

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 froth 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 fragrancly 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 showeth 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 cockcrowing, 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 shouldst 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 be 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 showeth, 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

sinners, 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 shunn'd 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 he 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 encampment 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 *Ajeleth, 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? *Ajeleth 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 salvation 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 *Alamo*, 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 ledest 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 arraignment 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 will 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 front 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 oneanother 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 fragrancy 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 unawakened, 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 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 fragranciness 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 drouth 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 tye. 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 fragraney 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 necessaries 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 teil 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 prophetic. 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 last 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 he 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. Harken, 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 will 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 prophetic 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 shamefulfulness 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 prophetic 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 *Pelathiah* 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 unwall'd 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.