then, let both Writer and Reader fall down on the knee of prayer and praise, before the throne, and *in* Him, and *through* Him, and *by* Him, through whom alone we can *offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually*; bless the united Source of all our mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the ONE Glorious, and Eternal JEHOVAH, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself; and all the fullness of grace and glory; in Him, for his Church, in time, and to all eternity.

And, as an instrument in the LORD's hand, let neither Writer, nor Reader of this little Work, overlook the faithful Apostle, whom GOD the SPIRIT was graciously pleased to appoint to this ministry, in handing down to the Church, from age to age, those sacred records, we have here gone over in the perusal. Truly, LORD, we cannot but see GOD the HOLY GHOST's distinguishing grace to this man, in this most honorable appointment. Well is it recorded, of the LORD's

personal ordination of him to the ministry, when in the Church the voice was heard: *Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them!* And oh! what a work indeed, not only in the then living ministry in person, to the Churches; but by his writings, in this, and the other blessed Epistles left on record for the everlasting instruction and comfort of the saints of GOD; whereby *he being dead, yet speaketh*. Farewell *Paul*, farewell, until the whole Church shall meet thee in glory, there together to praise GOD and the LAMB, for electing, redeeming, regenerating love, and favor, both to Pastor and People, all in One and the same glorious Head, to all eternity. Blessed be the LORD JESUS! for making thee his chosen vessel to bear his name as thou hast in those sacred writings done before Gentiles and Kings in every age of the Church.

LORD! add one blessing more. Pardon every thing of error in this humble work: and bless all that is offered upon it, as far as is agreeable to thy truth, and to thy mind, and will; that GOD *in all things may be glorified in JESUS CHRIST*.

Amen.

JAMES

General Observations

It should seem that the term *General Epistle*, is given to this part of the Holy Scriptures, in that, it is not addressed either to any particular Church or Person; but intended for the whole of CHRIST'S Church and People. And though it appears to have been directed to the *twelve tribes of Israel*, scattered abroad, yet not Israel after the flesh, but the LORD'S *Israel* after the SPIRIT, even the children of GOD, wheresoever scattered.

The writer of this Epistle, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, was *James*. It is not said, whether James, the son of *Zebedee*, and brother of *John*; or *James*, the son of *Alpheus*. But, indeed, there needed not this distinction. For *James* the son of *Zebedee*, was murdered by *Herod*, about the year of our LORD GOD 44; whereas this Epistle could not have been of an earlier date than 60. Hence *James*, the son of *Alpheus*, must have been the penman of it.

The great and leading design of this Epistle need not be entered upon in this Preface; it will meet us in due season, in its proper place. But the objection which *Eusebius* saith, some of the ancient writers had to this Epistle, from an idea, that it was contradictory, on the subject of faith, to that of the Scriptures in general, and particularly to *Paul's* statements of it, under the HOLY GHOST, is wholly void. The supposed contradiction is merely ideal; for there never did exist the least difference between *Paul* and *James*, on this subject. Both perfectly agree; and both evidently prove, that one and the same Almighty SPIRIT, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, guided the pens of both.

I have only here, as on the entrance in every former Book, to ask that *wisdom, which is from above*, (and which this Apostle so blessedly speaks of,) to be with me in going over this part of the LORD'S sacred word, as before; and to ask it *in faith, nothing wavering*. And may the LORD, if it be his blessed will, give it in

large portions, both to the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*; who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.

Chapter 1

Summary

The Epistle opens with a general, Salutation. Various Directions are given to the Church. GOD's Grace and Love to the Church are very blessedly set forth.

Reflections

Reader! observe the Apostle's salutation, addressed to the brethren, and see whether you have a personal interest in it. Can you count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations? Yet! If so be, by regeneration you know the LORD, and therefrom can discover GOD's love and favor, in the appointment of exercises. To every child of GOD, renewed by grace trials, whose issue can never be finally doubtful, will always bring joy, when patience hath her perfect work, in the perfection of JESUS. In Him, and Him only, can the Church find themselves perfect and entire, and lacking nothing. And when taught these precious things, every child of GOD, will daily find his lack of wisdom, and as daily be led, to seek his supplies from Him, and in Him; *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Yea, and in faith, and without doubt and wavering, will the child of GOD seek it in JESUS, and from JESUS. And oh! how truly blessed is that child of GOD, who when tried, takes all his confidence in CHRIST.

Great Father of light! blessed for ever be thy glorious Name, for that good and perfect gift, which comprehends every other, thy dear SON! And blessed be thou, O LORD, that thy gifts and callings are without repentance. Thy will, and not our purpose; thy grace, and not our deservings, are the alone standards of thy love and favor. Oh! the blessedness of that one scripture, which hath more in it of value, than a million worlds; *Of his own will, begat he us with the word of truth!* LORD! write it in the living tablet of my heart, for daily use, and every moment's joy.

Precious JESUS! be thou the perfect law of liberty to my poor soul, to look into, as in a glass, from day to day. Oh! for a blessed conformity to my LORD'S image; in all things! May GOD the HOLY GHOST, so take of the things of JESUS, and shew to me, that now by faith, I may daily behold thy face in righteousness; and ere long be satisfied in full sight, *when I awake with thy likeness.*

Chapter 2

Summary

We have in this Chapter, an interesting Statement, of the Conduct to be observed by the LORD'S People, towards the LORD'S Poor. And also, a blessed Account of the Works of Faith, as distinguished from a dead Faith, of a mere hearsay Knowledge!

Reflections

Oh! for grace, while reading what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath said in this Chapter, in reproving any respect of persons, in his house of prayer; that I may everlastingly keep in view the LORD'S pleasure, and so have not the faith of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as to regard the rich more than the poor; but to love the LORD'S poor with peculiar delight for Jesus's sake; and GOD'S chosen may be my chosen; and the poor of this world, if rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, may be *the excellent in whom is all my delight.*

Blessed and Eternal SPIRIT! keep my soul from all error, in the right apprehension of all thy gracious truths. Teach me, LORD, that if it were possible for a man to keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And, as we have all sinned, and come short of thy glory, never may my soul seek the smallest justification by the deeds of the law.

And I do beseech thee, O LORD, who leadeth thy people unto all truth, that I may so fully learn, from what thou hast here taught the Church, how unprofitable the dead faith of merely acknowledging divine truths, while not living under the influence of them, is before GOD; that my faith, like the faith of *Abraham* and *Rahab*, may be works of faith; in proof, that my profession and practice are in perfect correspondence to each other. Let my soul abhor the thought,

and much more the conduct, of professing love to a poor brother or sister, while withholding from them the tokens of that love. And in the higher concerns with my GOD and Savior, far be it from me, O LORD, to profess, that I know GOD, but in works deny him! Oh! for grace, while seeking justification before GOD, upon the sole footing of the Person, blood-shedding, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, to be found an eminent *example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity!*

Chapter 3

Summary

This Chapter contains much wholesome Exhortation to the People of GOD, on the several Parts of Conduct. The close of it hath a beautiful Description of the Wisdom which is from above, in Opposition to that which is earthly.

Reflections

Precious LORD JESUS! how sweetly doth this Chapter bring to my recollection thy tender, and endearing precept, to call no man master upon earth! for One is our Master, even CHRIST! Yes! truly, LORD, thou art, both by right and by purchase, by conquest, and by the voluntary surrender of my soul, in the day which made me willing, the day of thy power; thou art my lawful right, and highly honored Master, Sovereign, and LORD! And oh! for grace, everlastingly in willing homage, to bow my knee to the sceptre of thy grace. And as all creatures in nature have been, and are tamed and governed, let it never be said, that any of thy redeemed ones arose at any time in disobedience against thee!

And do thou, blessed and Wonderful Counselor! in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, grant me daily portions, from thyself, in that wisdom which is from above. LORD! be it my happiness to be distinguished, in all my dealings with men, from that worldly wisdom which begets envying, and strife, and every evil work; but out of a good conversation, by the in-dwelling power of GOD, the HOLY GHOST, may I be enabled to show forth all the practical fruits of godliness, *with meekness of wisdom.*

Chapter 4

Summary

The same Subject of Exhortation is continued in this Chapter as in the former. Several striking Expressions are made use of, to enforce what the Apostle is recommending,

Reflections

My soul! while reading this Chapter, and hearing GOD the SPIRIT putting that Solemn question to thee, *from whence come wars and fightings* in thy two-fold nature; a spirit regenerated; and a body of flesh virtually all sin: oh! bless that gracious, that sovereign, that bountiful GOD, who, by his quickening and illuminating power, hath opened thine eyes to the view of the awful state in which thou wert born in nature, and the distinguishing mercy manifested to thee in grace; and though still groaning under a body of sin and corruption, bless the LORD for thy redemption in CHRIST, by which thou hast gotten the victory, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And, my soul, see! that amidst all the wounds from sin, which, in the present warfare thou art daily sustaining, bless thy GOD and Savior, the issue of the conflict is not doubtful. Thy GOD will give thee grace to resist the devil, and he will flee from thee. Thy GOD will enable thee to draw nigh to him, and he will draw nigh to thee. *Satan* knoweth that he hath but a short time. Let nothing keep thee from the throne of grace. Here all thy strength is found. Look to JESUS, who is both thy wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, as well as redemption. *In Him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* And, do thou look forward with holy joy to the morrow, the day, even the great day of GOD, when JESUS will come to take thee home to his eternal kingdom. Let men of the world, from the world, seek their supreme joy. Yea, let them go from city to city, to traffic in the concerns of this world's good. Be it thy happiness to eye JESUS, even in the necessary things the body is occupied with here below. Soon thou shalt have done with all earthly employments, and the everlasting enjoyment of GOD in CHRIST will be thy portion for evermore.

Chapter 5

Summary

The Church is here taught, in the Opening of this Chapter, the short-lived Enjoyments of the Wicked. GOD's faithful Ones are reminded of the Blessedness of Patience; and what precious Advantages arise from Prayer.

Reflections

In closing up this short, but sweet scripture, let not the Reader overlook the tender care and watchful love of GOD the HOLY GHOST to the Church, in uniformly, from Chapter to Chapter, shewing the striking contrast between his people and the ungodly. While the rich worldling is bid to weep and howl in the awful prospect of miseries before him, the faithful, though poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, are desired to rejoice in their exercises, and in patience to possess their souls, for the coming of the LORD draweth nigh.

1st PETER

General Observations

WE enter here upon a most blessed portion of the Inspired Word of GOD. Oh! what unspeakable mercies doth the Church owe GOD the HOLY GHOST, for such an invaluable treasure! This is indeed so precious a part of the sacred canon of scripture, that in the most daring days of infidelity, none ventured to call its authority in question. But, Reader! do not fail to remark, that the most blessed testimony of GOD'S word is, GOD'S teaching by it. And thousands now upon earth, can set their seal to this Epistle of *Peter*, in having been taught in it by the LORD. And tens of thousand's are blessing GOD for the instructions they once received from it, when upon earth, who are now in glory.

The Epistle is not addressed to any particular Church or person, and therefore it is called *General*. It should seem, that though *Peter* was himself a Jew, and once deeply entrenched in *Jewish* prejudices, yet, in his own history, under the LORD'S grace to him, he learnt enough, before his departure out of life, to see very clearly, that CHRIST'S Church was but ONE. *Peter* well understood this, Song of Solomon 6:9. And with joy, being so directed by the HOLY GHOST, sends his Epistle, with his Apostolic benediction, to the strangers scattered abroad.

The *time* when this Epistle was written, is not so perfectly known, as to speak upon it decidedly. Some place it as early as the year of our LORD GOD, 44. And some as late as 65. The *place* appears to have been *Babylon*, from whence the Apostle wrote it. Not figuratively, but literally *Babylon*, the chief city of the *Chaldean* empire. All times, and all places, when and where the LORD the SPIRIT is pleased to raise up and send forth his servants, with what a demonstration of the SPIRIT, and of the power, do they come?

But the chief observations, in a general way, that we are concerned to remark in this place, is, the blessed contents of this

holy book, in relation to doctrine. And here it must be said, that though short (according to our greediness for more) this blessed Epistle is, yet we have in it all the leading points of our most holy faith. The everlasting love of GOD, our FATHER, in his choice of the Church in CHRIST, before all worlds; the redeeming grace, and love, and mercy of JESUS to his Church; and the regenerating, illuminating, sanctifying love of GOD the HOLY SPIRIT; all, and every part of these foundation-truths, are most blessedly, sweetly, and powerfully set forth, through the whole of this Epistle. I will not in this place anticipate the Reader's expectation, by here entering upon them. My soul is looking forward, with much pleasing delight, of going over the several Chapters, and there to contemplate at large, the precious features as they arise before us: The LORD give both Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, if it be his HOLY will, a blessed opportunity! Do thou, Almighty Author of thine own most sacred word, *take of the things of CHRIST, which thou hast here recorded, and shew to us*; and refresh our souls abundantly with this feast of fat things, that *our hearts may rejoice, and our joy none take from us. Amen!*

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle, after opening his Epistle with Salutation, immediately establisheth the fundamental Truth of the Covenant in CHRIST, and breaks out into an Hymn of Praise for the Divine Love. He shews, that Redemption by CHRIST is nothing new. He dwells most delightfully on the infinite Preciousness of CHRIST'S Blood; and finisheth this first Chapter with an affectionate Exhortation.

Reflections

SURELY we have reason to bless GOD for the dispersion of his people, in that so much grace is manifested, and hath been manifested in their recovery. All which proves the original and eternal election of the Church by GOD the FATHER, the purchase of their redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and their regeneration and sanctification by the HOLY GHOST. And that sweet promise is

confirmed in every instance of a child of GOD brought back by sovereign grace, *Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock!*

And, Reader! shall we not both join the Apostle's hymn, in the conscious recovery of our poor fallen nature, by the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, and in the assurance of that inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, to which all his redeemed are begotten, and which is reserved for them in heaven, who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation; shall we not bless GOD for his unspeakable gift! And though in the way to our possession of this secured inheritance, there is a *needs-be* to meet with manifold temptations, yet, even these temptations, under divine grace, minister but to greater glory; and every exercise of faith becomes more precious than gold that perisheth!

Precious JESUS thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. And though we see thee not by sight, yet do thy people love thee, the fairest and the loveliest of ten thousand. Thy salvation, the Prophets spoke of, guided by thy SPIRIT within them. Thy finished redemption, the HOLY GHOST hath given thy Church grace to believe, in the preaching of the Gospel, in thy presence and power, sent down from heaven. And while angels desire to look into these things, by way of discovery of their wonderful nature and extent, it is the unspeakable happiness of thy people to be taught of GOD, and to believe in GOD, that their faith and hope might be in GOD.

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! thou who hast given to thy Church this sweet scripture, give to them the knowledge and apprehension of all its blessed contents in their hearts. And, since, by thy sovereign work of regeneration, thy people are born again, and brought into the knowledge and love of GOD in CHRIST, give them also grace to live in the daily enjoyment of their high privileges. May they have such a daily sense of the electing love of GOD, the sanctification of the SPIRIT, and the redeeming, cleansing, and renewing efficacy of the blood of JESUS, as to believing in the sweet communion and fellowship of the whole, as to be found, *unto the praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST.*

Chapter 2

Summary

This Chapter begins with an Exhortation arising from the former. A blessed Account of CHRIST is given, both in the Beginning and Close of the Chapter. Very interesting Relations are made of CHRIST, to allure the Church to the Love of Him.

Reflections

BLESSED LORD GOD the HOLY GHOST! since by regeneration thou bringest the children into their adoption character in CHRIST JESUS, give me the daily influences of thy grace, that I may live and act up to the high character of my calling; and laying aside all the old corruptions of the old nature, of malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and evil speaking, as one new-born in CHRIST, may all the longings of my soul be after JESUS. Having tasted his graciousness, excite in me a thirst for unceasing enjoyments of him. And however my LORD becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to the world, may my soul be building upon him, as JEHOVAH's chief corner stone, elect and precious in Zion; every thing that is blessed for faith to rest upon, in life and death, in time and to all eternity, And amidst my weakness and unworthiness, and the slenderness of my faith, give me grace to attend to what thou hast here said as a token of faith; *unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.* Surely CHRIST is more precious to me than thousands of gold and silver. And therefore, my GOD saith, this is faith. LORD, *I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

Precious JESUS! thy people is a chosen generation; GOD the FATHER hath chosen them, and made them so. They are from the same source, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people! And will not the same grace which hath so distinguished them, cause them to be distinguished also as lights in the world, among whom they shine in a crooked and perverse generation? That grace must be from thee, for all grace is in thee. Enable them, O LORD, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and to adorn thy doctrine in all things. And while rejoicing in being delivered from sin, and all its tremendous consequences, by thy blood, may

they follow, through the sweet influences of HOLY SPIRIT, thy example!

Yes! thou Almighty Shepherd and Bishop of souls, thou hast brought back thy blood-bought sheep to thy fold, and thou wilt keep them thine for ever.

Chapter 3

Summary

The greater Part of this Chapter is Exhortation. Some few, but deep Things of Divine Truths, towards the Close of this Chapter, are touched upon.

Reflections

READER! what a beautiful illustration doth this Chapter afford, of the sweet effects of regeneration? All the relative and social duties arise from the work of grace upon the heart, as fruits from good seed, sown in good ground. And where the hidden man of the heart is found, there will be all the sweet properties of grace, in testimony, that GOD dwelleth in his people, by his HOLY SPIRIT.

Blessed LORD! diffuse the sweet influences of thy love, in the minds of thy redeemed, and in the 'contemplation of the example of JESUS; grant that there may be more of that SPIRIT of the LORD, reigning and ruling among thy people; so that by sanctifying the LORD GOD in our hearts, we may be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

Everlastingly be adored and loved, the sinner's LORD, who died, *the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD.* LORD let thy quickening SPIRIT, be unceasingly working in our souls, to keep alive in us thy grace, in endless communication, until thou shalt bring all thy Church, in body, soul, and spirit, to the everlasting enjoyment of our GOD in glory. Let there be no prison frame to thy people; but as thou art gone into heaven, and all power thine, for thy redeemed upon earth; let every thought of ours, be subject unto thee here below, as all authorities and powers, are subject unto thee above.

Chapter 4

Summary

This Chapter is full of Exhortations, in proposing to the Church, as an Object of unceasing Love, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; the People are tenderly invited to follow the LORD in the Regeneration.

Reflections

BE faithful followers of JESUS! what can arm you for the fight, and holy warfare equal to constant, firm, unshaken views of JESUS, and his unequalled sufferings? And look forward to the sure, and the not very distant hour, when you will cease from suffering, and for ever cease from sin! Enough of transgression hath indeed marked our lives while we were in a state of unregeneracy. Oh! that the days to come may be marked with grace, for the end of all things is it hand; and, therefore, may we always be seeking strength from the LORD, to wait on the LORD, and to watch in prayer.

Precious JESUS! do thou prepare all thy redeemed for every fiery trial, and for every conflict. Thy presence will make even the wilderness and the solitary place to blossom as the rose. And, oh! the blessedness of reproach, when it is truly for thy sake. But do thou, LORD, keep all thy little ones from every thing of evil, which might bring reproach on thy blessed cause. Let there be no temptation to dishonesty suffered to prevail over thy people, and still less to cruelty and evil doing. But to all the unjust sufferings of thy redeemed, may we learn to glorify GOD on this behalf. And oh! blessed LORD, grant all thy martyrs, like *Stephen*, to die in the full enjoyment of faith, and in and through thee, to commit their souls into thy hands, as *unto a faithful Creator!*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this chapter: and a blessed Close it is. As an Elder himself; he calleth upon the Elders, to feed CHRIST'S Flock; and both Elder and Younger to be in the Affection

of Brethren. Peter speaks very delightfully on the GOD of all Grace, and ends with his Apostolic Blessing.

Reflections

BLESSED be GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for this precious Epistle, among all the other divine revelations of covenant-love and mercy in JESUS CHRIST! What a review of the most out-refreshing truths, in looking back over this short, but comprehensive compendium of GOD's holy word, do we behold, concerning the great things of GOD? Surely, the LORD hath been most gracious to the Church, in the gift of this divine treasury. May the Almighty Giver add to it another blessing, and, make it for ever profitable to every child of GOD, in every renewed perusal, as long as the Church continues on earth, until brought home to glory.

Dear *Peter*; thou wert an elder indeed, when as in this Chapter, thou didst exhort the elders. Blessedly called by JESUS, blessedly distinguished by JESUS, among the Apostles; no wonder *Satan* marked thee as an object to vent his hellish malice upon, with the most decided hatred. The LORD be praised for thy recovery from his infernal spoils. The LORD be praised, for having recorded both thy fall, and thy restoration. And the LORD be praised for every single instance, where both have been made blessed to the Church, in teaching, by so remarkable an example, the weakness of our poor nature in the greatest of men; and the strength of divine grace, in recovering the LORD's people in the most desperate cases. Oh! how fully doth both prove, that, as the Apostle himself could well certify, that they who are kept, *are kept by the power of GOD, through faith, unto salvation.*

Reader! let us not close our meditation on this blessed book of GOD, without taking one view more of the GOD of all grace, in this most precious account of his rich, free, and sovereign mercy. What, but grace, can call to his eternal glory? What, but grace, can prepare the soul of any one individual for the enjoyment of it? And, what, but a GOD of all grace, can bear up, and bear on, and bear home the tried and buffeted child of GOD, against the roaring lion *Satan*, and sometimes the more raging lusts of sin, which arise in our fallen nature? Blessed be the GOD of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS!

2nd PETER

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

If there were any real doubts entertained by the Church of God, concerning the authenticity of this divine record of God's Holy Word, the several parts of its own internal evidence, must have carried every objection before it For the grand testimony, after all, to the truth of God is, God's own testimony, in divine teaching. For this comes home to the heart. God speaketh in the word, and by the word. And when the Lord's word is accompanied by the Lord's power, and the heart is made to receive *the truth*, in *the love of it*, here is the threefold witness, by which, as the Scripture saith, every word is established.

This Epistle of the Apostle *Peter*, like the former, is not addressed to any one in particular, but to the church in general, and therefore called, *the General Epistle*. It is to *them that have obtained like precious faith* with the writer; consequently, the regenerated church. The Reader should note this in every Epistle.

There are some very blessed and precious points of doctrine, beside the more general, which are insisted upon some what more largely in these chapters. And very blessed they have proved, and must prove, to the people of God, who base read, and are taught by the Holy Ghost the gracious knowledge and enjoyment of them.

The *time*, in which it was written, is generally supposed to have been about *two years* after the *former*; not above *three* or *four* years before the overthrow of Jerusalem; and but little more than a *year* before the Apostle suffered in martyrdom let us enter upon its perusal in prayer, and this will encourage us to hope that 'we shall close it in praise.'

CHAPTER I

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle in a short Salutation of the Church, and immediately enters upon the blessed Subject of Regeneration. He dwells upon the glorious Manifestation made to him in the Mount of Transfiguration; and concludes the Chapter, in declaring of God the Spirit's speaking by Holy Men of old.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed and Holy Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Praised be our Covenant God in Christ, for his unspeakable gift. What everlasting love, adoration, and praise, do thy people owe thee, O Father of mercies, and God of all grace, for having chose the Church in Christ, before the world! And thee, no less, thou glorious Son of God, for having taken thy Church into union with thyself, when the Lord possessed thee, in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; and for redeeming thy Church from the Adam-fall of ruin, in which, in this time-state, she was involved. And thee, with equal love and praise, O thou eternal Spirit, for thy gracious act of regeneration, in quickening the Church, in every individual of her members, whereby alone each child of God is brought into an apprehension of the Father's love, the Son's grace, and the Spirit's fellowship. Blessed, for ever blessed be God.

And we specially praise thee, dearest Jesus, for thy mercies to all thy Church, in this grace of thine to the Apostles, in the Mount of Transfiguration. It was surely for thy Church, in all ages, as well as for their personal comfort, so glorious a display of thy glory was vouchsafed. God, our Father, be praised, for the precious testimony then given to thy Son-ship. And God the Holy Ghost, in causing Peter, with his dying testimony, to bless the Church once more in the relation. And now, O Lord, may thy Church, and especially in the present awful day, be blessed of our God, with-grace to receive and treasure up so sweet a record of the glory of our risen and exalted Savior. Oh! Lord, continually make known to all thy members in grace, thy power and coming. Make known to us, in the blessed

prophecies of our God, and in all the ordinances of his house of prayer, this power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! to be heart-witnesses of Christ's majesty here on earth, till we come to be eye-witnesses of his majesty in heaven. Amen!

Chapter 2

Summary

We have in this Chapter a very awful Account of the latter-day Heresies. But, while the Holy Ghost graciously, informs the Church of those Seasons, he as graciously teacheth the Church how to discern their Features, and discover them from the Faithful.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful thing it must be, in a church, calling itself Christian, to be under the direction of false teachers. Professing the name of Christ, and yet denying his Godhead! Feeling their own daily state of sin and corruption before God, and yet rejecting the only possible way of finding peace and pardon with God, in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ! *My soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assemble mine honor be not thou united,* Oh! for grace, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to brave every opposition of men; and faithfully, fully, and unceasingly to proclaim the Lord our Righteousness.

Precious Lord Jesus! let thy name be as ointment poured forth. And, as thou knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation; do thou keep them now, O Lord, in these awful seasons, when the Holy Ghost is admonishing the Church, that false teachers will arise, even among the people. Lord! give! us grace, to discern grievous wolves from true shepherds, and those that love the flock from those that live only to fleece them. My soul is relieved in the view, that Jesus knows his sheep, and is known of them. He will keep them in the dark and cloudy day. He will watch over them for good. He will bring them home, and bring them in, to his everlasting kingdom. Precious Lord Jesus! how safe and secure are all thine, kept by thine own power!

Chapter 3

Summary

In this Chapter the Apostle--closeth his Epistle, and a beautiful Close he maketh of it. He foretells of the last Days being marked with Scoffers. He assureth the Church of the Certainty of the Lord's coming, and the Suddenness of it; and ends all in giving Glory to Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Glory be to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *Israel's God* in covenant for ever and ever! What praises thy people have now to offer, and what praises to all eternity, for thy love to the Church, in Christ! Praises to the Father's love, in his choice of the Church, from everlasting! Praises to the Son's grace, in marrying his Church, and redeeming her from all iniquity to himself; by his blood! And, praises to the Holy Ghost, for his love in regenerating mercy, and all his watchful care over the Church, from grace to glory!

And, Lord, while we praise thee, in thy distinguishing mercy, in founding the Church in Christ, presiding over it as the Almighty Minister, in the appointment of ordinances, and means of grace; and giving the whole scriptures of our God, by inspiration, to make thy people wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, we find renewed cause to praise thee, O thou eternal Spirit, for raising up this blessed scripture, by the instrumentality of thy servant *Peter*, to comfort thy Church with those glorious truths herein contained. Yes! most gracious Lord! it was not only meant to refresh the dying Apostle, in bringing to his recollection Christ's glory in the Mount; but the record of it was designed, as it hath often proved, still is proving, and will, to the end of time, be proved a blessed testimony to refresh the souls of thousands! Lord! let it frequently refresh my soul also! And, amidst all the scoffers of the present awful day, let thy people be always on their watch-tower, waiting the Lord's coming. And, in the mean time, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Farewell, *Peter*, while we bless thy Lord, and our *Lord*, for thy ministry, we find no less cause to bless the Lord for all the improvements in grace we receive, under divine teaching, for all that

is recorded in thine history. The Church of *God*, in heaven and earth, have profited by it. And, ere long, will all join together in the same song of glory, praise, and power, to God and the Lamb, for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

1st JOHN

General Observations

ALL antiquity have, with one consent, ascribed this lovely and loving Epistle to *John*, the Apostle and Evangelist, although he hath not put his name to it. There is a great sameness of style, and manner in it, as well as in the doctrine, to the other writings of the beloved disciple. The *place* from whence written, and the *time* when, are not so generally agreed upon. But, certainly, it must have been towards the close of John's life, for he speaks of *the last time*, by which he meant the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which JESUS foretold, and which took place but a little while (as some think) after *John* wrote this Epistle: though some have dated it before. The term of *General* Epistle, is intended only to intimate, that it was not directed to any individual person or Church.

But the most material point to be regarded on this occasion is the very plain and clear marks it bears with it of divine inspiration. Here we rest more than satisfied, and find occasion for thanksgiving and joy. One sweet feature runs through the whole of it, in relation to the Church, namely, the Apostle's testimony to the FATHER'S love, the SON'S grace, and the HOLY GHOST'S fellowship. And, as *John* lived to behold the springing up of deadly heresies in the coming of Antichrist, and the denial of the GODHEAD of our LORD, we have reason to bless GOD for lengthening the Apostle's life, to give the evidence which we have in this Epistle upon record, to this glorious fundamental truth of our most holy faith.

I shall not detain the Reader with any further observations, but only beg of him to bend the knee with me in prayer, that the LORD the SPIRIT, who hath graciously given us the scripture will give us with it the understanding to apprehend it, that *having an unction from the HOLY ONE, We may know all things.*

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle begins his Epistle with a glorious Account of CHRIST And he assigns this Reason of his Writing to the Church, to bring them into Fellowship with his glorious Person, and the FATHER in Him. A blessed Testimony is given to the Blood of CHRIST cleansing from all Sin.

Reflections

Reader! You and I may well enter upon this blessed portion of GOD with prayer. And surely, under divine teaching, we shall end it in praise. Oh! who can contemplate Him whom *John* saw, heard, and handled, even THAT which was from the beginning, but with holy rapture and delight. Oh! that the object for which *John* declared these things, may be in my instance fully answered; and that I may truly have *fellowship with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST!*

Blessed GOD and FATHER! grant that light to thy redeemed, which may enable them to walk in thy light; and to know, by heartfelt experience, that *the blood of JESUS CHRIST thy SON cleanseth us from all sin.* And, LORD! let thy faithfulness and justice, as well as thy mercy and grace, be my everlasting comfort. GOD *can be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in JESUS.* And GOD, for CHRIST's sake, will cleanse his redeemed *from all unrighteousness.*

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle is here affectionately addressing the Church. He speaks sweetly of CHRIST, in his Advocacy, and in his Propitiation. He calls upon little Children, young Men, and Fathers, in speaking to them of the great Subject of Salvation.

Reflections

READER! let us behold, with holy joy, the gracious provision which GOD, who is rich in mercy, hath made for sin, in the person, blood, and righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is GOD who hath set CHRIST forth a Propitiation. And it is GOD who hath sworn him into the office of our Advocate. Blessed therefore with such a Propitiation, and such an Advocate, in One and the same Person, and of GOD our FATHER'S own providing, with what confidence may we draw nigh the mercy-seat, under all the discouragements and infirmities of our poor fallen nature?

And, dearest JESUS! may not all thy redeemed behold thee, waiting with delight for employment in that high character of thine, our Advocate, for all thy people, since thou hast already acted as their propitiation, and made compleat satisfaction for them in thy blood? Do thou, LORD, then, take up every cause, and plead in thine own infinite merits, and death, for every one of thine, against all the accusations of Satan, the demands of GOD's law and justice, and all the fears and misgivings of unbelief, and our own guilty consciences! Oh! the blessedness of the assurance, JESUS can and will save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them!*

Hail! no less thou HOLY and Eternal SPIRIT! It is from thee cometh that unction, by which thy people know all things. Oh! for grace from GOD, to believe in GOD, and to continue *in the FATHER, and in the SON, in the full assurance of the promise of eternal life!*

Chapter 3

Summary

The Apostle breaks out in the Opening of this Chapter, into a devout Strain of Admiration and Praise, in the Contemplation of the Love of GOD. He draws a Line of Discrimination between the Children of GOD, and the Children of the Devil. Some very sweet Proofs are given of the Character of GOD's Children.

Reflections

Who can contemplate the love of GOD, as set forth in this Chapter, in adopting sinners into his family, and calling them sons of GOD, without being overwhelmed in the view. To behold some of the LORD'S family, indigent and poor in all the worldly accommodations of this life; and yet by regeneration, to know them kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER? They are indeed unnoticed, unregarded, yea, often despised by the great ones of the earth; and yet, considered in CHRIST it may be said of them; *of whom the world is not worthy!* And though overlooked and disowned now, what will be the consternation of the ungodly at that great day, when they shall behold them in the likeness of Him, in whose image they will arise.

My soul, I charge it upon thee, to mark well the characters so accurately drawn in this scripture, between the children of GOD, and the children of the devil. Oh! how gracious hath GOD the HOLY GHOST shewn himself, in those striking discriminations of character, that GOD'S little children may not be deceived. Blessed and eternal SPIRIT! grant to me thy gracious teachings. So shall learn the precious tokens of JESUS'S love, in laying down his life for his people! Give me grace in the view of it, for his sake to be always alive to testify my love to the brethren. LORD keep my poor soul from the errors of the present day, in high professions mixed with low apprehensions of JESUS. Dearest LORD JESUS! cause me to dwell, by faith, in thee; whilst thou art everlastingly abiding in my heart. And let my daily testimony, that I am thine, be always uppermost in my heart, *by the sweet teachings of thy SPIRIT, which thou hast given me.*

Chapter 4

Summary

Here are contained Commands to try the Spirits, and Rules given for discovering of them. Some blessed Things are spoken of CHRIST. The Chapter concludes with an Account of GOD'S Love.

Reflections

WHAT a relief is it to the child of GOD, amidst all the antichrists, and false prophets and teachers, which the latter day dispensation is to bring forth, that JESUS hath said, though if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect; yet this assurance confirms their safety in JESUS, they shall not. Whither but for this, might a believer be *tossed about, with every wind of doctrine, and the cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive?* Blessed GOD the SPIRIT! be thou everlastingly praised, and loved, and adored, for what thou hast taught the Church in this precious Chapter! Here from thee, thy regenerated people learn, that the knowledge of CHRIST being come in the flesh, having proclaimed redemption in his blood, and regenerating the souls of his redeemed, by his holy SPIRIT; becomes an infallible security, against all the awful heresies abounding, in this CHRIST-despising generation. LORD! let thy children know, and especially thy little children, that we have overcome the whole enemies of our salvation in our new birth. *Greater is he that is in us, than all that is in the world.* And oh! for the LORD to shed, abroad his love in our hearts, that we may love him who hath first loved us. And, do thou grant, gracious GOD, that in thy strength we may have boldness, looking forward to that great day of our GOD, that when he shall appear, who is our life our portion, our righteousness, and compleat justification; we may confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. *For as he is, so are we in this world!*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. He points out the Victory of the Regenerate. He most blessedly declares, of the three heavenly, and the three earthly Witnesses. And shews, that the Possession of Christ, by Union with him, is eternal Life.

Reflections

Reader! how gracious was it in our GOD, to give his Church such tokens as are here marked down, in order that every child of GOD might know; his having been begotten, to the adoption of children in JESUS CHRIST. Yes! blessed GOD, we do know whose we are, and to whom we belong, by our being made believers in CHRIST JESUS. It is sweet, it is blessed, to know him, and to love him, and to delight in him, who came by water and blood, even JESUS CHRIST!

Glory be to the three heavenly witnesses, for their united testimony to the SON-ship of JESUS CHRIST! LORD! give all thy redeemed grace, to receive with holy joy, the record GOD hath given to his dear SON, and that eternal life which is in him. And oh! may every individual member of his mystical body, rejoice in CHRIST, and live by faith here, until he come to live in glory hereafter on JESUS, and eternal life in him.

Farewell, thou beloved disciple! we thank our GOD for his love to thee, and his employment of thee, and for all the benefit the Church hath derived under the HOLY GHOST, from thee, in thy ministry. Shortly JESUS will come, and take home his Church, and the LORD shall be then seen, surrounded by his saints, with the whole redeemed Church of GOD, and all the disciples whom JESUS hath loved.

2nd JOHN

General Observation

It is highly probable, from the opening of this Epistle, that it was particularly directed to some one Person, and not the church at large. But still, from the contents of it, designed for general use. The word translated *Lady*, which corresponds to the Hebrew name *Martha*, might be a general name. But, certain it is, that it hath respect to every child of God, for it is connected with the title *Elect*.

Our chief concern is, to know, that the Writer of it was inspired to the service, and that he wrote it under the immediate influence and direction of the Holy Ghost. And this the testimony of the Church bears witness to, in every age, wherever the Lord hath blessed it in instruction to his people.

We have no particular date to it, neither of the place from whence it was written. But, neither are these things material. It is but short: yet, if the Lord teach in it, and by it, He can render it sweet. Lord! Let thy unction be upon it, and it will then send forth the fragrant of Christ's name, as the ointment poured forth!

Summary

The Apostle opens his Epistle, in calling the Person to whom he writes, Elect. He speaks of the joy he and his companions, who were Lovers of the Truth, found in the opinion they had of the grace the Lord had given her. He speaks of the Antichrist of the time, and warns her against all such teachers. He concludes with affectionate salutations.

Reflections

The Elders in the Church of Jesus may learn from this short, but gracious Epistle of John the elder, how to address the Elect, and with what words of comfort and consolation in Jesus, they are to be spoken to. And there is nothing more strengthening to the Church of

God, than when old disciples speak to young ones, concerning God's purposes in Christ, as manifested in his electing, converting, redeeming, establishing grace! It is blessedly said by one of old, "*the righteous shall bring forth fruit in his old age, to shew that the Lord is upright.*" I do not presume to say so much, but I humbly ask, did not the Lord the Spirit cause this Epistle to be sent by John to one Elect Lady, to be recorded in the Church, and handed down, through the several ages, to the present hour, on purpose to teach old saints, and especially faithful old ministers, how to speak to the elect children of Christ, in the several stations and characters as they stand in grace?

Blessed and eternal Spirit! Be thou praised for this sweet morsel of thy holy scripture! Let it be a savor, in thine Almighty hand, for good. And let thy servant John's ministry in it be owned and blessed of the Lord for good to all thy people, that though the Apostle be dead, he may be said yet to speak. Praised be God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all blessings in Christ. Amen.

3rd JOHN

General Observation

Here is another short, but precious Epistle of the same writer, under God the Holy Ghost, as the former. And this is also written to a private person, and not publicly to the church. Who this Gaius was, to whom the beloved Apostle sent this Epistle, is not known, though it hath occasioned much conjecture. He calls him *well-beloved*. No doubt, as a child of God, he was so; and, on this account, John called him so. Paul had a companion of this name, which we read of, Acts 19:29 and Acts 20:4. But, it is hardly possible that this was the same person to whom John writes this Epistle, for there must have been more than thirty years between the date of those times. However, this is not so material. It is enough for us to know, that this Gaius was well-beloved of John; and, consequently, one of the elect of God. And we know also, that God the Holy Ghost directed the Apostle's heart and pen to write it, and hath caused it to be recorded for the Church's benefit. These things are enough in recommendation.

I beg the reader to enter, with me, upon the perusal of it in prayer. And very sure I am, if we pray over it, we shall profit under it. May the Lord therefore bless it to our use, and to the whole Church of God in Christ. Amen.

Summary

After his usual salutation, the Apostle tells his beloved Gaius of his desires, both for his temporal and spiritual prosperity. He commends him for his kindness to the brethren. He remarks of the opposition made to the Church, by a man called Diotrephes. He commends another man of the name of Demetrius. And concludes his Epistle with greetings from friends.

Reflections

What a beautiful view is here afforded, of the beloved Apostle in his pastoral office, addressing the faithful Gaius, beloved in the Lord. To behold the venerable saint of God, amidst all the infirmities of declining years, thus blessing God, and blessing the servant of God, in his wishes both for spiritual and temporal prosperity.

But while we look at John, who justly commands our veneration and our love, let us look infinitely above John, and behold John's Lord still blessing all his church; and every Gaius of his redeemed family below, with blessings in himself. Precious, precious Jesus! We desire to praise thee for all that is lovely, in the disciple whom Jesus loved; for all that is lovely in John, was, and is derived from thee! Lord! Hasten on thy blessed purposes, and bring on thy glorious day when thou wilt come to be glorified in thy saints, and to be admired in all that believe! To thee, Lord, it belongs, to keep thy Church from falling, and to present it faultless before the presence of thy glory with exceeding joy. In the blessed hope of thy appearing, may all thy Church in thee, and through thee, daily ascribe to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Israel's God in covenant, endless praises. Amen.

JUDE

General Observation

Jude is particularly spoken of as the brother of James, perhaps to distinguish him from Judas the Traitor. For otherwise, it was more the custom to speak of the Jews by descent. Jude lived the last of all the Apostles, except John. And it could not be well less than thirty years after Christ's ascension, that he wrote this Epistle. He hath evidently followed the Apostle Peter, in his Second Epistle, and thereby confirmed the words of God, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established (Deut. 17:6; 2 Cor. 12:1).

The design of God the Holy Ghost, in sending this Epistle generally to the Church, seems very evident from its contents. Heresies had at this time sprung up, and the Church was infested with them. It is our mercy, that Jude as well as John, lived to see them. For under God the Holy Ghost, we owe our possession of those blessed Epistles to this cause. And both the origin and support of heresies, we are expressly told, is, that the truth of God may be thereby manifested among us.

I have only to request the reader, that here, as in all the former books of Divine Inspiration, we may enter upon the study of it with prayer, that we may end it in praise!

Summary

The opening of this Epistle is truly sweet. Jude addresseth all he hath to say to the Church. It is to you, Beloved, Jude saith that he writes. He then, through the greater Part of the Chapter, points out the awful state of the reprobate. But still it is to the Church he speaks of those things, for their consolation and instruction. Towards the end, he points out the safety and blessedness of the Church, and concludes in praise.

Reflections

Reader! Hath God the Holy Ghost in his gracious teachings blest to your perusal and mine, this precious portion of his sacred Word? Are we that of distinguished people, who are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called? Oh! Then let us both beg another blessing from our bountiful God, and ask for grace, that on our bended knees we may cry out with the Apostle, *“thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!”*

And we desire to praise the Almighty Minister of his Church, even God the Holy Ghost, for the grace he hath shewn, in forewarning, and fore-arming his people, concerning the last days heresies. Truly, Lord, we live to see them. We live among them. And thanks tour God, for giving his Church such plain features of character, as are here drawn by his servant, and by which, under the Lord’s teaching, we cannot fail to know them. Oh! What shall thy people say; what praise shall thy people offer, while reading the striking distinction, which mark thy redeemed from the world. The one, sanctified, preserved, and called; the other, ordained of old to this condemnation, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ!

We bless our God for the faithfulness of his servant Jude, in this Scripture. And, while we look to the eternal Spirit with praise for making him faithful, we would honor the instrument, whom God so graciously made use of in the work. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, we thank thee for thy labor of love. The whole Church, in all ages have found cause to thank thee for it, from thy time to the present hour. And, oh! Lord the Spirit, give grace to thy faithful now to testify their sense of the mercy vouchsafed the church in this precious Epistle, *“by earnestly contending for the faith, once delivered unto saints.”* Oh! Keep thy people, Lord, from being led away with the speciousness of the times! Oh! For an holy boldness, from the Lord, to stand up for the Lord, and to resist the bait of supposing we can honor God’s glory, while silently sitting and mingling with those who dishonor his Godhead, disown the person and Work of the Spirit, and boldly deny the electing love of God the Father. Unto such assemblies, my soul, be not thou united! Lord Jesus! Do thou keep all thine from this, and every other evil until thou shalt bring all thy redeemed home, and

“present them faultless before thy presence of thy glory with exceeding joy.” Amen

REVELATION

General Observations

I PRAY for grace, to enter upon this sublime and mysterious Book of God, while proposing my humble observations upon it, with the most profound reverence and godly fear: And as I approach the mercy-seat, to bend the knee of my soul, before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in meditating on this blessed portion of his holy word, which relates so immediately to the Person of Christ and his kingdom, the Lord may give unto me, the *spirit* of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Indeed, when first I ventured on this Poor Man's Commentary of the Bible, I fully intended, if it should please the Lord to guide me through it, and bring me to this Book of the Revelation, to have passed over those sacred Chapters, without presuming to offer any observations of mine. I had seen so many erroneous opinions, from great and good men on this part of the word of God, and especially in their calculations of the times, when the several Prophecies, yet remaining to be fulfilled, would be accomplished, that I judged it rather presumptuous than wise, to touch this part of the inspired records. And I still think, that as those great and good men, (for great and good men they certainly were, in their day and generation,) have all been found in error, in limiting the period when those prophecies would certainly be fulfilled, it can neither be decent nor proper in men taught of God to presume to be wise, above what is written, and to offer their conjectures concerning what God hath not been pleased to discover. The words of Jesus to his disciples after he arose from the dead, in answer to the anxious enquiry they put to him, concerning the time of the Lord's restoring the kingdom of Israel, appears decided on this point; It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, Acts 1:6-7. But when I read again and again, what is said in the opening of this precious Book of God; Blessed is he that

readeth, and *they that hear* the Words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; I dared not be wholly silent. And I thought moreover, that if God the Holy Ghost (whose guidings in this work I had all along implored, and whose grace in instruction in it I hope I can now, with truth, say I have found,) would still graciously condescend to go before, and follow me, the Lord would keep me from treading in, to that part of the sacred ground, which relates to prophecies yet unfulfilled, by attempting to calculate any time, when I might presume on their accomplishment, but leave it wholly to the Lord; while, under his teaching, I might humbly offer my observations, on such only, as we have seen come to pass. With these limitations I felt encouraged to prosecute my Poor Man's Commentary on this part also of the divine word, deriving advantage, even from the mistakes of those great servants of the Lord, which have gone before, and which in those points act as light-houses at sea, purposely placed there to keep off the mariner, from approaching too near the rocks, and quicksands around them.

And I confess, that under these later views I have taken of the subject, I have felt additional encouragement, to prosecute my feeble labors for the Poor Man's Commentary, on this part of the word of God, from the recollection, that now in the present hour, time hath brought forward many things to view in this scripture, and, through the Lord's teaching, more light hath been thrown upon the predictions here given, than in the day when those great and good men lived, whom I allude to, who for years past have been gathered to their fathers, and have seen corruption. Many of the prophecies have since been accomplished, and more seem to be now accomplishing in the earth. And, indeed, on the supposition that we, who are now entered some years into the nineteenth Century, are they upon whom the ends of the world are come, it must behove the people of God to be on the look-out, like the Prophet on the watch-tower, and in prayer and humble waitings on the Lord, expect those manifestations predicted to be accomplished, concerning his Church. That the interests of Zion, are at the bottom of all God's designs in the earth, and that the putting down of one kingdom, and raising up of another, have no ultimate object, but of bringing on the Lord's purposes, concerning Christ and his Church; is too clear a truth to need the being insisted upon. And fully assured we are, that when all

the prophecies which are in this Holy Scripture, yet remaining to be fulfilled, are accomplished, the last sand, in the hour-glass of time, will have run out; and the whole purposes of the Lord concerning this earth, will be completed. And then, that event takes place, which John heard proclaimed by the Angel, *he lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer. Then, the mystery of GOD shall be finished. Then, the seventh Angel shall sound, and great voices will be heard in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world, are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever,* Revelation 10:5-7 and Revelation 11:15.

The great point of error, into which all my predecessors of Commentators, on this blessed Book of GOD, more or less, have fallen, I shall, through grace, wholly avoid. I shall not knowingly, offer a single attempt, in a way of calculation as to the *time* many have supposed, in which the prophecies herein contained, yet remaining to be fulfilled, will be accomplished. Here I desire to remain, as much as ever, wholly silent. Indeed, it hath always appeared unto me, to have been along the LORD'S design, in relation to the prophecies in general, to throw a veil over them, until they are fulfilled. And then, when they have been brought to pass, so complete an agreement hath discovered itself, between the prediction and the event, that the LORD'S people have found cause to stand the more amazed, at their dullness of perception and the LORD'S glory. But there is a manifest wisdom of GOD in the obscurity. It tends to the promotion of greater faith. It calls forth greater dependence upon the LORD. And GOD speaks in his word, and by his word to his people, during the suspense of accomplishment, as he did to the Prophet of old; *Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed the time of the end. Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days,* Daniel 12:8-9; Daniel 12:13.

I must not indulge myself with any longer Preface, in an humble work like this, on general points. But I must beg to extend these observations a little further, by way of introduction to the sacred Book of the *Revelation*, which we are going to enter upon. It will be proper at the threshold, to pause a moment and consider, both the LORD'S gracious design, in his gift of it to the Church, and also to

pray over it, as we enter upon it, that this blessing of a Covenant GOD in CHRIST may be made profitable to our souls.

That *John*, the beloved Apostle was the Writer of it under GOD, and that the place where those revelations were made to him, was *Patmos* in the *Mediterranean* Sea, and where he was banished for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, about the year of our LORD GOD *ninety-four*; these are truths, so generally allowed and confirmed, as can need nothing additional, by way of proof, to be observed. And the gracious design of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in sealing up the sacred Canon of Scripture, with so divine a portion of his holy word, hardly requires to be remarked to any gracious Reader. This is a subject which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath had the unwearied thanksgivings of the Church for, in every age, from John's days to ours; neither will this precious portion of divine truth ever cease to call forth the continued praises of the Lord's people, till time shall be no more.

I shall request permission in this place, to give the Reader a brief statement, according to my view of the whole subject, of this Book of God, that he may have a general idea of the whole contents. Such a plan will serve, under the Holy Ghost's teaching, to guide both the Writer and Reader of this Poor Man's Commentary, through the several Chapters; and enable him to discover, that there is a beautiful uniformity of order in the whole design, comprehending the several periods of the Church's history, from Christ's appearing to John at *Patmos*, until his second coming at judgment. From such a view, we shall proceed through the several Chapters, with a greater clearness of apprehension, of the whole subject; and, through grace, have our minds better prepared, to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches!

For the better understanding this sublime Book of God, let the Reader recollect, that when the Son of God appeared to John, as the opening of the first Chapter declares, the Seven Churches to whom he sent the messages, contained in the second and third Chapters, were then in being. Of these the Lord speaks, he calls them the things which are, Revelation 1:19, and all is contained in those two Chapters, refer to them. But the prophetic part of the Revelation, which begins at the fourth Chapter, comes under, what Christ calls the things which shall be hereafter, Revelation 1:19. Hence from the fourth Chapter is commenced, the prophecies of events, which the Lord, foretold his servant John should be accomplished in his Church. And in the fifth Chapter, we have what may be called the

installment of Christ into his High Offices, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. With these preliminary views, if we prosecute the Book, through the several Chapters, we shall discover the beautiful order, connection, and harmony of one great whole, from beginning to end.

And let the Reader recollect no less, that at the time when the Lord Jesus manifested himself to his Apostle John, to give to him these revelations, to show unto his Churches, the Roman Empire, which was mistress of the world, was then heathen. Satan had universal sway, and excepting that handful of the Lord's people, formed here and there into Churches, the earth was full of idols. The Jews nationally considered, for their rejection of the Lord of life and glory, had lost their temple, their government, their beloved Jerusalem, and were now scattered over various parts of the globe. This was the state of things respecting religion, when the Son of God appeared to his servant John as here stated; and delivered to him these predictions, which were from age to age, to be progressively accomplished in the Church, from that period to the final consummation of all things. The sum and substance of the whole, is set forth, though in mysterious terms, to intimate that the Church of CHRIST should be opposed by the powers of darkness; during which, *seals* were to be opened, *trumpets sounded*, and *vials* poured out; but, at length, order should arise out of confusion, and light from darkness. The Church of GOD should triumph over all, and the throne of GOD and the LAMB, be discovered as established for ever.

Such was the state of things, when the subject of prophecy begins at the sixth Chapter, with the opening of the seals. The ministry of the seals, appears to be principally, if not wholly directed, in the preaching of the Gospel against heathenism. And we find from history, that from about three hundred years from the period at the opening of the first seal, the Roman Empire became Christian; that is, made a national profession of christianity. This event took place in the government of the Emperor Constantine.

To the ministry of the seals, when finished, succeeded that of the Trumpets. The time to the Trumpet ministry takes in a much larger compass than that of the Seals; yea, it should seem is not yet finished. For the sounding of the seventh Trumpet is, when the mystery of God shall be finished, Revelation 10:7. And it should

appear very plainly, that the opening of the twelfth Chapter, begins with a new subject of prophecy; I say a new subject of prophecy, because the former terminates in the preceding Chapter, with the relation of the day of the Lord being come, and the temple of God being *opened in heaven*. Revelation 11:18-19. But though a new subject of prophecy, yet not a new subject, as it concerns Christ and his kingdom, for this is but one and the same, through the whole book of Revelation from the first opening of the seals at the sixth Chapter, to the account of the paradise of God, in the twenty-second. All, and every part under the different predictions, is in relation to Christ and his Church.

The twelfth Chapter, as it appears to me, opens with the state of the Roman Empire, when it became (nationally considered) no longer heathen, but professing christianity. And now, according to this Chapter, persecution began, from the heresies springing up in the Empire, among the Christians themselves, And this subject occupies the following Chapters to the eighteenth, where the final destruction of Antichrist is shown, in the total overthrow of the two great branches of those powers, subverting the truths of God in the Eastern and Western world. And these events, evidently remain, at present, unfulfilled.

During this period, the ministry of the *Vials* is said to exercised. These will all be noted in their proper place. In the Mean time, it will be sufficient here to observe, that with the pouring out of the last Vial upon the air, which figuratively should seem to intimate the whole kingdom of Satan, (who in this sense is called *the Prince of the power of the air*; Ephesians 2:2) the opposition to CHRIST'S kingdom ceaseth for ever. Hence the *nineteenth* Chapter opens with the accounts of the triumphs in heaven, over all the enemies of CHRIST and his salvation. The chaining of *Satan* in the bottomless pit follows in the *twentieth*; and the Church of CHRIST coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband, is related in the *twenty-first* Chapter. And the whole subject is closed up in the *twenty-second*, with the description of the glory of GOD and of the LAMB, in the salvation of the Church, and the destruction of the wicked. These are the general outlines of this most blessed and precious Book of GOD. I will detain the Reader no longer from entering upon it, than only once again to look up for grace, and the light of the HOLY GHOST, to guide both at the entrance and through

all the departments of it to the end. May that Almighty and Infallible Teacher, direct both heart and pen, that nothing of error may be found in those pages, but all be so graciously dictated by Him, that the LORD's glory, and the Church's happiness, may be ministered unto in these feeble services, through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

After a short Preface of what the Apostle is called to, in the Ministry of this Book of Revelation, he addresseth the Seven Churches of Asia, with the Salutation of Grace and Peace. He speaks most blessedly of the Person and Glory of CHRIST, in his appearing to Him, and relates what passed at this Interview.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED! for ever blessed, be GOD the FATHER, for the gift of his dear SON JESUS CHRIST. Blessed! for ever blessed, be GOD the SON, for this gracious revelation of himself to his servant *John*, to comfort, and instruct the Church. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for causing so sweet and precious a record, to be handed down to the Church from generation to generation, of the word of GOD, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST. LORD! add a blessing to the whole, and give grace to thy people, that *they may hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.*

May it be the blessedness and felicity of the LORD's redeemed, to find grace and peace, according to the Apostle's benediction, from Him, *which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Yea! may the Church daily find all Covenant blessings, from GOD the Judge of all, from JESUS the Mediator of the New Covenant, and from the influence of the HOLY GHOST, in his sevenfold gifts and graces, which are before the throne. Oh! the unspeakable mercy of GOD in CHRIST. He who hath made us Kings and Priests, unto GOD and the FATHER, *having loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his blood!*

Precious Emmanuel! thou who didst bless John with thy presence, and gavest him those blessed revelations, to deliver unto thy Church, condescend to visit thy people now. Thou art still the

Alpha and the Omega. Thou art still all the blessedness of thy Church and people. LORD! visit thy Churches. No *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamos*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis*, *Philadelphia*, or *Laodicea*, ever needed thee more, than the professing Churches of this land, where we dwell. Oh! then, come LORD, and take up thine own cause, lest our Churches, like those of Asia, which are now no more, be desolated, and without inhabitants. If JESUS will come forth with his people, if GOD the SPIRIT will ordain ministers, and walk up and down in the midst of his people; then will thy servants be as stars to the right hand of CHRIST, and his people, like the candlesticks, shining bright with the oil of grace, from JESUS walking in and out among them. Oh! for a little revival *in* the present day, that the LORD may not remove our candlestick out of its place!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Here begins the LORD'S Message to the seven Churches. This Chapter contains what was commanded to be delivered to four of them; namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. And the Chapter closeth with a solemn Admonition, which is repeated to each: to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou glorious LORD! thou Almighty Head of thy Church, and people. Blessed be thy Name, for those gracious messages, to thy redeemed. Truly, LORD, amidst all their spots and defilements, we behold thy mercy over them, and thy grace towards them. Thou bearest testimony to their faith and patience, for all that is wrought in them is thy grace and of thee, have they received it. And yet, JESUS graciously beholds it, and speaks of it, as their own. LORD! give thy Churches, under every state, grace, to be looking wholly unto thee, and to know thee, under all these distinguishing characters. It is thine, O LORD, to hold thy ministers, as stars in thy right hand, and to walk in the favorite haunts of thy Churches, as amidst the golden Candlesticks, thy people. Thou art the first and the last in all the designs of JEHOVAH; and the first and the last, yea, the

whole sum and substance of everlasting joy to all thy people! Thou art the bright, and the morning-star, the sure harbinger of everlasting day, and in the souls of thy people, thou arisest when the Day-spring from on high visitest them. Be thou, LORD, my light, my life, my everlasting portion, that amidst all the darkness of the present state of the world, in thy light I may see light, and walk under the light of thy countenance for ever!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the remaining Messages of CHRIST to the Churches, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. JESUS manifests his Grace in the sweet Promise of coming and supping with his People.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD of thy Churches! Give thy servants grace to praise thee for such love-tokens of thy favor, that in thine infinite condescension thou didst send those gracious messages to thy Churches; and still more, didst cause them to be handed down to us, even to the present hour. LORD! we see enough to be humbled to the dust in all. There are now the same features of character among thy people. Like *Ephesus*, too many of thy dear children have left their first love. Like *Smyrna*, we have the blasphemy among us of those who profess the truth, but are not. Like *Pergamos*, we have men of corrupt minds, who follow doctrines in head-knowledge, but void of hearth influence: and, like *Thyatira*, we have multitudes now in our land, who not only suffer, but follow the doctrine of *Jezebel*, and are running back to the idolatry, of false worship. LORD JESUS! do thou purge the land! And amidst the *Sardis* state, if we are in that state, prepare us for the more glorious one that is to follow, under the *Philadelphian*, and bring on the great day of our GOD. LORD make it a short work among all *Laodicean* spirits, and hasten that blessed period, when JESUS will close up all in glory.

In the mean time, blessed LORD JESUS, be not sparing of the sweet visits of thy love to thy people! Oh! for grace to hear thy voice, at the door of our hearts, and to receive CHRIST to his holy

supper, and to be among those that eat bread in thy kingdom. Even so, Amen. The LORD be praised for these sweet Epistles to his Churches.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

At this Chapter, we enter upon those Prophecies which relate to the Church of GOD, from the Ascension of CHRIST, going on through a regular Progression, to the Descension of CHRIST, at the great Day of GOD. John is here introduced into the Visions concerning those wonderful Events. He is led to behold the Throne of GOD, and the glorified Inhabitants of Heaven round the Throne.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Let us seek grace, that, like the beloved Apostle, we may by faith hear the sweet voice, saying, Come up hither, and like him, may be immediately in the SPIRIT, when we come to visions and revelations of the LORD!

Oh! LORD the HOLY GHOST! as it is thy blessed office to glorify the LORD JESUS; do thou for ever glorify him to the view of thy people, that as oft as thou liftest the eye, and the soul to look to the throne; oh! to see the LORD JESUS, as the Rainbow encircling the throne, and, as GOD the Father's bow, the everlasting token of GOD's good will to man. Yea, Almighty FATHER, behold thy Church in *Him*, through *Him*, and by *Him*, as our everlasting security and portion. And let thy Church begin the Hymn, and all thy redeemed Elders and Men, follow in one vast song in the same, to celebrate the wonders of thy grace. And what a song will that be finally in heaven, when all the redeemed from every nation, country, and clime, shall be assembled before thee, to sing to the LORD'S glory for evermore?

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The preceding chapter, having in Vision opened Heaven; this prosecutes the same Subject, in describing what took place, when the Hymn of the Church had celebrated the LORD'S Glory. Here is an Account of a Book with Seven Seals. None was found worthy to open it but the LAMB. The Events which followed.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

With this chapter commenceth the Opening of the Seals. Here are six of them opened in this Chapter, the various Events of which are enumerated in Prophetical Language, and with these the Chapter closeth.

REFLECTIONS

Methinks I would wait in silent humble adoration, while my GOD and SAVIOR opens the seals one by one, to make known to his Church the mysteries of his kingdom. And while I hear the voice of invitation, *come and see!* oh! for the LORD that calls to give grace also to hear, that I may understand those prophecies of our GOD.

Precious LORD JESUS! IS it not thou that I behold, going forth on the white horse crowned with victory, *conquering, and to conquer?* And do I not hear thee say, and my soul makes her cheerful responses to the same; *As for those that will not I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me!* Yes, LORD, the red horse of blood, and the black horse of famine, and the pale horse or death, with hell in the rear, are suitable to follow in the execution of thy judgments.

I bless my GOD for unfolding to his Church, the precious view of the souls under the Altar, beseeching the LORD, to avenge their blood on their enemies. May I learn many a sweet lesson herefrom! And when at any time, I am impatient under exercises, waiting for answers to prayer, here may I look up and learn, how to explain all

seeming difficulties. If JESUS deferred the answer to them, how shall I complain? I here discover, that delay is not denial. There is a *set time to favor* Zion. And learn, O my soul, a sweeter lesson still. *Abel's* blood called for vengeance. The martyrs of my GOD plead to be avenged. But JESUS's blood for mercy. Oh what a thought to comfort a poor sinner!

LORD! what an awful account this Chapter closeth with, of those apostates under the *sixth* seal, and every other who deny CHRIST'S GODHEAD, and cause even sun, moon, and stars to blush at their foul ingratitude. Surely their judgment is just. For to whom can they look for salvation, while they deny his power who alone can save. Think then my soul of thy safety and happiness, in having CHRIST for thy portion! Precious LORD JESUS, say to my soul, fear *not, I am thy salvation!*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an Account of the Sealing of the Servants of GOD. The Number sealed! John hath shown Him an innumerable Multitude, gathered out of all Nations, standing before the Throne. They are described who they are, and how they came there. The Glories of the LAMB.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we look with holy meditation at this vision which *John* saw, and mark the four Angels holding as they were commanded, the four winds of the earth, from going forth to destruction; until the LORD had done his gracious purpose towards his servants; Let us behold our Almighty JESUS ascending from the East, to mark, his own against the day of tribulation! And while we see him so gracious to his *Israel*, and while we see him so gracious to his Gentile Church also, to which you and I belong, oh! for grace, to stand impressed with this most certain assurance that He is the same watchful, loving, and all lovely LORD now, as he was then. He is; He must be JESUS CHRIST; *the Same yesterday, and to day, and for*

ever. Oh! then, depend upon it, that he hath sealed, he doth seal, and he will seal, every individual one of his redeemed.

And, Reader! let you and I behold our JESUS, (if so be, by regeneration you can call him yours,) encircled with his blood bought sons and daughters, now on his throne. Hath JESUS washed their robes, and will he not wash ours? Hath he made them white in his blood, and shall ours remain uncleansed? Hath he loved his Church only in heaven; and doth he not regard his Church upon earth? Did JESUS show so much attention to his beloved at the time here shown, and would not suffer the winds or wars to come on; until that he had sealed his redeemed, and will he behold Our exercises, our difficulties and tribulations, and look on unmoved? Oh! no, thou dear REDEEMER! thou art still the LAMB, and still in the midst of the throne. All power is thine, in heaven, and in earth. And such is thy love to thy poor ones below, that thou art watching over them night and day, lest any hurt them, and whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of thine eye! Oh! how sure, how safe, how blessed are all thine, both in earth and heaven.

Reader! let us seek grace, to eye CHRIST unceasingly, as in the midst of the throne. He hath all divine attributes, all divine blessings, all suited grace, all suited mercy. To Him may all his people come. In Him they find all suited fulness. From Him they receive the every needed grace. And to Him offer all praise and glory. LORD! hasten the hour, when thy whole Church shall be round thy throne, and thou shalt have wiped all tears from off all eyes. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here, the Opening of the seventh Seal. To this succeeds the seven Angels coming forward with their seven Trumpets. An Angel is seen at the Altar of Incense. Four of the Angels in succession sound their Trumpets. Great Plagues follow.

REFLECTIONS

MY Soul! behold the grace of thy GOD, when at opening of the seventh seal, and silence took place in the Church, before the new circumstances of sorrow began, JESUS will be seen at the Altar, in his High Priestly Office, with his golden Censer! Was it not to teach the Church, both then, and now, yea, in all ages, that under every *seal* opened, every *trumpet* sounded, every *vial* poured out, He is unceasingly engaged, for all his redeemed ones, and not a moment intermits his care, but is for ever carrying on the whole purposes of his unchangeable priesthood? Oh! what a blessed view was here opened, for the everlasting consolation of the Church. Ye redeemed of the LORD! Ye Priests of my GOD! Ye Ministers of the sanctuary! never cease to shew the Church JESUS in this endearing office, as always engaged for his people. And do ye follow up petition after petition, neither keep silence, nor give him rest, until he hath made his *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth. Oh! the preciousness, from this blessed view of our GOD, that JESUS it is, at the Altar, which offers up in his incense, the prayers of his saints; and both the persons and offerings of his people ascend before GOD out of this Almighty Angel of the Covenant's hands!

LORD! thy Church finds cause to bless thee to this day, that amidst the destructions which have followed those trumpets, JESUS hath yet a seed to serve him, which are *counted to the LORD for a generation*, And, though heresies still abound, yea, are in various instances, increasing in the earth; yet *the LORD knoweth them that are his*. Oh! for grace, to be found faithful, and to live above the reproach of men, by living upon the faithfulness of GOD in CHRIST. And then, while all the woe trumpets have been, or now are sounding, and our GOD shall show wonders above, and signs in the earth, beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke, JESUS will own them whom he hath sealed; and the world shall know whose they are, and to whom they belong, when that *great and notable day of the LORD shall come!*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The fifth Angel sounds his Trumpet. Great and fearful Signs follow. The first Woe is past. The sixth Angel succeeds, and soundeth his Trumpet, and very awful Events take place in the Earth.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold how the LORD's judgments rise higher and higher, in the scale of punishment! The *four* first trumpets were bringing forward very awful visitations in the earth, but those *two* of the woe trumpets, how far have they already exceeded in affliction! And who shall say what yet remains to be unfolded, before the period of the sixth trumpet is finished! Let you and I pause, as we contemplate the subject. Let us behold and look behold over the long space of so many centuries which have run out, since at the voice of the sixth trumpet sounding, the LORD CHRIST gave command, to loose the four angels at the river *Euphrates*. Contemplate what ravages have been made! what slaughters followed. And yet no reform, no repentance, no one effect of contrition produced, by the chastisement! Let us next look at home. Doth not the question arise, nationally considered, *what then are we better than they! No, in no wise*. What, though the worship of images is not by law established, and prayers to images and saints we are not commanded to do, yet, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST more honored than before? Is his GODHEAD, and his blood and righteousness, considered by all ranks of our people, as the very foundation of *the faith once delivered to the saints*? Alas! how greatly the reverse in this CHRIST-despising day and generation! And while like a flood, the awful heresy of denying his GODHEAD is running through the land, and threatens to carry all before it, there are no laws of restraint to stop the pulpit or the press, from saying or doing as their corrupt nature unsubdued by grace may tempt them, against the glorious Person and finished salvation of the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And what may we suppose will follow such daring ungodliness. Surely, if we calculate from what is past, what is probable to follow, before the *sixth* woe trumpet hath finished his period, very desolating consequences may be looked for. The ear of

faith may hear that voice which was once heard and again and again repeated; and never more suited than now. *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the LORD, shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this.*

One sweet thought will comfort the LORD's faithful ones, under all. JESUS is as the helm. All plagues, whether locusts or men, whether fire or sword, have their power from him. The Church of GOD is still the Church of GOD, and everyone is sealed by him. Oh! the precious assurance. Here then Reader, every child of GOD may safely say with the Prophet, LORD! *in the way of thy judgments have we waited for thee.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

John beholds in vision another mighty Angel come from Heaven, he hath a Book in his Hand. At his crying aloud, seven Thunders make their Responses. He swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that Time should be no longer. John is commanded to take the Book from him, and to eat it.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou Almighty Angel, whom *John* saw coming down from heaven! Give me, by faith, to behold thee with the delightful rainbow upon thine head, in token of the everlasting Covenant! LORD JESUS! whatever clouds or darkness thy divine dispensations are clothed with, still never will my faith despond, as long as JESUS appears to my view with his rainbow. Though the Church be in the fiery furnace, and clouds and darkness all around, yet while GOD my FATHER is beholding his Church through CHRIST, and in CHRIST, the bow in the cloud; and while JESUS'S face towards his people is as the sun in divine grace, and love, and favor, and the Church looking to CHRIST, and in CHRIST, and through CHRIST to GOD, all is well.

Blessed LORD! thou hast sworn, while taking possession of heaven, earth, and sea as thine, that the hour is hastening when time shall be no longer. Oh! then prepare thy Church, prepare thy people for this great day of our GOD! LORD, in thine own time, which is the

best time, finish the mystery of GOD, in breaking down all the powers of antichrist, and thereby finish the mystery of iniquity, which now so much opposed thy pure Gospel.

LORD! give me the same spirit of obedience as thy servant *John*. Make me to eat and digest thy saving truths. Let all be sweet in thee, however bitter in the world, from flesh and blood. Kings, and nations, and tongues, shall hear thy prophecies, and all thy people shall praise thee.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

John, at the Command of the Angel, measureth the Temple. The LORD speaks of his two Witnesses: their Power. Their Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The seventh Angel soundeth his Trumpet. The great Events which follow.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! thy Church finds cause to praise thee, for by gracious watching over thy people, and regarding their interests as thine own. Very sweetly didst thou manifest this love of thine, when commending *John* to measure the temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein. Surely, LORD, if *John* was thus taught to know the dimensions of thy Church and people; JESUS meant to say; that he himself, knows all that concerns them, the thought of this is; enough, in the worst of times, to comfort thy chosen. True, LORD, thy witnesses are in sackcloth in the present hour. The waters of the sanctuary run low. But *the Lord knoweth them that are his*. In the darkest seasons, JESUS hath a seed to serve him, a generation to call him blessed.

LORD! prepare thy Church for the awful time, when thy witnesses shall be slain. Oh! keep thy Church, in every individual instance of her true members, from the accommodating spirit of the present day. Oh! for grace from thee, thou glorious LORD, to bear up against the torrent running through this land, of mingling *with the heathen, and learning their works*. Carry on thy chosen, through all that remains to be accomplished, under the second woe trumpet of

thy counsels. And hasten, in thine own time, that blessed soul-reviving sound, which shall call forth great voices in heaven, and the shouts of thy redeemed upon earth. Though both the Writer, and present Reader of this feeble labor, may not be alive to hail thy coming; yet all thy faithful now in grace, do by faith take part in that glory, which shall then be revealed, when *thou shalt come to be glorified in thy saints, and admired in all them that believe. Amen.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with the History of the Church, from the Beginning. Here is represented by Figure, that Church, brought forth, and immediately persecuted. A Dragon stands ready to devour. She is preserved in the Wilderness. To these follow an Account of War in Heaven, with the Consequences.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if the Church appeared as a great wonder in heaven, when beheld clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars, shall not you and I wonder as we behold her also? Oh! what a lovely sight is the Church, the spouse of JESUS! And what a wonder, that the SON of GOD should choose for himself such an one, when all the Angels of GOD were at his command! Yea, Reader! what a greater wonder still, if so be you and I are of CHRIST'S members, in this mystical body! A child of GOD is the wonder of heaven, the wonder of angels! and oh! how much more a wonder to himself, that while meriting hell, he should be preserved for heaven.

And, Reader! let us look also to the other wonder in heaven, and behold this great red dragon. Let us look at him without fear, while looking to, and depending upon JESUS for help. JESUS hath conquered him for us, and in us; and we know, that *the GOD of peace, will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.* Oh! what a world of wonders are we in, that the worm *Jacob* shall thresh the mountains! But, Reader! never lose sight in whose strength it is, we are made strong. The armies of heaven, overcome by the blood of the LAMB. Yes!

there can be salvation in no other. No other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!

LORD JESUS! cause the earth to help the woman, thy Church, now in the flood of heresies, the Serpent hath belched out of his month with a view to destroy her, in this present sinful and spiritual adulterous generation. And while hell in such numberless directions, is making war with the true remnant of thy seed, oh! for the LORD to give that seed to see that more is with us, than all that are against us. Remember, precious JESUS, thine own gracious words, and make them particularly sweet and refreshing to thine own, in the present day of rebuke and blasphemy: *My seed* (thou hast said), *shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They shall come and shall declare his righteousness, unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This Chapter is introduced with an Account of a Beast arising from the Sea, to whom the Dragon gives his Power. Another Beast cometh also at the same Time upon the Earth. This latter causeth the Earth to worship the Image of the former, and to receive his Mark.

REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, well may the child of GOD, cry out with the Apostle, how doth the mystery of iniquity already work! What an awful account is here, of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders? And how hath the LORD, for this cause given the ungodly up, and sent them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie!

Can the imagination conceive any view of the dark and ignorant state of the human mind, as great in point of self deception, as is here stated? That men should be brought to worship the beast, and with him the devil, to hear his blasphemy, to receive his mark, and to call him by names which belong to none but GOD. And that this delusion should descend from father to son, in a regular succession; from one age to another; no man being able to deliver his soul and

say, is there not a lie in my right hand? Blessed LORD JESUS! be thou adored, and loved, and praised, and delighted, in that thou hast kept thy people, and secured them from the possibility of worshipping the beast, for thou hast marked all their names in thy book of life. Oh! the blessedness of electing, preserving, redeeming, regenerating grace! LORD! do thou keep my soul in the hour, and from the power of temptation that is coming on the earth! LORD! give me to see the sure cause of rejoicing, in that my name is written in thy book of life.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

We have here a most beautiful View of CHRIST, as a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, his Church, and with him a blessed Company of his Redeemed. An Angel is seen as flying in the Midst of Heaven. Another is heard, declaring the Fall of Babylon. Here is the Harvest of the Earth, and the Vintage, and Wine Press of the Wrath of GOD.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The Church, having been prepared in the preceding Chapter, by seeing her Safety in CHRIST, is in this Chapter taught concerning the Ministry of the seven Angels, with the seven last Plagues. The Song of Moses and the LAMB. The seven Angels come forth from the Temple.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we were called upon in the last Chapter, to shout with songs of holy joy, in beholding the LORD, our great and glorious Redeemer, standing with his Church, on Mount *Zion*, encircled with his army: and here we are called upon again, to shout with the Church, in beholding the people of GOD, who have gotten the

victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, standing upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, singing *the song of Moses and the LAMB!* Oh! the felicity, when from a renewed heart, regenerated by grace, we can sing the praises of Him, *who hath called us out of darkness, into his marvellous light!*

And already we contemplate the sure victory over hell, and all the awful heresies abounding, in the view of the angels going forth from the Church of GOD, with their vials of GOD's wrath, to pour out upon them. Every false religion, every idol, and abomination, shall sink under the dreadful plague, to be poured upon them. The man of sin, that mystery of iniquity, which still doth work, shall be destroyed; and that wicked one, both of East, and West, the LORD will consume with the SPIRIT of his mouth, and destroy, with the brightness of his coming. We see the seven angels coming forth from the temple. We behold them armed with the seven golden vials, full of the wrath of GOD. And, by faith, we contemplate the glory of GOD which shall assuredly follow, when they begin their awful visitation. LORD JESUS! arm thy redeemed with grace, and strengthen them with power, to bear their testimony against the awful abominations of the day. And, oh! for grace to look on, stand still, and see the salvation of our GOD! For yet a little while, and the antichristian heresy of the West, and the false prophet of the East, shall both be no more; and the true Church of CHRIST shall behold them, with the dragon, all cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall never again harass and afflict the Church any more. Even so: Amen!

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we behold all the Angels, one after another, pouring out their Vials. The awful Consequences which followed are related. The sudden coming of CHRIST is noticed. A Blessedness is pronounced on him that watcheth.

REFLECTIONS

Look up, and contemplate the LORD, sending forth from his Church, the seven Angels, and messengers with his seven last plagues, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to deliver his people. Then let the Reader consider, how sure, how everlastingly sure, is the LORD'S Church and people. What though for a while the enemy seems to triumph, and the redeemed of the LORD are oppressed by the mighty, *yet the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD, who is also their strength in the time of need.*

How awful are these pourings out of the vials of divine wrath? One after another, arising higher and higher in the scale of judgment. But so desperately hardened in sin, are the enemies of our GOD, and of his CHRIST, that though the sinner is scorched with fire and great heat, yet he only blasphemes the name of GOD, and repents not to give the LORD glory.

My soul! learn from hence, to trace all thy mercies to their source. It is GOD'S everlasting love, which hath chosen thee in CHRIST, and preserved thee in CHRIST, and accepted thee in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. Hence, all thy mercies in JESUS, by which the vials of wrath, poured out upon the ungodly cannot come nigh thee. Blessed JESUS! let my soul be on the lookout for thy coming, that no midnight hour may surprise me, no blasphemies of men or devils may alarm me. And, when *Babylon* shall come into remembrance before GOD, and our GOD shall give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, thy Church may shout aloud in her destruction, and both heaven and earth praise GOD with exceeding joy.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Under the Representation of a Woman, arrayed in purple and scarlet is shown unto John, the Whore of Babylon. Her Character given. The Victory of the Lamb. The Whore's Punishment.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed and condescending Teacher of *John*! Thy Church desire to praise thee, O LORD JESUS, for causing thy servant the Apostle to be shown, and the Church through him also concerning this great spiritual whore, which sitteth upon many waters, committeth fornication with the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, and hath been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Through thy grace, LORD, instructing thy people, we cannot mistake her character. Her purple and scarlet robes, her gold and proud trappings, the blasphemy of her pretended power, and the names she assumes, her whore's forehead and the mystery she hath put there, all mark her out, as the object of horror and detestation, to thy people. And while we behold her drunken with the blood of thy saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of JESUS, we cannot but wonder, with great admiration! Oh! the awful state, to which the nature of man is brought down! Oh! the astonishing extent of the long suffering of Almighty GOD.

Dearest LORD JESUS! the souls of thy people are relieved in the pleasing prospect, that shortly thou wilt come and root out of thy kingdom, all things that offend. She, which hath intoxicated herself with the blood of thy saints, shall have her flesh eaten by those who professed to love her. She, who hated the meek and humble followers of the Lamb, shall herself be despised; yea, they shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Oh! what a relief to my soul is it, to turn from the view of images so horrible, and to contemplate JESUS under his own rightful character, LORD of lords, and King of kings! May every knee bow before thee! And oh! what praises shall I offer to my GOD, that JESUS hath a seed that serve him, a generation that call him blessed; who *are called, and chosen, and faithful!* LORD! do thou in those awful times, make them and keep them faithful. It is thy sweet province, and sure I am, it is my LORD'S delight, *to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise GOD, our SAVIOR, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

The Fall of Babylon. GOD's People come out from her. The Kings, and great Men, and Merchants, wail for her. The Saints of GOD rejoice over her.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be the LORD! the destruction of the whore is come! One hour, when the time all along predicted arrives, is enough, and all her traffic in hunting souls, and ruining the world, is done away for ever. Of what avail as all her pomp, and sitting as a queen among the nations!

Precious LORD JESUS give thy redeemed grace to hear thy love-calls, and to come out from among her! How many of thy dear ones are now hidden where the seat of the beast is! How many more, yet to be called, are found therein! Oh! bring them out, and house them in thy little *Zoar*; when thou makest the awful overthrow.

Methinks I would hail the Church, whoever lives to see it in the view of the blessed event. The very prospect of it is blessed. With what joy, will *the* redeemed welcome the day. Yea, heaven itself will take part in the felicity of it. The Apostles and Prophets, gone before, will rejoice over her, when GOD hath avenged his people on her. LORD! be thou eternally and everlastingly praised, in the total overthrow of thine enemies, and the salvation of thy people!

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an Account of the Joy in Heaven, in the View of the LORD's Triumphs over Antichrist upon Earth. The Church in Heaven celebrates CHRIST's Marriage with his Church. A blessed and glorious View of CHRIST. The Beast and false Prophet cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with Brimstone.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! the raptures, the joy, the unspeakable felicity, which will break out in heaven, when, like *John* in vision, the Church of GOD will hear in reality, that great voice, of much people, saying *Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the LORD our GOD!* The imagination of the human mind cannot conceive the triumphs of the Church, when the LORD shall bring home the redeemed of his people; and the LORD shall have avenged the blood of his servants at the hands of the great whore, who, for so many ages and generations, hath corrupted the earth with the multitude of her fornications!

Oh! ye Church of my GOD, ye followers of GOD, and the LAMB! who shall number up your mercies, or speak the endless felicity of your happy state, when safely brought home from all the exercises of sin and sorrow, and are called to the marriage supper of the LAMB! Ye servants of the LORD! see that ye are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, even the righteousness of saints, which is JESUS's robe of salvation! See that GOD, who provides it for you, puts it on. No other can gain admission to the table of the LORD, either here in grace, or hereafter in glory! Oh! for the being so clad, that all the redeemed of the LORD may exult in the language of the Church of old, and say: *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels!*

But, Oh! for grace to behold my GOD and SAVIOR as *John* saw him, riding on his white horse, in his glorious characters of faithful and true, and in righteousness judging, and making war. LORD! give me to see thee, with thy many crowns. And, oh! for that very one, which thou hast enabled me to put upon thy sacred head, when in the day thou madest me willing to be saved in thine own way, and the knee of my heart bowed before thee; and I cried out, JESUS hath redeemed me, and saved me, and washed me from all my sins, in his blood! LORD! let me daily behold thee, in thy vesture dipped in blood! let me daily read, and know thy name, the WORD of GOD. Let me, to the last moment of my life upon earth, till I fall before thy throne in glory, hail thee, my King, and my GOD yea, King of kings,

and LORD of lords! Oh! the day, the blissful, happy wedding day, when JESUS will take me home, and while the beast, and the false prophet fall to rise no more, but sink in the lake of fire; I shall, through sovereign grace, behold my GOD and SAVIOR as he is, and dwell with him for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The Overthrow of Satan. The Devil is seized, and bound for a thousand Years. CHRIST's Reign with his Saints. Satan for a short Time loosed. The general Judgment. The Devil cast into the Lake of Fire, where the Beast and the False Prophet are. All cast into Hell, whose Names are not found written in the Book of Life.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! the unspeakable joy, the Church, both in heaven and earth, must feel, in CHRIST's triumphs over the devil! What a glorious sight, even in contemplation, to behold CHRIST coming down from heaven, and seizing upon the monster, to cast him into the bottomless pit, where hell and horror reigns.

Praises to our All-conquering JESUS, for shutting him up, during his thousand years reign with his saints, that their joy shall have no interruption. And blessed be his holy Name, that he will raise up his saints and faithful ones, to sit on thrones with him, during this blissful age, of light, and life, and glory. Nothing of sin, nothing of sorrow, shall interrupt this blessed *Millennium*. And JESUS will have the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and the word of GOD, and that have not worshipped the beast, but hated the whore; to reign with him. Oh! the felicity of beholding JESUS, and the glory of his Person, and the love of his heart, to his redeemed, his people!

They are indeed blessed, and holy, who have part in the first resurrection. GOD the HOLY GHOST hath said it. And, my soul, beg the LORD to seal the everlasting remembrance of it, in thy inmost affections. On such, the second death hath no power!

And while thy Church, O LORD, are rejoicing with holy triumph, over the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet, in beholding them for ever cast into the lake of endless torment; oh! for grace, in a life of faith on the SON of GOD, to be waiting for that great day of the LORD, when JESUS will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Then will JESUS say to all his redeemed: *Come ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. LORD!* shall this be my happy portion? Will JESUS so own me, when he cometh to make up his jewels? Oh! for the LORD to bless my soul now with grace; and sure I am, that then the LORD will give me glory.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

John in Vision is led to see the New Jerusalem. He beholds CHRIST upon his Throne. A Description of the Holy City. The LORD's Presence, the everlasting Glory of the Place. None can enter into it, but they whose Names are in the Book of Life.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold with an eye of steady faith, the new heaven, and the new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth! Yea, look again and again, with rapture, at the Church coming down from GOD Out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband! Bless GOD the FATHER, in the contemplation, for his electing love, in choosing; for his giving love, in giving the Church to his dear SON; and for all the ten thousand manifestations of his love, in predestinating each, and every individual of the mystical body, to the adoption of children, by JESUS CHRIST to himself, and accepting the whole Church in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

Bless GOD the SON, for his betrothing his Church before all worlds, watching over her, in all the time-state of her sad adulterous departure from him redeeming her with his blood, washing her from her sins, clothing her with his righteousness, bringing her home, and presenting her to himself, in the marriage supper, prepared for her in his kingdom of glory.

Bless GOD the SPIRIT for his anointings in the early formation of CHRIST and his Church as one, before the foundation of the world, for his quickening and regenerating grace in time, and for all his leadings, teachings, comfortings, and renewings, when glorifying the LORD JESUS to the Church's view, and directing the heart into the love of GOD. Oh! for grace, while contemplating the Church, the LAMB's wife, to behold with yet greater rapture and joy, the LAMB himself, and bless the whole persons of the GODHEAD, for all their love and mercy to the Church in Him.

And what a state of unspeakable felicity is the Church here brought to, after all the temptations of *Satan*, the deceivings of the heart, and the opposition from the world. Precious JESUS! thou art the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all blessedness. Blessed are all thy gifts and all thy manifestations in wiping away all tears from off all faces, and putting an everlasting end to all sorrow and sin. But blessed yet more art thou for thy love. Do thou, LORD, who art the everlasting light, and the glory of heaven, be the light and glory of thy Church on earth. LORD! shine daily on my soul, until thou shalt bring me home to this blessed city, where neither sun nor moon shall any more be needful, for thou, LORD, wilt be the light of all the poor Gentiles thou hast brought into thy kingdom, *and the glory of thy people Israel*.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

GOD the HOLY GHOST in this Chapter finisheth the Subject of all the Prophecies; and with it, the whole Canon of Scripture. The LORD gives the Church a further Account of the Holy City. Here is spoken of, the River of Life, and the Tree of Life; and the LORD'S Promise, of coming quickly. A gracious Invitation at the End, to all the People of GOD. A solemn Caution, not to add to, or take from, the Things written herein.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSING, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever. LORD!

upon the bended knee of thanksgiving and praise, let all thy Church praise thee, for this among all thy other unnumbered mercies, that thou hast given to thy servant *John*, this precious portion of thy sacred word, to show unto thy Church things which must shortly come to pass. Blessed be the LORD for the accomplishment of such parts, as have been already fulfilled, and of others that are now fulfilling in the earth. And do thou, LORD, give thy servants grace, to wait in full exercise of faith and hope, the accomplishment of all that remains to be fulfilled. And since thou hast caused it to be left upon record for the encouragement of the faithful, saying, *blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein*, Revelation 1:3. LORD! I beseech thee, let these blessings be my portion, that I may both read, and hear, and keep those glorious truths, by thy grace in my heart.

Let the blessed prospect of this reign of CHRIST in his Church, comfort and encourage all thy people. And while here below, let the souls of thy redeemed both drink and be satisfied with the streams of *that river, which make, glad the city of GOD*. Oh! for grace, to sit down oft by faith, till the LORD shall take my soul home to sit down for ever in full enjoyment, under *the Tree of Life*. Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end* of all my spiritual joys. Thou that art *the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star*; be thou my all in all, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity. Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all the fulness of blessings, and JESUS, and all his fulness in blessings, both for the life of grace that now is, and for that life of glory which is to come.

And be thou thanked with all the love and affection of a brother, faithful *John*! for thy tenderness to the Church in JESUS, and for all thy ministry and labor of love. We regard the servant while we bless the Master. And blessed be our GOD and SAVIOR, for calling thee to the ministry, highly honored Apostle of our GOD! When JESUS shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, how will JESUS our GOD and SAVIOR shine in all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily, encircled with all his Apostles and Prophets, and Martyrs, and the redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, *who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB*. Oh! for the poorest and unworthiest of all the LORD'S redeemed ones, to be found in the throng, and to join the

hymn of salvation and praise, with all the Church of GOD for evermore.

And now, Reader, in folding up the whole of my *Poor Man's Commentary*, while I lay low in the dust before GOD, under a conscious sense of unworthiness, and my continued shortcomings, I desire to set up a renewed *Ebenezer* to the praise of his grace, who hath hitherto helped me, and borne with me, all the way through, in the many years since first I entered upon it, to the hour of writing with my pen the last line of it. The more I contemplate the subject, the more I stand amazed at the LORD'S goodness, and my undeservings.

I know not whether, after all my endeavours and earnest desires to exalt the adorable name of JESUS, I have succeeded so far, as that the Reader may perceive, that this is the sole object I have all along had in view. To speak of Him as He really is, I know, is impossible. Neither men nor angels are competent to this service. For, of Him it must be said, without any strain of language, THERE IS NO END OF HIS GREATNESS. But, I have only labored so far and in the best manner I have been able, to hold up, and hold forth, the LORD JESUS CHRIST as GOD'S CHRIST, and as the sole perfection of all his people. Oh! that the LORD by his grace, may so seal Him in my heart!

And now, Reader, farewell! I hope the LORD hath pardoned, and will pardon all the errors of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, and that you will pardon them also. And having said this, *I commend you to GOD, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build his whole family up, and to give them an inheritance, among all them which are sanctified.* Amen. To the one only GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, be endless praises. Amen, and Amen.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,

April 13, 1816,

Once more made memorable in being my birth day, counting Sixty-three years of the LORD'S grace, and my sins.