

HAWKER'S
BIBLE CHAPTER
SUMMARIES
AND
REFLECTIONS

VOLUME 3



BY
ROBERT HAWKER

DANIEL – REVELATION

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CONTAINING
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PREFACE

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

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

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

The Publisher

DANIEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE now enter upon a most interesting part of Scriptural Prophecies. The Book of *Daniel* demands our highest attention, affection, and regard. It is indeed but short, both in the historical part of it, and the prophetical. But there is so much in that little concerning the person of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and his Church in him, that we never can be sufficiently thankful to GOD the HOLY GHOST, both for the ministry of this man, and that this precious record of inspiration hath been watched over, preserved, and handed down to the Church to the present hour upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Of the certainty of Daniel's prophecy being authentic, the testimonies are undoubted. The LORD seems to have over-ruled things in such a manner, as to put it out of all question. The Jews, indeed, in order to invalidate Daniel's prophecies concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, cause his writings not to be put among the other writings of the Prophets. And the reason is very obvious. For so pointed and express is this man's whole tendency in his prophecies, to the person and glory of CHRIST, that had they acknowledged his writings to have been prophetical, they must have acknowledged CHRIST also. Therefore, by separating *Daniel's* book of prophecy from the general prophecies of scripture, they aimed to do away the Prophet's testimony concerning CHRIST. But added to the whole authority of the Word of GOD to prove that *Daniel* was a Prophet, the church of GOD hath one that is most blessed, conclusive, and satisfactory. I mean the testimony of the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself. For in that memorable discourse which the LORD JESUS delivered, and which may be called CHRIST'S own prophecy concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem; the LORD expressly refers to the prophecy of *Daniel* in confirmation of it: and as expressly calls *Daniel* a Prophet. So that nothing can be more in point. See Daniel 12:11. and

compare what he there delivers with the words of JESUS, Matthew 24:15.

The name of *Daniel* is not without much signification considered with an eye to his ministry. It is a compound in itself, and means, *the judgment of GOD*. And if we consider, that both his ministry in the court of Babylon, and the scope of his prophecy concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose office is, to set *judgment in the earth when the isles should wait for his law*, Isaiah 42:4. There is a great beauty in the servant's name who ministered to such a Master. *Daniel* was of the tribe of *Judah*; and as we find carried away among the captives to *Babylon* when very young. His ministry was lengthened, it is more than probable, through the whole of the captivity. But what I would more particularly beg to remark concerning the ministry of Daniel is, that he not only prophesied of the events to be accomplished in the Church from the *Chaldean* to the *Roman* monarchy, but his prophecies looked much further. I do not presume to speak decidedly upon this, or any other subject, that is unexplained by GOD the HOLY GHOST; but with an eye to his divine teaching, I venture to enquire, whether the prophecies of *Daniel*, are not in some parts of them accomplishing in this very hour? For, as the Roman empire, to which, as by the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies in part hath been already proved, this holy man of GOD plainly referred, we behold the reference of his prophecy: so as *Rome* was mystically the Babylon spoken of in the Revelations, it should seem, that the Prophet was directed by the HOLY GHOST, to look as far forward as the present, and perhaps a future day of the Church.

The Book of *Daniel* is partly historical and partly prophetical; and the subjects are frequently incorporated. The first six Chapters are chiefly the history of the times of *Daniel*; yet not without an eye to future events in the Church. The last six Chapters are chiefly prophetical. And very blessed they are, as hath been proved in such as time hath explained by the accomplishment. And equally blessed are those, no doubt, which are to be fulfilled, and which perhaps are now fulfilling in the earth. For what can be more blessed, than what refers to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and to his Church in Him?

I beg the Reader, both at his entrance upon the threshold of this sacred Scripture, and through all the departments of it, to keep a stedfast eye to GOD the HOLY GHOST for his divine teaching;

remembering our LORD's own words concerning it; *Let him that readeth understand*, Mark 13:14. Almighty Teacher! I would say both for myself and Reader! make these words, both at once, a precept and a blessing. And the grace of understanding which thou commandest to the Reader, do thou LORD thyself give him; and let both Writer and Reader be enabled to receive and accept those sayings as faithful and true. And may the LORD GOD of the Prophets explain them to the heart of both: and prove, here as in every other instance, that *the testimony of JESUS is the Spirit of prophecy*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The prophecy of Daniel opens with an account of the captivity of Israel. Daniel is among those who were carried to Babylon in the captivity. He finds favor in the sight of the keeper of the prisoners. Is permitted to abstain from the food of the Court. Is commended for his understanding.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over this first Chapter in the history of Daniel. And let us remark in his instance the wonderful properties of distinguishing grace. Behold! how the LORD made way for him, and guided all his paths, and directed all his ways. Though carried into captivity, yet, from that very captivity, all the great events which followed in the Prophet's life took their rise.

And when we have duly pondered the history of *Daniel* in order to mark the progress of grace in his instance, let us see if we can discover nothing similar to the same in our own. If, peradventure, the eye which reads those lines hath been opened by sovereign grace, to discover the LORD's dealings in his own experience; he will find enough to melt his very soul into tears, in the recollection, how the LORD hath been, and always is, leading on his people, making their way to differ from others; yea, to differ from themselves, in a thousand instances before their unthinking minds were brought into the least apprehension of divine mercy towards them. What a subject of this kind doth every child of GOD in his history, open to view

when once grace opens the book, and turns back the leaves of what is past. Every one finds cause to join in what the Prophet was commissioned to deliver? *Wilt thou not from this time* (saith the LORD) *cry unto me; My father, thou art the guide of my youth.* Jeremiah 13:4.

LORD JESUS! give to every follower of thine grace to know thee in these things; and cause us to stand before thee in those subjects of wisdom and learning; beyond all the knowledge of worldly skill that we may discover from whom, and by whom, we derive understanding in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

In Consequence of the King of Babylon forgetting the subject of a dream which had troubled him; Daniel, through the LORD, tells the monarch both his dream and the interpretation of it, and is advanced to honor.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I contemplate the GOD of Daniel in his providences, as well as in his grace. Oh! what an arrangement of events and things were here, in order to raise the LORD's poor captives from their low estate, to an high. Surely, that scripture was eminently fulfilled; *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.* But let us not rest here, but remember also, that the events recorded in this Chapter were for the comfort of the Church then in captivity: or as Daniel told the King, *it was for their sakes* that the secret was disclosed to Daniel, that is, the sake of his Church, his chosen. Not to inform an idolatrous King and his court, unless to damp and mortify their pride, that Babylon must fall, and all monarchies unto CHRIST, be as the potsherds of the earth; but that the Church of the living GOD might know that JEHOVAH was still as ever, watching over their interests, and would in due time, hasten on and establish forever the

kingdom of his dear SON. Here, Reader! let you and I make our improvements of this blessed Chapter, and at the same time recollect, that this, and this only, is at the bottom, of all JEHOVAH'S dispensations, to bring forward JESUS and his great salvation; that, as the scripture gloriously explains it, JEHOVAH might, *in the dispensation of the fulness of time, gather together in one all, things in CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in Him.* Hallelujah, Amen.

But chiefly, Reader! let our improvement of this Chapter be to contemplate Him, whom under the similitude of a *little stone* cut out without hands, was both to destroy all the images of idolatry, and to become a mountain, and fill the earth! Oh, precious, precious LORD JESUS, in thee I behold all this most blessedly fulfilled! and on thee would I hang the whole of my soul's meditation, as the Bee hangs upon the sweetest flower. Surely, LORD, without human hands, or human power, or human policy, or human strength, thou camest forth unknown, unperceived, unsought of men, at the call of GOD thy FATHER, for the salvation of thy people, and the destruction of thine enemies. Little indeed, and despised, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;* but, oh! how infinitely precious in the sight of JEHOVAH, and in the love and admiration of thy people. And how hast thou, LORD, since the day of thy servant Daniel, fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, all that was then promised. Oh! do thou Almighty mountain! fill heaven and earth; yea, all the hearts of thy people with thy glory. Hasten, LORD, the glorious hour, when *all the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdom of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and thou shalt reign forever.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The dedication of a golden image for worship, is appointed by Nebuchadnezzar; the people commanded to bow before it: the Jews are accused of neglecting it, and are cast into the furnace, but miraculously delivered.

REFLECTIONS

READER! can you desire a stronger explanation of what scripture continually holds forth, *between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth GOD and him that serveth him not*; than what is here brought before us. Behold the daring impiety of the Babylonish King and his nobles! Behold their cruelty also. Then mark the end of these men! Look, on the other hand, at the LORD's servants! see what confidence faith in the LORD JESUS can and will induce. And behold, how the LORD bears testimony to his people, and confirms the dependence of his redeemed. And such, depend upon it, more or less will it be in every instance. Faith in JESUS enables the believer to triumph, when all outward circumstances are most unpromising and dark. Hence some of the martyrs of GOD have been enabled to *sing* songs of rejoicing, even in the flames. They well knew, that however painful to the body, it was full of blessedness to the soul; and therefore, these afflictions were but *the light afflictions of a moment, which were working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!*

Precious JESUS! make both him that writes and him that reads, if it be thy blessed will, followers of them, *who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. And seeing that we are thus encompassed about with so great *a cloud of witnesses*, may we run also the race that is set before us, *looking unto thee the Author and Finisher of our faith*. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We are here brought acquainted with another dream of Nebuchadnezzar; which Daniel interprets. The event of the same is also awfully related.

REFLECTIONS

I pray the Reader to ponder well, from the history here given, in the character of one of the greatest monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of the world, the wretched state of man void of the grace of

GOD. Respecting outward circumstances, there was nothing Nebuchadnezzar wanted to constitute happiness. But what were all outward circumstances, when thus left a prey to the desolate state of a guilty mind, under the hand of GOD! Reader! mark well the solemn lesson, and turn it every way, the instruction is the same. In the present fallen state of mankind, there is nothing that can bring comfort but JESUS. Everything beside is tinged with vanity. As many as are under the laws of Moses are condemned; and they without the law, are, as the Apostle saith, *a law unto themselves*; their conscience accusing, or else excusing; and they are, and must be always miserable. Let their condition be what it may, there is nothing that can give peace. But, my brother, if CHRIST be your portion, He sweetens all; He sanctifies all. Beautifully to this purport, speaks the LORD by the Prophet. *In that day (saith the LORD) will I make a covenant for them, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.* The sense is; All things, and all creatures, shall promote the peace of him that is at peace with GOD. *He that overcometh (saith another scripture) shall inherit all things. I will be his GOD and he shall be my son.* LORD JESUS! make such views blessed, both to Writer and Reader, that in thee, and in thee alone, we may seek for a portion to live upon, in time, and to all eternity!

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Having done with Nebuchadnezzar, we here enter upon the history of his descendant Belshazzar; and a short history it is. We have here, his impious feast; his prophanation of the vessels of the sanctuary: his awful alarm and death.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! dismiss not this solemn chapter, until thou hast gathered some of the many instructions, which, under grace, it holds forth to the Church of GOD, and to all the members of CHRIST'S

mystical body. It is blessed to behold, in the swift judgment of sinners, how sure the LORD's appointments are; and how JESUS is unceasingly watching over the special and personal interests of his people. And while *the hand writing on the wall*, or what is the same thing, the voice within, in the sinners conscience, loosens the loins of the enemies of CHRIST; the HOLY GHOST is witnessing to the spirits of the LORD's people, peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Oh! ye *Daniels* of the present hour! *be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might*. Witness for your LORD, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, Shortly the midnight hour of the ungodly will come, when all the enemies of the cross shall perish. Shortly that day will arrive, when the LORD wilt call his faithful home to glory! And oh! what a vast, what an eternal distinction will then take place, between the *Daniels* and the *Belshazzars* of every generation! Precious JESUS! in that day, be thou my hope, my joy, my confidence; that when the whole world of unbelievers are *weighed in the balance and found wanting*, my soul, among the redeemed of Zion, may be able to shout aloud for joy, crying out in the language of GOD's own word, *In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall I then come, with all that believe in Him, and never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end!*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Daniel is raised to preferment under the new government. He is cast into the den of lions. He is saved from danger, and his accusers destroyed.

REFLECTIONS

READER! remark here how unremitting the malice of hell hath been of old, and continued from age to age, against CHRIST and his Church! When nothing could be found to ruin *Daniel* in his trust with men, such is the venom of hatred, that the attempt is made to poison his reputation in his dealings with GOD. Such hath been, and ever must be, the bitterness of the *Esau's* against the children of

promise. But how blessed is it to behold the grace of GOD in its actions, and on the hearts of GOD's people! Oh! for the same spirit as actuated the soul of Daniel! The prohibition of men is nothing, when the fear of GOD possesseth the heart. *Among the gods*, said one of old, *will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD!* And so will every faithful follower of the LORD, though lions be in the way, and hell and destruction oppose. It will be a blessed improvement of this Chapter, if the heart both of Writer and Reader be led therefrom, to seek to the LORD for a portion of the same spirit as actuated the mind of Daniel. Precious JESUS! in thy bright example we behold how blessed it is, when bulls of *Bastian* set themselves against thy people all around, to lay hold by faith of thy strength and grace, and to be more than conquerors through thy power helping us. Oh! LORD! be thou my confidence all the day, so shall I be saved from the lions dens, and from the mountains of leopards: and my GOD will be mine everlasting strength and my glory.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here in this Chapter introduced into strong visions of GOD. He is blessed by one that stood by with an interpretation of what he saw.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! over this most sublime and blessed Chapter; and passing by every lesser consideration, contemplate this, as the highest and the best on what is said of Him, whom Daniel *saw*, *the Ancient of Days*, in the glories of his person, and Almightyness of his character! Perhaps the whiteness of his garment might be meant to intimate the purity and holiness of his nature and essence. And it is possible, by the hairs of his head, like the pure wool, might be intended to represent the sovereignty of his glory and majesty. But, alas! what figures or similitudes can afford the least resemblance of Him, *who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see!* Almighty JEHOVAH! before thy footstool help both Writer and Reader to fall

down with the lowest possible prostration of soul and body; everlastingly keeping in remembrance, that both now to a throne of grace, and hereafter to glory, there is no possibility of access, but in and through a gracious Mediator, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS!

And concerning thee, thou blessed EMMANUEL, whom the Prophet Daniel saw also, in this solemn vision, under the similitude of One like the Son of man; help us to look up with all that love and adoration, and holy fear, and faith, and delight, as becometh thy redeemed. For do we not know, dearest JESUS, by the teachings of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that since thou didst finish redemption-work, and art returned unto glory, it is thou that hast opened a new and living way by thy blood, and ever livest to keep it open by thine intercession. Hail! precious LAMB of GOD! worthy art thou to take the kingdom, and power, and glory, for *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*

And no less, thou Eternal SPIRIT of all truth, who art one with the FATHER and the SON! be thou exalted and glorified LORD, in thine own personal power and GODHEAD! And may all the Church, both in heaven and on earth, daily be enabled to send forth their united praises to FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the One glorious and incomprehensible JEHOVAH in endless adoration and love, through the boundless ages of eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here favoured with more visions of GOD. An angel interprets the vision to Daniel. special allusions in the vision to the Church.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both beg of GOD for grace to gather suitable improvements from this Chapter, and such as GOD the HOLY GHOST evidently intended the Church should derive from the perusal of it in all ages. The image of the ram with two horns, and the goat with a notable horn between his eyes, these similitudes are explained to us in the Chapter, and had their accomplishment in the kingdoms of

Media and *Persia*, and of *Grecia* that succeeded both, and have long since been done away. But the vision of the *evening*, and the *morning*, and the *daily sacrifice*; these are subjects of everlasting meditation, and lead to unceasing improvement under divine teaching, as long as the Church shall continue on the earth. And who doth not see, blessed and eternal SPIRIT, when taught by thee, the sweet allusions in those things in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, and daily sacrifice, to the person, blood, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Is not JESUS *the* lamb *slain from the foundation of the world*? And if the exhibition by type of this sacrifice was needful, so the LORD thought fit that it should be set forth both morning and evening, to manifest, that from the morning of life to the evening of it in death, a propitiation is needful for sin, and becomes continually necessary! And Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of the subject, as often as the HOLY GHOST graciously brings it before thee, that this contemplation of the LAMB of GOD taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is of all subjects the most momentous and interesting. Think, Reader! how infinitely meritorious in itself. Think how blessed must it have been in the sight of GOD the FATHER, when for four thousand years together, before the thing to be accomplished was brought to pass, the LORD appointed a daily memorial of it, in the lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening, to be sacrificed! Precious JESUS! let it be our daily delight, both in the morning and evening of every day, to contemplate thy body bruised, and thy soul made an offering for sin! Frequently, LORD, at thy table, and in thine house of prayer, be it our happiness to commemorate thy death in holy communion. And while we behold the LAMB of GOD taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself; give to us such rich views of GOD the FATHER's complacency, in the blessed act of CHRIST dying for us, that we may enter into the most lively conviction and certainty, that when he died on the cross, for the sin of his people, he *died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD*. JESUS was then made sin, and a curse for his redeemed, that *they might be made the righteousness of GOD in him*. Amen.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have here as interesting a Chapter as in the whole book of prophecy, and which wholly treats of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Daniel is taught of GOD, by books, to count the number of the years determined to the Babylonish captivity. He is deeply engaged in fasting and prayer; when he is favoured with a vision. The exact period to Jerusalem's bondage is marked out to him.

REFLECTIONS

GRACIOUS GOD! what praises hath the Church of the LORD JESUS to offer for the illustrious prophecy contained in this Chapter! Blessed be GOD, in that he left not himself without witness, when for the transgressions of Israel he gave them over into the band of the enemy! Blessed be GOD, in sending his Prophets *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* with the Church, that *the law should not perish from the priests, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the Prophet*. Blessed be GOD, that enabled Daniel to read the word of the LORD, in a strange land, and gave him grace, and wisdom, to understand by this blessed Book of GOD, the number of years to be accomplished in the desolations of Jerusalem. And blessed be GOD, for handing down to the Church in succeeding generations, and so on to the present hour, the records both of the prophecy and the accomplishment; whereby we behold the exact correspondence; and can, and do, trace our mercies to their source, and discover the LORD presiding over and appointing all. And now, O LORD! as we have here seen thy grace and mercy magnified to thy servant the Prophet; so we beseech thee, that thou wouldest go on to display all the riches of thy grace to the Church at large, in the person, work, blood-shedding, and glory of thy dear SON. We behold, LORD, in this glorious scripture, the features of JESUS very plainly and clearly drawn. And we have seen in the Gospel, how truly the original answers to the portrait. Yea! blessed JESUS, thou wast indeed in the days of thy flesh, anointed as the most holy, to seal up the vision and prophecy, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness. Heavenly Redeemer! let this righteousness be unto all, and upon all thy

people, for there is no difference. And, oh! LORD! grant to thy servants now, as to thy *Daniels* of old, such revelations of thine holy will as may suit the wants of thy Church now, as the ministration of thy Prophets were needed then. And may every enlightened eye, like that of Daniel, be always on the lookout in the expectation of thy second coming; that when the weeks appointed for the desolations of thy people be run out, JESUS may come to take his people home to himself, that *where he is, there they may be also*. Amen.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

We are here introduced into the acquaintance of another vision of the Prophet's. Daniel is observing a long and solemn fast, when he is suddenly visited by One, who appeared in great glory. The Prophet being exceedingly troubled in the view of the vision, is comforted by an angel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let our improvement of this blessed Chapter be, to admire the wonderful grace, love, and condescension of our adorable LORD JESUS; in his manifestation to his servant the Prophet: and the solemn effect wrought upon the Prophet's mind, even in the mercy.

Precious LORD! never can thy people sufficiently admire the astonishing love that must be in thine heart, when we behold such evidences of thine attention towards them. Was it not enough, blessed JESUS, when the fulness of time should come, that thou shouldst so readily and freely give *thy back to the smiters, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair?* And was it not to show thy people in the several ages before the time arrived, how much thy soul was bent to redeem them, and that thine whole heart was towards them, and full of love? And in confirmation of it, didst thou, dearest EMANUEL, visit then one and then another of thy saints, and tell them, that they were greatly beloved? LORD! shed abroad a portion of that love in our cold hearts, and cause, us to love thee, who hast so freely and so greatly loved us!

Reader! do not close this Chapter, neither pass away from the contents of it, until that thou hast duly pondered what is here said of Daniel's comeliness, turned into corruption, in the view of the Holy One. Think, my brother sinner, I beseech you, how solemn, how awful, how overwhelming, must be the open view of CHRIST in his glory; What must be the feelings of the soul, in the moment of death, when departing the body, at the first interview; yea, the first glimpse, of the LORD JESUS? I am speaking now of GOD'S redeemed ones; of souls truly regenerated, and who are clothed in the robe of JESUS'S own righteousness. Yet even with them, how solemn, how truly awful and affecting! But, if so, think again, my brother, and ask the heart, what it must be to the soul of him, who cometh up from the bed of death without a surety, without the Redeemer's righteousness, and without CHRIST as an advocate! What trembling, what paleness, what horror, must then be upon the soul? LORD JESUS! be thou my righteousness now; and then wilt thou be my everlasting confidence, through life, in death, at the day of judgment, and for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have here a long and particular account of Kings in Persia, and of the realm of Greece. Daniel receives the relation from the same person as in the foregoing Chapter. In the close, a short, but striking account is given, of some formidable foe to the Church, which shall plant his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this Chapter, and behold in it the evidences of the LORD'S tender mercies over his people. Though they were in captivity, and justly suffering punishment for their sins, yet, still the LORD hath an eye over them for good, and will not, finally *cast away his people whom he foreknew*. Hence they shall be told what is to happen to them, after their deliverance from Babylon. The Persian, and the Grecian, and the Roman government, are shown to

be in succession to each other, and all to make way for CHRIST. And no doubt, He that brought the Prophet acquainted with the events which were to come to pass, gave him also an assurance of the Church's redemption in JESUS, with all the blessings that were to follow, by reason of CHRIST'S coming.

Reader! and shall not you and I find confidence in the whole of GOD'S promises in CHRIST, to look still forward, with the most pleasing faith, for the accomplishment of all yet remaining to be fulfilled, in the person, work, and righteousness, of GOD our Saviour? Did Daniel thus receive knowledge in the events to come concerning the Church; and is the interests of the Church less dear to CHRIST now? Have not we lived to see all things accomplished, which were here foretold; and are not all these so many additional testimonies to the truth, as it *is in* JESUS? Hail holy, blessed, Almighty LORD give to both Writer and Reader, grace, to wait in full assurance of faith, for all the events connected with thy second coming. And oh! grant, that that faith, may be so lively, in all its actings upon thee, that *when thou shalt appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before thee, at thy coming.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The prophecy of Daniel closeth in this Chapter; with some most gracious assurances of Israel's deliverance; from all her troubles. Daniel's mind is exercised with thoughts concerning the same. The LORD's gracious consolation to the Prophet.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I cannot better close our view of this blessed portion of prophecy, than in following the direction given to Daniel. Here is enough for us each to rest in! *Michael* our prince; JESUS the captain of our salvation, hath stood up, is standing up, and will forever stand up for the children of his people, even his redeemed, his blood-bought royal seed! Trouble there will be; trouble there must be; for sin brings trouble. But where *sin abounded, grace doth much more abound: and* grace triumphs in JESUS CHRIST. And while

our Almighty JESUS lifts his both hands to heaven, he lifts them to bless his redeemed, and he will bless them, when time shall be no more. Oh! LORD! do thou bless us, and we shall be blessed. Purify and make white thy people in thy blood, and bring thy Church, yea, all thy redeemed, to the greater knowledge and love of thee, let thy knowledge be increased, and in thee shall we find all blessing. And now Daniel, O thou man of GOD, greatly beloved! we take our leave of thee; blessing thy LORD, and our LORD, for thy ministry; and loving thee for thy services. Thou hast gone thy way indeed, and we are going ours, in the same faith. Even to old age the LORD thy GOD carried thee; and even to hoar hairs the LORD will carry all his people. By and by the LORD will come. One of those days the shout will be heard from heaven, and Michael our glorious Archangel will appear in the clouds. Oh! for full confidence in that hour, to lift up our heads, when our redemption, draweth nigh, crying out with the Church, *Lo, this is our GOD, we have waited for him, and he will save us. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*

HOSEA

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE word of GOD, in the prophetical part of it, hath been committed for writing by GOD the HOLY GHOST, to various penmen. *Hosea* is the first, in point of order, as placed in our present Bibles, of what is called the *twelve minor* Prophets. Not minor Prophets, because the writings of those holy men were less inspired, or less important, than the others which are placed in the word of GOD before them; but on account of their smallness in point of bulk. Some of the ancients put the whole in one book, and hence, perhaps, in the speech of *Stephen* before the council, (Acts 7:42.) he quotes a passage, and calls it as *written in the Book of the Prophets*.

The name of *Hosea*, is of the same import as that of *Joshua*, and signifies a saviour. The Jews were remarkable for calling their children by names very expressive of somewhat great and good. *Hosea* ministered in the Church about eight hundred years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; consequently, though placed after the whole *four*, of what is called the *greater* Prophets, he lived before all of them; and delivered his prophecy before all of them. Notwithstanding this, several of those prophetic writings, which are placed after *Hosea*, were written before his: *Joel*, *Amos*, and *Jonah*, were all prior to *Hosea*. However, it is not of so much moment to know the exact order in which are placed those holy men of GOD; as it is to know, that they all wrote, as well as spake, *as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST*.

It is blessed to observe, in confirmation of the faith, how the servants of the LORD correspond in word and doctrine. If the Reader will compare the writings of *Jeremiah*, who exercised his ministry long after *Hosea*, with the writings of *Hosea*, he will observe in several instances their agreement. *Jeremiah* 7:34. with *Hosea* 2:11. So again, *Ezekiel* 16:15-19. compared with *Hosea* 2:8, 9. And the New Testament Writers, yea, the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself,

confirms the divine authority of the prophecy of *Hosea*, by quotations from it. Matthew 11:13. Romans 9:25, 26. Matthew 2:15. 1 Peter 2:10.

The chief scope and tendency of *Hosea's* writings, seems to be directed towards preparing the minds of the people to be on the lookout for the coming Saviour. Acting under the mission of the HOLY GHOST, the Prophet is reprovng the people of GOD for sin, and at the same time directing their minds to him who came *to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader any further, by general observations on *Hosea's* prophecy, but immediately to enter upon the book itself, first previously desiring the LORD the SPIRIT, to lead both Writer and Reader by the hand, through every part of it, that we may discover the mind of the LORD in the same, and *know the things which are freely given to us of GOD*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The prophecy opens with an account of the Prophet himself, and the period in which he ministered to the Church. The Prophet becomes a Type, as well as a Preacher, in the Church of GOD.

REFLECTIONS

READER! We may truly say, with one of the Sacred Writers, in reference to the Church in her latter-day glory; glorious things are spoken of thee thou city of GOD! For to behold, as this Chapter relates, the low and impoverished state of the Church; and GOD putting away, as it were, his people, and yet recovering them by the riches and sovereignty of his grace, all of himself, and from himself, and his own purpose, counsel, and will; surely we are constrained to exclaim, what hath GOD wrought?

Reader! is it so, that we are by nature, and by practice, like the children of whoredoms, and richly deserve to be forever called, Lo ruhamah, and Lo ammi; but yet by the infinite grace of adoption, brought into acceptance by CHRIST, our spiritual Head? Is it in JESUS, and by JESUS, the one glorious Head of his body the Church,

the whole of Judah and Israel are gathered; and when not a people are made the sons of the living GOD; oh! for grace to admire and adore these high privileges, and ascribe all the glory, and the praise, to whom alone it is all due. Precious JESUS! let my soul henceforth be forever eyeing thee, as the cause, the whole means, the whole end. Earnestly as my soul desires to love thee, let not my love to thee be made any more the standard of my safety in thee, but let me consider thy love as the whole sum and substance of all my safety and my joy. Oh! for grace to know the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge. In heaven itself, the full and clear apprehension of thy love, constitutes the chief happiness of the place. Give me then, dearest LORD, by thy SPIRIT, to be able to comprehend with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love, that I may be filled with all the fulness of GOD!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here a most interesting Chapter, describing the LORD's gracious dealings with his people, in bringing them from a state of sin to salvation.

REFLECTIONS

READER! ponder well the very many precious things contained in this blessed Chapter. It is all over gospel from one end to the other; and contains within its sacred bosom, that which always was, and always must be, the very, essence of gospel grace; namely, JEHOVAH'S love to poor lost sinners, in the person, work, and righteousness of his dear SON, and their sure acceptance in him, through the infinite merits of his blood, and the covenant-faithfulness, of JEHOVAH.

Behold again and again, how all the mercies of salvation flows in and through this one most gracious channel, by our LORD JESUS CHRIST. JEHOVAH first calls, and calls most lovingly. Say ye to your brethren, *Ammi*, my people; and to your sisters, *Ruhamah*, beloved. Both sons and daughters are called upon: for JEHOVAH had promised in redemption-work, to call CHRIST'S sons *from far, and his*

daughters from the ends of the earth; therefore, here the LORD sends to call them, agreeably to his most sure promise. And observe yet further; though the LORD was about to plead with them, and to tell them of their transgression, and the house of Jacob of their sins; yet the original covenant of redemption, founded in CHRIST before the world began; and consequently, before their fallen state, was not destroyed. JEHOVAH'S love to his Church in CHRIST JESUS, Was founded in the ancient settlements of eternity; so that her after-fall in Adam did not prevent GOD'S original purpose and grace, *given in CHRIST JESUS before the world began*. Observe further, the gracious methods of divine love, in bringing his Israel unto him. The LORD hedges up the way with thorns, brings the soul into the wilderness; makes crosses spring out of our supposed comforts, and thus by the convictions of his HOLY SPIRIT, compels the soul to return to her first Husband, because all else is vanity and vexation of Spirit. And when the LORD hath his infinite mercy accomplished the purposes of his grace; then the name of JESUS, husband, brother, friend, become sweet to the soul; and all the fulfillment of GOD'S covenant engagements follow; the LORD acknowledges them for his people; and they acknowledge the LORD for their GOD.

Reader! doth your personal knowledge of these things make this scripture blessed to your own heart? Hath GOD so dealt by *you*? Hath he indeed taken away the names of *Baalim* out of *your* mouth? and is JESUS altogether precious to your soul in his person, work, and righteousness? Oh! how truly lovely is it, when GOD'S Word corresponds to our experience; and while we read the sacred testimony; we are enabled *to set to our seal that GOD is true!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This is a short but interesting Chapter. The LORD commissions the Prophet, under the same figure of an Adulteress, to set forth the very shameful departure of Israel from the LORD; and his grace in CHRIST for their recovery.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS, precious LORD JESUS! let me pass by and pass over every ether thought and consideration furnished by this Chapter, to attend to thee, and to that lovely character of thine set forth in this scripture, as the husband of thy people! It is thou, dearest LORD, and not thy servant *Hosea*, that is here set forth, as loving a woman, an adulteress, in thy love to thy Church and people. We have indeed all played the harlot, and done that which even the worshippers of the dunghill gods of the earth, never did; changed their gods, which were no gods; but we have changed that which is our glory, for that which cannot profit. But in the midst of all this rebellion, and apostacy, and departure; thou hast not changed thy love, nor given a bill of everlasting divorce, but if at all, yet only for a season. Every act of thine, in all ages of the Church, very fully shows, that thou hast not put away thy people whom thou didst foreknow. And after many days, thou wilt return and visit thine inheritance, and Israel shall again fear the LORD and his goodness, after many days. Oh! for faith in lively exercise, to be always on the lookout for the LORD's coming. Hasten, O LORD, the gracious promise, and arise and have mercy upon Zion; for *the time to favour her; yea, the set time is come.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have here a very sorrowful Chapter. A picture is drawn of the people's transgressions; and the LORD's threatened punishment follows.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! cause my soul to read this solemn Chapter with an eye to what thou hast said, that thou hast declared in it that thou hast a controversy with thy people. Oh! gracious LORD GOD! And what do all thy controversies lead to, but to bring back thy people? Wherefore doth JESUS in his adorable grace, and love, and mercy, send forth his ambassadors, but that they should pray his

people, as though GOD did beseech them in CHRIST'S stead, to be reconciled to GOD. Surely the Church hath reason to be humbled in the dust before thee, when she calls to remembrance, that the land mourns for the sins of it; and that the great and crying sins are the transgressions of the LORD'S people. And if the LORD in the days of the Prophet, declared that his people were destroyed for lack of knowledge, what shall be said of the present hour, but that it is a CHRIST-despising generation, who know not the LORD. LORD, take to thyself thy great name, and come forth for thine own cause, and turn back the captivity of Jacob!

Oh! ye deluded sons and daughters of Adam! ye who take pleasure in the infirmities of GOD'S people, and eat up their sin. JESUS will plead for his redeemed, when he seeth that their power is gone. He will revive his chosen; he will take up their cause; he will yet make them a name and a praise among the people of the earth, to whom they have been a reproach, in the day when he bindeth up their breach and healeth their wound: even in the day of his great power. *The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a very proper continuance to the subject in the former. The LORD had said that Ephraim should be let alone, having joined himself to idols; and here is related the sad consequences. The Chapter closes, however, with the prospect of mercy.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul dost thou behold in this Chapter, the false teachers here described? Ponder well the awfulness of such characters, who to please men, and find favor with the great, set their nets in the *Mizpahs*, and *Tabors*, of the present hour, to harass and afflict the people of GOD. Whatever *Hosea* knew of this in his day, he could not know more than the present time affords, of such deceivers and antichrists. Surely there never was a period of the Church, when in what is called the Church itself, so little is known, and so little proclaimed, of the person, work, office, and character, of the LORD

JESUS CHRIST. The LORD CHRIST, if at all spoken of, is for the most part spoken of by such men, not as He really is, the whole sum and substance of the Bible the whole of ordinances; and of means of grace; but seen only in the back ground of the subject, and cautiously mentioned, and as cautiously recommended to the people. Reader! observe the LORD's jealousy, I beseech you, in this chapter, and mark it well. Oh! for grace to make CHRIST what GOD the FATHER makes him: the whole, substantially so, of all the covenant; yea, the very covenant itself. JESUS is the first, and the last; the author and finisher; the object, means, and end, of everything that concerns salvation. If we seek for pardon, where shall we seek it, but in CHRIST? If for peace, He, and he alone is our peace, *when the Assyrian shall come up into our land*. Need we a promise? JESUS is the sum of all, yea, himself the promise. He is the whole of the law; the substance of all the types, and shadows; the body of all the prophecies: *to him give all the prophets witness*. My soul! see that thou draw improvement from every scripture, in discovering JESUS in that scripture: *for*,

until thou hast found Him, to whom all scriptures witness, and of whom all scriptures testify; thou knowest nothing yet, as thou oughtest to know. Blessed LORD! grant this, both to Writer and Reader, if it be thy blessed will, that we may know thee, *whom truly to know is life eternal!* Amen.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The opening of this Chapter is most blessed indeed, and carries with it evident tokens of grace. The other parts are somewhat like the preceding Chapters, the LORD'S expostulations with his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is blessed amidst the general; yea, universal corruption of our poor fallen nature, to behold, even in a few instances here and there afforded, of the sovereignty of the LORD's grace. And when we hear the cry issuing from the heart, *come, and let us return unto the LORD*, we may well exclaim, *what hath GOD*

wrought! For surely nothing less than an Almighty power could effect the change; and the LORD's grace alone accomplish it.

But it is to thee, O blessed JESUS, as the glorious and efficient cause, the great event in every instance must be ascribed. It is from thy goings forth as the morning, when thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, the auspicious mercy is to be traced. LORD! help me to contemplate thee, under this endeared character! Be it my mercy, night and morning, to behold thee in this lovely, this gracious point of view. By the leadings of thine HOLY SPIRIT, guiding my soul through the sacred pages of thy word, I see thee coming forth as the morning, yea, as a morning without clouds, in the council of peace between the persons of the GODHEAD, when thou stoodest up, at the call of JEHOVAH, as the glorious Head, and Surety, of thy people. I see thee also coming in with the very first dawn of revelation, as the seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's head. I trace the wonderful subject, all pointing to thee, in every sacrifice, type, and shadow, of the law, during the whole Jewish dispensation; until at length, in the fulness of time, thou camest forth as the morning, in the open manifestation of thyself; in substance of our flesh! Hail! thou glorious, gracious, great Deliverer, of a lost world! And dost thou not now, even now, come forth as the morning, when to the heart of every individual believer, after the long night of the sin, and darkness, and ignorance, of a fallen state, thou manifestest thyself to them in a way of conversion, otherwise than thou dost to the world? Dost thou not, blessed JESUS, make every renewed love token of thy visits, like the morning when coming a-fresh, to revive, to comfort, to help, to maintain, and strengthen thy redeemed, in the dark state of their present pilgrimage? Oh! precious, precious JESUS! continue and increase those sweet visits, morning by morning, and be thou as the rain, both the latter and the former rain, upon the earth. Yea, LORD! come upon my dry and barren heart as showers of blessings! Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The subject of reproof is continued through this Chapter. But it is mingled with mercy. Here are many blessed marks to show that the LORD had mercy in reserve for his people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let this Chapter, as many other Chapters of the same nature and doctrine are highly calculated for, lead your heart and mine, under the teachings and influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to take a double view, and in one and the same moment, behold the corrupt and fallen state of man, and the infinite grace and goodness of GOD. I do not say, that the LORD took occasion from man's misery to magnify the exceeding riches of his grace in providing salvation; for His love was before our misery; and his covenant grace in CHRIST existed before all worlds. But I may say, that in every instance of divine favor the LORD doth make the glory of his grace to shine towards his redeemed; and where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD!

Reader! when you and I look into ourselves, what do we see but evil, and that continually? When now the LORD hath healed us in JESUS, how is our iniquity discovered? Our hearts are always ready to the lust of evil, like the baker's oven! How have we, like Ephraim, mixed ourselves with the heathen, and learned their works? And though we return, yet how often is it deceitfully, and not to the Most High! is it not so? Think then, how gracious, long suffering, and slow to anger, the LORD is? Gracious LORD JESUS! how shall we ever rightly and fully value the infinitely precious and costly sacrifice of thy blood and righteousness? How indeed shall creatures such as we are, rightly value what our utmost conceptions cannot fathom, or comprehend? Oh! for grace, to have some glimpses of those infinite dimensions of Almighty love, in all its heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths, which passeth knowledge! Oh! to behold thee, thou blessed LAMB of GOD, in thy unceasing worthiness before the throne; and never, never to forget that thy blood speaketh more for

thy boughten ones, than all their sins speak against them. Yea, dearest LORD, do thou enable me to cherish the sweet thought in my soul day by day; that a sense of the remains of indwelling sin in my nature, may not overwhelm me in despair; that thou art still appearing as a LAMB that hath been slain, in the presence of GOD for thy people, and canst, and *wilt save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by thee, seeing that thou ever livest to make intercession for them.* Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here another Sermon of the Prophet, or perhaps it is but a continuation of the former, for the subject is the same. The LORD expostulates with his people, and threatens to correct them.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Was there ever a period in the Church of CHRIST, when those that are divinely inspired, and called to the office of ambassadors for JESUS, needed to set the trumpet more powerfully to the mouth, and to call upon the sinners in Zion to be afraid for the impending judgments of GOD? Surely the LORD hath a controversy with the people, and he will plead with Israel. But, blessed JESUS! how sweet and refreshing doth it become to thy faithful ones, however few in number, that the interests of thy redeemed are safe, neither shall hell's gates prevail against the Church of JESUS. The enemy may have a momentary triumph; the adversaries of GOD's people seem to rejoice. The Church languishes in all her borders. But there is a *set time to favour Zion*, and in due season the LORD will arise to manifest his sovereignty, and the lighting down of his glorious arm. In the sure expectation of this, let GOD's tried ones repose, looking unto JESUS, who is both the Author, and Finisher, of faith. Shortly he will come to take out of his kingdom all things that offend; and prove himself to be the whole of salvation to his redeemed. In that blessed day of GOD, may it be the felicity, both of him that writes, and him that reads, (if the LORD will,) to be found among the ransomed of Zion, that shall return with songs of

everlasting joy upon their heads, when sorrow and sighing, sin, sickness, and death, shall be known and felt no more.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have here the threatened visitations of the LORD upon Israel, on account of transgressions. And if we read those awful denunciations of GOD, and keep in remembrance their accomplishment in the Babylonish Captivity, the whole is explained to us.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED EMANUEL! how can I fail to behold thee, in this Chapter, under the endearing character of the Husband of thy Church; while hearing my LORD thus expostulating with his Israel of old, for their whoredoms and fornications! Indeed, indeed, precious JESUS! thou hast married our nature, in having taken that pure portion of it, which thy FATHER gave thee, into union with thyself. And thou hast thereby most plainly and fully proved, how great and unequalled the love thou hast fixed on thy spouse the Church. And didst thou not know, holy Redeemer, how unfaithful and unworthy thy wife would prove? Yea, LORD! thou didst not only know it, but didst declare it. I knew thou didst say, that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and be called a transgressor from the womb! Yet such was thy love, that this did not stop the graciousness of thine Almighty purposes; neither prevent thy union, or the manifestation of thy tender affection to thy people. In every age, to the worthlessness of thy chosen, thy grace hath been shown; neither hast thou kept back thy loving mercy from thy redeemed, even when like Israel here, thy Church hath gone a whoring, and set up the stumbling block of iniquity in the heart! Oh! LAMB of GOD! what patience but thine could have borne with the sins of thy people; yea, with the unceasing rebellions of the hand that now writes? From the first moment that thou didst pass by, and beheld our whole nature cast out to perish, and polluted in our blood, and didst bid us live to the present hour of thy Church; who shall recount most among all

the members of thy redeemed, the greatest recoveries by grace, amidst the greatest undeservings of nature? Whose song on earth, or whose note of salvation in heaven, shall be the loudest in praise of JESUS's love? Precious LORD JESUS! while I read Hosea's prophecy; behold the relation of Israel's sins, and thy mercy; while I call to mind how thy long suffering hath been exercised in the thousand and ten thousand instances of all thy people, from that period to the present; yea, from the garden of Eden, through all the ages of the Church; and to continue until the consummation of all things; I feel constrained to cry out in the language of thy servant the Prophet; who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. Thou retainest not thine anger forever; because thou delightest in mercy. Yes! precious JESUS; thou wilt turn again; thou wilt have compassion upon us; thou wilt subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The same subject of reproof and expostulation forms the burden of this Chapter. The LORD, by his servant the Prophet, is still speaking to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is very blessed, in reading these scriptures of the Old Testament, to behold how the figures made use of are explained under the New. Our emptiness as a vine, and the plowing of the heart in wickedness, are strong representations to what is really the case of every man by nature, when the fallow ground is not turned by GOD, and the whole man remains unregenerated and unrenewed by grace. But when the soul is made sensible of this, and under divine teaching is led to behold the infinite preciousness of JESUS; then the poor awakened sinner feels the whole three of the Prophet's words, and finds it to be high time indeed to sow in righteousness,

and to reap the rich mercy of GOD's free and sovereign grace in JESUS CHRIST! Reader! it will be no small improvement of this Chapter, if by GOD the HOLY GHOST's gracious influence, so much in Israel's emptiness and transgression we discover, as to be made sensible of our own; and from such a conviction of our nothingness, the all-sufficiency and suitableness of the LORD JESUS is discovered; for then we shall gladly flee from all creature dependencies, to take refuge in Creator strength; and feeling what we are in ourselves by nature, most earnestly rejoice in what we are made by grace. Such views will tend to endear CHRIST to the heart; and form him there *the only hope of glory.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have here a most gracious account of divine love; and a most melancholy account of human ingratitude. There is much of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and his gospel in this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! beg with me for grace from GOD the HOLY GHOST, that we may both follow up his merciful design in giving the Church this precious Chapter, and behold the love of GOD the FATHER to his dear SON! See how GOD's own son, when appointed before all worlds, to be CHRIST, the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD, for salvation to his body the Church; was beloved in the divine mind in this gracious character! Hence he called him out of the Egypt of this world. Hence, in his divine counsels, he set him up, not in open flesh from the beginning, but subsisting secretly in the mediatorial settlements of eternity. And when the fulness of time was come, he came forth for the salvation of his people. And in all the events of his mysterious life, ministry, and death; we may say concerning him, as the Apostle did in his devout prayer; *of a truth LORD, against thine holy child JESUS, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people Israel, were gathered together; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.* And may we not add from the same

authority, in all the works and sufferings of JESUS; *thine hand did lead him, and thy right arm did strengthen him.* Yea, LORD, the Mediator, in all his soul travail, did cast himself upon thee; and thou didst manifest that he was the very CHRIST, in making the pleasure of JEHOVAH *to prosper in his hand!*

And now, LORD, for his sake, look upon the whole Church, and love them as *thou hast loved him.* Teach them, LORD! to go, taking all thy little ones by their arms. And though they know not the LORD, as the LORD ROPHE, that healeth them, yet draw them with *the cords of a man,* yea, with *the bands of love;* and fulfil thy gracious promise to our glorious Head, in making all his people willing *in the day of thy power.* And though thy people are bent to backsliding, and their heart is prone to wander, yet, Holy FATHER! how canst thou give them up? How canst thou make them as *Admah,* or *Zeboim;* while the One, Holy Man, whose name is Wonderful, is in the Sodom of this our World, to save his people from their sins? Hath he not brought in an everlasting righteousness, with which thou hast declared thyself well pleased. And is not this the very righteousness in which thou beholdest thy People? Oh! most gracious GOD and FATHER! we would look up to thee, in, and through the blessed SON of thy love, and say in the language of thy Church: *behold, O GOD, our shield,* and *look upon the face of thine anointed!* Hear LORD, *the voice of Judah,* and *bring him unto his people;* for *Judah yet ruleth with GOD and is faithful with the saints!*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The subject contained in this Chapter hath respect to Ephraim Judah and Jacob: in it there is a mixture of reproof and commendation.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and behold how GOD honored the Patriarch Jacob, a thousand years after his ashes had been mouldering in the dust! Behold what praise the LORD bestowed upon his servant's gallant faith; and learn from hence, how costly such sacrifices are

in his sight, when coming up before him in his dear SON'S name. Oh! that you and I may learn herefrom to wrestle with GOD in prayer; that like the Patriarch, we may have strength in the same source, and have power with GOD to prevail.

But, Reader! while looking at Jacob, let us not overlook Jacob's LORD. It is JESUS, that as a prince and a Saviour hath power with JEHOVAH, and hath prevailed. By his own righteousness, and by the incense of his merits and atoning blood, he comes off victorious, and must prevail FATHER! I will! is the language of our LORD. And while his pleadings are all for his redeemed, what is there then can be withheld, to the all powerful, all prevailing intercessions of his priesthood? Precious LORD JESUS! give me to see thee in thy daily office; now thou art entered into the presence of GOD for thy people. Thou hast indeed, like the Patriarch Jacob, thy type, served for thy wife, as he did for his; and dearly indeed purchased thy Church with thy blood. Oh! keep, LORD, thy redeemed, with thy power, and preserve them to thine eternal kingdom, and be thou, the LORD GOD of hosts, our everlasting memorial.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

Ephraim is still under reproof in this Chapter. But grace still triumphs in the LORD's victory for Ephraim, over death, hell, and the grave.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST numberless beauties which this Chapter furnisheth for the most blessed improvements under grace; methinks I would attend to what my LORD hath said concerning his ransom of his people from the power of the grave, as eminently important; and indeed as including all blessings in one. For if JESUS hath indeed in his own glorious person, conquered both sin, and death, and hell! (as that he hath most assuredly,) in that victory all his people are implicated, and interested in all his triumphs. And as under the HOLY GHOST's teachings, every believing soul is led to see the truth of what the LORD hath said in this Chapter; *O Israel, thou hast*

destroyed thyself; it must be blessed indeed to be equally convinced of what the LORD saith, in me is thine help. Look up then my soul, look up Reader, and hear thy Redeemer's well known voice, when he declares that he hath ransomed his people from the power of the grave, and redeemed them from death. And hath he not most completely and most effectually done it, by the assumption of our nature, and in that nature vanquished death by his own death, and subdued the dominion of the grave in arising from the grave in the triumphs of his cross? Hath he not done all this, as the head of his body the Church, and in our nature opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers? He hath paid our ransom with his blood. He hath answered the whole demands of divine justice by his righteousness. He hath shown the satisfaction wrought out, and made to all the FATHER'S perfections. And as it was impossible that the grave should detain such a prisoner; so is it impossible that any of his seed, for whom he hath purchased redemption, should remain in the prison of the grave; for he hath said, because I live, ye shall live also. Hail! thou glorious LORD! thou art indeed the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in thee shall never die. Well may every faithful child of GOD cry out in the triumphant voice of the Apostle, thanks be to GOD who giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the man of GOD closeth his prophecy, in the sweetest and tenderest expressions of the LORD'S grace and mercy. Israel is shown his fall by nature; and the richest promises follow of grace.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD for the sweet and precious doctrines contained in this Chapter. May GOD the HOLY GHOST write their full import on the heart both of Writer and Reader. I would pray for grace to see my own state described in the first part of it. Indeed

every child of GOD may truly exclaim, I am the man that hath fallen by my iniquity. The LORD help me therefore to take with me words, even GOD'S own words, and come to the throne of grace, in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and find grace, mercy, and peace from Him, in whom the fatherless findeth mercy.

And oh! thou blessed EMMANUEL! speak to my soul, yea, speak to every regenerated soul in those reviving words of thine, *I will heal thy backsliding; I will love thee freely; I will be as the dew unto Israel*

And do thou grant, oh! thou blessed SPIRIT of truth, in thy sweet office of glorifying the LORD JESUS, that through thy gracious influences I may be kept from any more going after my former idols. Yea, give me to see that JESUS is the source of all my strength, hope, and consolations; that in Him is my fruit found, and all my fresh springs are in Him.

Farewell *Hosea!* adieu thou faithful servant of the LORD! Well hast thou ministered to the Church by thy writings in all ages, from thy days to the present hour; and shown in what man's ruin is found, and in whom alone is salvation. And while I bless the Great Head of his Church for thy ministry: my soul desires to go forth in thanksgivings and praises to the LORD GOD, in whom alone thy ministry, or all the ministry of men or angels can be profitable; in that JESUS doth bless, and will bless his holy word by his servants the prophets. Praises be to JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for those blessed writings of inspiration! May the LORD go on to commission them to his glory, who in times past *spake to the Fathers by the Prophets*. But still more would we give praises to GOD, who hath in these last days *spoken to us by his SON*. Oh! thou LORD GOD of the Prophets! everlasting blessings be thine, to whom all the Prophets give witness, that *whosoever believeth in thee, shall have eternal life*. Amen.

JOEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE prophecy of *Joel* is but short; but if it were only from one passage in it, which hath respect to gospel days, and was interpreted by an Apostle with peculiar reference to the open descent of the HOLY GHOST, after the ascension of CHRIST, it would form a precious portion of the spirit of prophecy. *And the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy.*

The name *Joel* is significant; it appears to be a compound of Jah and El; that is, the LORD GOD. We have no account of this Prophet's descent or connection further back than his immediate father. Neither can it be determined with any exactness, the period in which he prophesied. Probably, somewhat about eight hundred years before the coming of CHRIST. But we are much more interested to trace the evident marks of inspiration in Joel's writings, than to be particular as to the time in which he delivered his commission. I only detain the Reader with my usual precaution on entering any and every inspired writing; namely, to be careful to implore that Almighty GOD that guided the Prophet's pen, to influence every Reader's heart, that since to JESUS *all the Prophets give witness*, we may receive the truth in the love of it, and *the truth may make us free*. May the LORD GOD of the Prophets thus graciously do both by Writer and Reader in the present record now opening before us, *to make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophecy begins with an account of a dreadful affliction to be accomplished on Judea. The Prophet exhorts the people to repentance, and appointeth a fast.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark in the instance of this Prophet to what all the other Prophets of GOD bear equal testimony; the process of grace in all ages is the same. Sin brings forth sorrow, and godly sorrow through grace leads to CHRIST for salvation. From the first transgressor in the garden of Eden, to the last fallen son or daughter of Adam to the end of the world, divine teachings invariably produce the same effect. The fathers to the children may therefore make known the LORD'S truth, and the LORD'S praise. Reader! it is most blessed to see, and yet more blessed to experience, our own personal interest in those divine teachings. *I the LORD teacheth thee to profit*, may be discerned and read by every enlightened eye as the title page of the whole of inspiration. And when, in the corrections and visitations of the LORD, by the LORD'S great army, we plainly discover the LORD'S hand; when in the locusts and palmer worms of the earth, we both hear the rod and who hath appointed it; when the fatherly reproofs of a gracious GOD in CHRIST are sanctified to bring the heart to CHRIST; oh! how blessed are the awakening judgments of our GOD, in rousing his people from the sottish stupidity and indolence in which the world and its pursuits have intoxicated the soul, and calling home the heart to JESUS and his salvation. LORD! I pray thee put a cry in every heart of thy redeemed! Especially stir up the ministers of my GOD in the present awful hour of Zion's languishing, to cry aloud and spare not, for the LORD'S deliverance of his people. Oh! for the LORD to be very jealous for his Zion, and make her yet the praise and perfection of the whole earth. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The same subject is continued in this Chapter as in the former, the dreadful day of the LORD's judgments is solemnly described. But the close of the Chapter comes in with the sweetest promises of blessing in the out-pouring of the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both pause over this most striking Chapter, and looking up for the fulfillment of the sweet promise at the close of it, in our own personal interest beg that we may indeed, and in truth, realize and enjoy the precious blessings there contained. Let us observe what is here said, then look to the Gospel, and mark the full confirmation of it; and then, as souls convinced of divine truth, ponder well the sacred contents, and see to it that we neither of us fail of this grace of GOD.

Behold how solemn and how sure the great day of GOD is proclaimed. There is, there must be a day coming, in which all these alarming judgments, which the former part of this Chapter relates in figure, will be manifested in reality! Oh! for grace to sanctify the solemn truths in our houses, and families! Ye ministers of my GOD! do ye not find cause, in the present awful hour, when the LORD's judgments are in the earth, to blow the trumpet in our British Zion, and to sound an alarm in GOD's holy mountain! Yea! do ye not weep between the porch and the altar, and bear testimony to the truths of your LORD in an holy jealousy and zeal for his honor; crying out with one of old; mine eyes run down with water because men keep not thy law! Ye fathers and mothers of the rising generation! will ye not gather your little ones, and present yourselves with the very infants that hang at the breast before the LORD, to implore the LORD's mercy in the present impending evils, that the LORD may be jealous for his land, and pity his people. And oh! ye humble followers of the LORD JESUS, on whom this spirit of grace hath been poured out, the sure token of JESUS love, and your interest in him! See to it, that ye manifest a spirit of grace and supplication, hath been given you, and is continually in your daily walk, by besieging the throne with earnest cries and prayers, that will take no denial for Zion in her

present alarming state of languishing. Go, my brethren, go into the very retirings of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, seeing that you have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS; and give him no rest nor peace, until he establish and make Jerusalem praise in the earth. Oh! for the HOLY GHOST, in his infinite mercy, to pour out of his sevenfold gifts, in a copious fulness, upon all the LORD's heritage, now JESUS is returned to glory, that all the redeemed may be earnest at the throne, until there shall be *a deliverance in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, as the LORD hath said, and in this remnant whom the LORD shall call.* Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this chapter, which closeth the prophecy of Joel, there is contained special blessings to the Church, in the latter day dispensation, and an account to be taken with the enemies of Zion.

REFLECTIONS

READER! every part of GOD's word comes in to support the blessed but solemn prophecies contained in this Chapter; *when the LORD shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe*, he will come no less to take out of his kingdom *all things that offend*. That day will burn as an oven, when all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly will be as stubble, and consumed both root and branch. But to the redeemed, JESUS will arise as *the sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings*.

My unawakened brother, in our common fallen nature (if peradventure this Commentary should come within your observation) will you suffer me to ask, have you ever duly pondered these things? Have you solemnly thought, equal to the importance of the subject, what you will do, or say, when the LORD shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem? If, in that dreadful day of GOD, the heavens and the earth shall shake, can the unregenerated, unpardoned sinner, hope to stand in confidence? Is it not important to ask after the way of safety, and to enquire how to escape the

wrath to come? *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

Ye people of the LORD! Ye that are followers of JESUS in the regeneration; take to yourselves the sweet promises and rich consolations of this most blessed scripture. Your JESUS is coming, and will come to save you. Hear what he saith, and take to yourselves the full comfort of it. *You shall know, JESUS saith, that I am the LORD your GOD, dwelling in Zion!* You shall enjoy his presence, hear his voice, sit with him on his throne. Jerusalem shall then be holy, and be so forever. Then no more strangers shall pass through. No more the Canaanite shall be in the land. No longer the remains of indwelling corruption shall vex the soul; nor the temptations of Satan, or the persecutors of the world afflict. JESUS will have taken away all the remains, and have cleansed all the blood of his people that had not been cleansed. And He will be their joy, their hope, their glory, their portion forever! Amen.

Farewell *Joel!* servant of our gracious GOD! farewell until that blessed day when thou, and all the LORD's heritage, come to enjoy the fulfillment of thy prophecies, and enjoy them forever. Thanks for thy ministry, in the short, but precious gospel truths thou hast from thy master, the LORD GOD of the Prophets, here given us. It is thine honor thus to have been employed, while it is the Church's happiness, to be thus ministered unto. But, blessed forever, blessed be the LORD who hath sent thee with his message! Precious JESUS! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, grace to improve by thy servant's labors; that that blessedness may be in the lot of both, who *hear and keep the words of our GOD*, as the time for the accomplishment draweth nearer. Amen.

AMOS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE Prophet *Amos* hath furnished the Church with a more copious prophecy than that of *Joel*, but the purport of his writings is much to the same amount.

The name *Amos*, which signifies *Burthen*; or as some render it, *loading* or *weighty*, from *Omas*; was not unsuitable to the importance of *Amos's* writings, which are certainly very weighty and powerful. It is supposed that he was of *Tekoah* in *Judah*, about four leagues from *Jerusalem*: but there is no certainty on this point. And it is supposed that his ministry was immediately after that of *Joel*. We have the reign indeed in which it took place; but unless we had the very period of the earthquake which he speaks of in the first opening of his prophecy, it is not very easy to ascertain the exact time. Neither is it essential in a work of this kind. The subject matter of his prophecy, and the evident marks of inspiration with which the Book itself is accompanied, become points of much greater importance to regard. The chief scope of *Amos*, in those Chapters, is directed to the reproof of the nations at large, and Israel in particular. He speaks directly of judgments that were hanging over the head of both, and from the solemn prospect calls upon them to turn to the Lord. But what I more earnestly desire the Reader to remark with me is, the sweet close of his prophecy, in the bright prospect of the coming of the LORD JESUS to his kingdom. Here *Amos* seems to rise to a greater degree of beauty and fulness in his prophecy; and as the other Prophets had done, under various figures; in representing the Mediator's advent and reign; so *Amos* assures Israel, that the Lord would plant them in their own land, and they should never more be plucked up or destroyed. The Lord the SPIRIT, be both with the Writer and Reader of this Commentary, through the whole of *Amos's* prophecy, that *we* may find him, like all his coteremporaries, bearing testimony to JESUS, and to the word of his grace, that to

him give all the Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. Amen.

Chapter 1

SUMMARY

In this first Chapter, Amos in the Lord's name is calling to account the several nations in the neighborhood of Israel, and rousing them to the apprehension of divine judgments.

Reflections

READER! we shall lose the beauty of this solemn scripture, and overlook the interests we ourselves have in it, if we do not behold the Lord of hosts thus calling the nations to account for their hatred to Christ and his people! It is all on Christ's account that their hatred began. In all ages of the Church, this bitterness of the carnal hath gone forth against the Lord's heritage and chosen. It began in the heart of *Cain*, against *Abel*, wholly on this account: *Ishmael* mocked *Isaac*; *Esau* hated *Jacob*: and thus the seed of the Serpent have shewn their deadly teeth against the seed of the Woman, and his offspring. What an awful consideration it is! And what very awful consequences are involved in it! Reader! in the absence of higher evidences, this is no small one, to bring comfort to a child of God; I mean his love to Zion. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, (said one of old) let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Reader! can you adopt this language? Is Jesus and his Church; Jesus and his members, dear to you? If so, take with you the comfortable assurance of the beloved Apostle in his testimony of the divine life, and say with the same confidence as he said; *we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren!*

Chapter 2

SUMMARY

The same subject is continued here as occupied the former Chapter. Moab is first reckoned with, and then Judah, and Israel.

Reflections

Reader! think what a sad representation is made in this Chapter of human transgression. Not only the nations of the earth, but the Lord's people, are involved in the same rebellion against God. It is not *Moab* alone, but *Judah* and *Israel* also. *Had it been an open enemy* that had done the Lord such dishonor, *then it might have been borne*. But the expostulation is cutting indeed, when it is said, *it was even thou my companion, and mine own familiar friend!* Alas! who among the redeemed of the Lord, that can stand forth and plead not guilty to the charge.

Precious Lord Jesus! in every place, and in every view, how sweet and consolatory doth thy great and gracious undertaking come home to my heart! And dost thou, dearest Lord, say, behold! *lam pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves!* Oh! thou Lamb of God! thou hast indeed been pressed for thy people, when as the mighty burden-bearer of thy Church, thou didst bear all our sins in thine own body on the tree, when thou didst die, the just for the un-just, to bring us unto God! Oh! blessed Lord! still vouchsafe to bear our souls *up* above all sin and sorrow, trial and temptation; work in us true godly sorrow for those sins which brought thee to the cross; and do thou, gracious Lord, rescue us from the power and dominion of sin, and the guilt and punishment of it; and *sanctify our whole souls, and bodies, and spirits, to the day of tiny coming.* Amen.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

The subject is continued through this Chapter, which formed a part in the conclusion of the former. Israel is still before the judgment seat, and the Lord is expostulating with his people.

Reflections

READER! while you and I pause over a subject of so truly humbling a nature as this Chapter affords, in the contemplation of the Church's backsliding and rebellion against God; and while from a conscious sense of the part we all bear in the great aggregate of human transgression, we take to ourselves, as we justly ought to do, shame and confusion of face; let us learn to form a proper distinction between the fatherly corrections of the Lord over his children, and the tremendous judgments manifested to his enemies. What the Lord himself hath here said, is enough to lead our hearts to form a right estimate of all his corrections. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* The very scripture, in the moment of threatened correction, carries with it in its bosom a full testimony that that correction is not to destroy but to reform. Hence Reader! let us learn, that the Lord's design is to bring the heart home, not to harden, but to soften; to purge from sin, not to leave the soul in sin; to bring *to* Jesus, not to lead *front* Jesus. A gracious and a blessed end is in every dispensation. And most blessed it is when the poor sinner, led by grace, is brought back with the awakened cry of the soul; *Lord! take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.* Blessed Jesus! how unceasing our need of thee; and how precious thy salvation! Oh! for grace, to have our souls kept from sin, and our souls washed from sin, in thy blood!

Chapter 4

SUMMARY

The Lord is still pleading with Israel, and most solemn pleading it is. The Lord showeth also, how ineffectual hitherto his punishments to reform had proved.

Reflections

READER! the continuance of the Lord's expostulations with his ancient Church, Chapter after Chapter, will not fail I hope, to operate both upon your heart and mine, to the same conclusion as it did in the Apostle's mind; that sin will then indeed appear to be sin, when by the holiness of the commandment it is discovered to be exceeding sinful. Depend upon it, until by the sovereign grace of God in the heart, the proper nature and malignity of sin is brought home in its proper colors, the children of God, as well as others, have but too slight views of sin. It is only when God the Holy Ghost *lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, that the sinner lays low in the dust before God, and never presumes to open his mouth any more in a way of justification, or in softening transgression. And the same solemn considerations will serve to teach, why it is among the Lord's redeemed that the nations of sin, from the remains of indwelling corruption, do sometimes rise up with such violence a-fresh, and distress so exceedingly the soul. It is to shew the believer, after all his attainments, what a poor creature he is in himself; and what lie would be if not kept by the Almighty rower of God, through faith unto salvation. And what can tend to endear Jesus equal to a daily, hourly sense of our need of him? What can so effectually operate, under the Lord's grace, to hide pride from our eyes, and to keep open a perpetual spring of humbleness, and faith, and godly sorrow for sin; as such motions from within, that we are still in the body? Precious Lord Jesus! be thou increasingly precious every hour, and then those workings of a corrupt nature, kept under and restrained by thee, will be overruled to thy glory, and our soul's welfare. Blessed be that glorious covenant, which shews the ruin, and brings the remedy! Though sin hath reigned, and doth reign, unto death; yet shall *grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

We have here the same subject continued, and in which the Lord is taking up a lamentation for the land of Israel. The close of the Chapter brings forward an additional charge against them for hypocritical worship.

Reflections

As we read this Chapter, and as we close it, we may cry out with the Psalmist, *I will sing of mercy and judgment*; and direct our song unto the Lord; *to thee, O Lord, will I sing*. It is truly blessed to observe, how in the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy; and even while the Lord is chastening his people for their sins, he is coming forth to their deliverance in his grace. And it is doubly blessed when the cause is discovered; namely, his own free, rich, and sovereign love, and his covenant engagements in Christ. And though he punisheth them for their sins, and as it is said in scripture, *takest vengeance of their inventions*, yet he regardeth their persons, and forgiveth their iniquities. And it is still more blessed, when the soul of a poor self-condemned sinner is enabled to follow up the precious truth in the heart-felt enjoyment of his own soul. It is founded in covenant love and faithfulness. It is secured in the relationship in which the Great Redeemer hath put himself to his people. It is confirmed in the ransom and full equivalent paid by their Almighty Surety for the sins of his people; and God the Spirit sets to his seat the firm and unquestionable truth. Thus bringing with it all the testimonies of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the poor sinner, when returning by grace unto the Lord, finds confidence ill conning, and *rejoices in hope of the glory of God*'

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

Here is a cry to the Church. The wanton state of professors described; and the Lord's determination to punish.

Reflections

I CANNOT pass away from this solemn Chapter, without first desiring the Reader to ponder well the sacred contents of it, and learn from it how to form a just estimate of what is still going on in life, in the different characters, *between him that feareth the Lord, and him that feareth him not.*

The carnal world, in this our *British Zion*, are, as Amos described the Zion of old, in the time of his ministry. A graceless mind, meeting with what *is* called the good things of life, have their whole hearts, and families, and houses, swallowed up in those sensual enjoyments. No prayer in their family; no grace in themselves; their children, if they have any, their servants all around them, breathe, and live, and move, in the same corrupt atmosphere. They put far away the evil day as a day of dread and horror. *They chant to the sound of the viol;* but know nothing of the melody of the gospel. *They invent to themselves instruments of music;* but are ignorant of the joy of the soul. *They send forth their little ones to the dance;* but teach them nothing of the afflictions of Jesus! But, oh! how sad the close of their account. *They spend their day* (saith Job,) *in wealth,* or (as the margin of the Bible hath it) *mirth and in a moment go down to the grave!* Reader! shall not you and I say, in the language of the dying Patriarch, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united!*

On the other hand, look at the people of God, and you will discover, that in proportion to the attainments under grace they have acquired in the school of Jesus, so are their exercises and conflicts. . *I think* (said Paul) *that God hat/n set forth us, the Apostles, last as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place.* And these were men *of whom the world was not worthy.* Reader! with whom is your choice? Can you with Moses, and from the same blessed principle of faith as he had, take up his resolution, and *choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?* Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of such a state even now: when like him, *we esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the*

treasures of Egypt. And oh! the blessedness that will follow, when mortality is swallowed up in glory!

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet is going on in this Chapter, in the Lord's name, to preach to the people of their sins, when he is interrupted by Amaziah the priest, who informs the king against him. Amos continues faithful and denounceth judgment upon Amaziah.

Reflections

I take occasion, from the noble conduct of the Prophet in this Chapter, in opposing the priest of Bethel, to remark to the Reader and mine own heart no less at the same time, how truly blessed it must be, thus to defend the truths of God, whenever or by whomsoever they are opposed. Cowardice in a minister of God is worse than in the soldier of an earthly prince; for the deserting the cause of this world is but for a day, but running from the Redeemer's standard affects a whole eternity. Had the Prophet been a time-serving man, no doubt the charge of *Amaziah* would have alarmed him, and soon bought him over. But as his study was to approve himself to God, he felt that holy indignation, which not only repelled the attack, but gave him an honest boldness to reprove in his Lord's name. And never was there a day in the Church of God, when a modest firmness became more necessary than the present. Lord! give thy servants, whom, like *Amos*, thou hast called to the work, grace, like *Amos*, earnestly *to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints*. Let an holy zeal make them earnest to win souls, and to consider that faith worth contending for, which gives God all the glory of salvation, and exalts the Lord Jesus as the source and fountain of all spiritual life, in grace here and glory to all eternity. And do thou, Lord, carry on thy work in their heart, and the hearts of thy people, that both may be living under the rich anointings of God the Holy Ghost! Amen.

Chapter 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here again in this Chapter instructing by figure. By a basket of summer-fruit is shown the state of Israel. The Chapter closeth with the threatenings of famine.

Reflections

READER! while we read the awful threatenings of the Lord to Israel of old, of turning the songs of the temple into howlings, and inducing a famine of the word of the Lord, more to be dreaded than all the famine of bread and water; while we trace the cause in Israel's despising the Lord's sabbaths, is it possible but we must tremble, lest the crying sins of our *British* Israel should bring on the same judgments, and from the same causes? Was there ever a day like the present, when the Lord's days were so profaned, or the pure and holy religion of the Lord Jesus so little regarded? Blessed Lord! look in mercy upon our Zion, and take thine own cause into thine own Almighty hand! Pour out upon the remnant of thy people that are left, in the midst of the present adulterous and sinful generation, a *spirit of grace and a spirit of supplication* Enable them to Come with weeping, and with earnest cries for the Lord's graciousness to be preserved to our land. And do thou Lord as thou hast said, and let that sweet promise be now fulfilled, which is now so much needed. *Then will I turn to the people* (thou hast said) *a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent; and then will I take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain!*

Chapter 9

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with solemn threatenings and concludes with gracious promises. The reference to Gospel days is clearly proved

from the application made to this scripture in the Acts of the Apostles, under the Apostle's preaching.

Reflections

READER! Now we have gone through the writings of this highly taught Prophet, let us pause, and gather into one view the whole purport and scope of his ministerial labours in this department, to which God the Holy Ghost commissioned him. We find him, like most of his brethren, in the college of the Prophets, opening his prophecy with marking the desolate state of the Church in the day of his ministry. With what earnestness and zeal do we behold him calling upon Israel to turn to the Lord! How strong and full the figures he makes use of, to set forth the alarming situation in which Zion lay before the Lord. He reproveth indeed all the nations around, and fully shews the Lord's determination to arise to their punishment. But it is Israel and Judah more immediately, whom the Prophet mourns over for their transgressions and sins. Here the Prophet finds cause for the exercise of sorrow and affliction, while calling upon them to turn from their iniquities, and to seek the favour and loving-kindness of the Lord. But, Reader! do not forget to connect with the whole, and to gather into one point of view the close of *Amos*: sermons. His last Chapter in the end of it is all gospel. Jesus and his salvation, the spiritual David of his people, is here set forth, so truly, so lovely, so gracious, and interesting, that it is impossible, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, not to see, that to this one object, and to this alone, the whole of the Prophet's ministry was directed. All that *Amos* said before, and all the alarms he rang to the sinners in Zion, all his labours were to introduce the glories of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give the Church the gracious promises, how the Lord would recover his people, and manifest his grace, notwithstanding all their undeservings. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader grace, to gather the many blessed instructions intended to the Church by this prophecy. Farewell! faithful servant of the Lord! may all that are called to the ministry of the word find equal strength to resist all the *Amaziah's* which oppose them. Blessed Lord Jesus! raise up many an *Amos* in the present day, to hold forth to thy Church and people the truth; and never fail to publish *the whole counsel of God*. Amen.

OBADIAH

General observations.

Obadiah might be an eminent servant in the Church of the Lord in his sermons, and preaching, and ministry: but in his writings he is very short. But certainly, short as it is, for it contains only a single Chapter, it carries with it the mark of divine inspiration.

The name of *Obadiah* is not without meaning. It signifies a *laborer of the Lord*. There are several of this name in scripture. There is an Obadiah mentioned in 1 Chron. 3:21. and another the grandson of *Uzzi*, a chief man in his day with his brethren, 1 Chron. 7:3. One also, a valiant man in David's army. 1 Chron. 12:9. But neither of these was our Prophet. As he opens his prophecy without any account of himself, it is not very easy to determine, either his connection or the precise time of his labours. Some have thought that he was the same *Obadiah* that was a steward in *Ahab's* family, see 1 Kings xviii. 3. But if so, it is astonishing that the whole scope of his prophecy should have been directed about *Edom*, and not *Israel*.

It will be rendered profitable to the Writer of this Commentary, and to the Reader of it, if God the Holy Ghost shall be graciously pleased to lead the hearts of both to any discovery of the Lord Jesus in *Obadiah's* writings. For this will be a further confirmation of that blessed scripture, which saith, that *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*. Rev. xix. 10. Reader let us beg the Lord God of the Prophets, so to bless our present attention to this man's labours, that they may be rendered profitable to our hearts, *through the faith that is in Christ Jesus*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet hath a vision concerning the children of Esau. As sworn foe to Christ, Esau's destruction must follow. Obadiah is here setting it forth. Towards the end of the Chapter there are many gracious promises to Israel.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! we have a very solemn subject in this short but striking prophecy. When we consider the nearness of natural alliance between Jacob and Esau, and behold the bitterness of Edom to his brother, and that from generation to generation; when we look at the source, and trace it to its end; when we call to mind that this is the enmity of nature to grace, the son of the bond-woman to the free; when we contemplate what scripture declares, that there never can, nor ever will be an union between them, in time or to all eternity; bow truly solemn, and how tremendously' awful doth the whole appear!

Reader! let us seek relief from a subject so abundantly distressing, tn the sweet assurances given to Israel, that *upon mount Zion there shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness*. Blessed Lord Jesus! thou art indeed the holiness, and thou art the salvation of thy people. We thank thee, O Lord, for this sweet morsel of scripture prophecy; pointing, as all prophecy doth, to thee, *to whom give all the Prophets witness*. And oh! Lord, let it be blessed to all thy Church, that all of thine who read it, may through thy Spirit's teaching, be enabled to set to their seal that *GOD is true*. Farewell, *Obadiah*, faithful hast thou been in thy testimony. Short as it is, it is sweet. May God the HOLY GHOST be adored for thy ministry, and the ministry of all his servants who have written to us the word of GOD. Give us grace, O Lord, *to follow their faith, considering the end of their conversation, JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. Amen.

JONAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

WE now enter upon the writings of Jonah, the *fifth* of the minor Prophets, so called from the lesser extent of their sermons. He is called *Jonah* the son of *Amittai*, both which names are significant, as most of the Hebrew names are: *Jonah* signifying a *dove*, and *Amittai*, *truth*. His writings have been called by some *sepher* Jonah, that is, the book of Jonah. And indeed the book itself is more historical than prophetic; for, excepting one fragment in it, in which Jonah cried and said, *yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown*, Chapter 3:4. there is nothing of prophecy in it. I rather venture to consider *Jonah* himself as an eminent type of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and therefore his writings became very sweet, as the record of his typical character.

The time of *Jonah's* ministry is not so accurately stated as to mark it with exact precision. Of himself we have a full account, when he lived and where he sprung from, 2 Kings 14:25. And this refutes the account of those in our LORD's days, who declared that no Prophet arose out of Galilee, for *Gath-hepher* is well known as a town in *Zebulun* of *Galilee*, John 7:52. It also makes *Jonah's* ministry to be more ancient than either of the Prophets; *Hosea*, *Isaiah*, *Joel*, or *Amos*, being during the reigns of *Joash* and *Jeroboam*. But his ministry being directed to *Nineveh*, and not to *Israel*, makes it in some measure unconnected with the general thread of the Church's history.

The authority of *Jonah* as a Prophet, and of those his writings, can need no other than what the LORD JESUS himself hath given of both, Matthew 12:39-41. And in respect to our improvement of this part of scripture, I should hope, that independent of the humbling lesson we here learn in *Jonah's* character, of attempting to flee from the presence of the LORD, as well as his infirmity of temper on the withering of the gourd; the views such things give us of poor fallen

nature in its highest characters, will be always profitable. And no less at the same time, the blessed representations here made of divine goodness, patience, and long-suffering towards his servant's frailties; I say, independent of these things; which are highly improving; if we read this book, as setting forth Jonah the type of the ever blessed JESUS, a large scope of the sweetest and richest improvements will, under the LORD'S teaching, arise out of it. May that Almighty LORD of his Church and people, who hath given us this scripture, give both Writer and Reader grace also to the wise understanding of it, that as it is *given by inspiration, so it may be profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Jonah receives a call from the LORD to go to Nineveh. He fleeth to Tarshish. A storm overtakes the ship in which Jonah is embarked. At his request the mariners throw him into the sea, and he is swallowed by a fish.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! improving as the history of Jonah may be found in numberless instances, I cannot, I dare not for a moment lose sight of thee, while beholding thy type in the wonderful account here given, and which so strikingly sets forth thy glorious person, as three days and three nights *in the heart of the earth*. If Jonah was the only sign given in the days of thy flesh, to an evil and adulterous generation, let my, soul bless the LORD for the sweet testimony this brings with it, to thy sovereign grace and salvation. Yes!, dearest LORD! Jonah did resemble thee, when delivered to the raging sea for the salvation of the people. Thou didst indeed bear the overwhelming torrents of thy sufferings, when the vials of justice were poured out upon thy devoted head, and when thou didst tread the wine-presses, of thy FATHER'S wrath alone. And although in thy holy nature there was no shadow of guile; and never wert thou

otherwise from one eternity to another than the unceasing object of thy FATHER'S love; yet, as the sinner's surety, like Jonah, thou didst stand the only cause of the dreadful storm; and all the cataracts of tempest came in upon thy soul, until thou wert *sorrowful even unto death, sore amazed, and very heavy*. And hence those cries of soul; *I sink in deep water where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me*. Blessed LORD JESUS! may my soul frequently meditate on thee in this endearment of character! And as often as I read of Jonah's being cast forth, and the tempest of the sea ceasing in consequence, may I feel my soul refreshed in the contemplation; JESUS I will say was made this and infinitely more for me, that I might be made *the righteousness of GOD in him!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here the prayer which Jonah offered up to the LORD in his dreadful distress. The LORD's gracious answer also in his deliverance.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over this wonderful subject, and behold the miracle here related with fixed attention and regard. Many are the blessed instructions, simply as an history of the LORD'S dealings with his people, which it holds forth; and which, under the HOLY GHOST'S teachings, may and will be profitable. Surely it is consolatory to a deserted soul, to behold in this instance, that his case is not singular. The LORD may, and the LORD will correct the backslidings of his Children. They may during the sharp exercises of correction, fear, that they are cast out of the LORD'S sight. But in the midst of all they still possess precious testimonies, could they but see them, that the union with JESUS is still the same, and cannot be lost. Else how would they resolve still to look to the holy temple? Else how would they groan under a sense of sin, and earnestly pant for a deliverance from it. Evidently Jonah had the same views of GOD'S rich mercy in CHRIST as ever; and was alive to proclaim the LORD'S honor while dishonoring himself. Reader! make application

of these things to your own case and circumstances, and those of the Church at large, and the improvement will be blessed.

But chiefly, dearest JESUS, and above all other considerations in the history of Jonah, may our souls be led to behold in him thy type. And oh for grace to bless thee, and adore thine holy name, that in an age so remote and distant, the great event of thy detention in the heart of the earth, for the salvation of thy people, should have been so wonderfully set forth! Cause the heart both of the Reader and Writer to be often meditating on Jonah's history, and there in figure behold by faith the wonderful mystery of thy humiliation, when for us and our salvation, thou didst condescend to lay in the grave until the morning of thy glorious resurrection! Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have here the LORD again calling Jonah to the service of preaching to the men of Nineveh. The Prophet executeth the commission. And this Chapter records the effect.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark with me the wonderful properties of grace, both in the heart of the Prophet and of the people. See the change in *Jonah!* behold the change in the *Ninevites*. What cannot GOD accomplish, when by the sovereign act of his love he inclines the sinner's heart, and turns the whole tide of the affections back again.

But here, Reader, as in all other instances, do not forget to behold the blessed cause in the provision made for Prophet, Priest, and People, in the person, and by the one all-sufficient sacrifice, of *the LAMB slain before the foundation of the world*. To this, and this alone, GOD hath respect in all his dispensations, both in providence and grace. It is for JESU'S sake sin is pardoned, and the sinner forgiven and received into favor. CHRIST is both the mercy seat, and propitiation; and we have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have here a sad view of the mind of Jonah; the LORD's grace to Nineveh excites the Prophet's displeasure. he is reproved by the LORD under the figure of a gourd.

REFLECTIONS

HERE, Reader, let us pause as we finish the history of Jonah, and gather together into one view the wonderful subject, as it relates to the LORD's servant, and as it relates to the LORD himself, in his abundant grace manifested to such a wayward and rebellious frame of mind. We shall read the account of Jonah's preaching to Nineveh, and his displeasure at the LORD's mercy to little purpose, if we do not learn from the whole to bring the subject home to our own hearts, and under divine teaching discover that the seeds of the same sins, as we find in the *Ninevites*, and the Prophet, are in our nature also. *What* (saith the Prophet) *are we better than they?* No! (saith he) *in no wise. For we have before concluded all under sin.* And to whom, or from what cause do we ascribe the whole of salvation, but to JESUS and his wonderful undertaking in our nature? Chiefly let the people of GOD from this history learn, what man in his highest attainments is, if for one moment left to himself. Though like *Jonah* we have cried from the deep of affliction, when the wormwood and the gall of sin hath been bitterly drank by us; and though from the very belly of hell we have been brought to know the LORD, yet the withering of a gourd will open a-fresh our rebellion, if that thwarting providence, be it what it may, is not sanctified. Precious LORD JESUS! cause both him that writes, and him that reads, to live under the unceasing teachings of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that a spring of humblings and sorrow may be constantly kept open in our souls. LORD, keep from us, as the most dangerous of all evils, every thought of anything and everything in ourselves as righteous; that a sense of the daily workings of corruption, however graciously restrained by thee from breaking out into actual commission, may cause us to go humbly and softly all our day. And above all, dearest LORD, let the daily consciousness of our need of thee, and of thy greatest salvation, make thee daily, yea hourly, more precious to our souls.

Farewell Jonah! I bless my GOD and Saviour for the profitableness I find under his blessed SPIRIT'S teaching of thy ministry. Even the frailties of my LORD's servants, so faithfully recorded in his holy scriptures, afford instruction to my soul. Men of like passions with ourselves, are better suited in my LORD's service than angels of light. But oh! gracious LORD JESUS! what shall I say, or what shall I offer of thankfulness in beholding thy wonderful condescension in causing a *Jonah*, amidst all his unworthiness, to be a lively type of thine own person, when accomplishing the purpose of redemption. Here surely LORD, as in a thousand other instances, *thy thoughts are not our thoughts, nor thy ways our ways*. I bow, LORD, to the dust before thee, and thankfully acknowledge, that both in thine unequalled humiliation and exaltation, thou hast a name above every name, and all creation shall confess that thou art LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.

MICAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE Prophet *Micah* comes forward in the Church with no small eminency as a servant of the LORD, from several brilliant observations concerning his LORD and Master. None of the Prophets but *Micah* had the honor of telling the Church the very memorable and honoured spot where CHRIST should be born. Indeed we are highly indebted to him for many blessed testimonies concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which we find like the spangled stars of the firmament, shining here and there in several parts of his prophecy.

The name of this Prophet is striking. Micah signifies poor and humble. He is called the Morasthite; perhaps from a city in the tribe of Judah called Moresa, or as some render it, Mareshah. He was nearly a contemporary with Isaiah, and consequently lived in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings, of Judah. Some have determined the extent of his ministry as a Prophet, to have been near fifty years; but it is more probable that it did not exceed forty years.

The Reader of this Commentary will be much more interested to find in Micah's prophecy the testimony to his inspired office, from his predictions concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST, than any circumstantial account of the place of his birth, the connections in his family, or the period when he lived or died. I beg the Reader, therefore, to join my spirit at the mercy-seat, that so much light from heaven may shine in upon the sacred page of the writings of Micah, while we go over it, that we may both find precious testimonies to the truth as it is in JESUS: and find cause also to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for this portion of his divine word, to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet opens his commission with a very sorrowful tale. Israel and Judah are under the LORD's displeasure, and therefore Micah speaks of nothing but desolation.

REFLECTIONS

SOME may not easily discover the LORD JESUS in this scripture. But in the poverty and misery of our fallen nature, GOD the HOLY GHOST is not unfrequently preaching CHRIST. For Reader! suffer me to ask, by what more persuasive and powerful means can the LORD JESUS be recommended to our hearts, than by showing us our misery and ruin out of CHRIST? When you and I are taught feelingly and experimentally what sin is; and that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing; surely it must endear CHRIST, and induce a sense of our want of him. Oh! how much will a soul long for JESUS, when led to see that without him we are lost forever. Hence the Prophet's vision is not confined to *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*; all people, yea, all the earth are called upon to the charge. The LORD grant, Reader, that you and I, in the Prophet's call, may feel interested, so as to impress the necessity and suitableness of the LORD JESUS, and that the HOLY GHOST may bring him home to our hearts, and form him there, *the hope of glory!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with the same melancholy relation as the former. But several sweet views of CHRIST arise here and there as we prosecute the contents; and in the close we have a lovely manifestation of the Redeemer under one of his divine offices.

REFLECTIONS

READER! from the perusal of this truly gospel Chapter, behold the gracious provision made for you, for me, for all that are of the house of Jacob, spiritually considered; the Spirit of the LORD is not straitened, neither the power of the Almighty Breaker diminished! Everything around us, in us, and about us, join the Prophet's cry; *arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest because it is polluted.* Surely then we must desire a better country, that is an heavenly. And blessed be our GOD, there is not only prepared for us a better country, but JESUS, our Almighty Breaker, hath broken up, and gone before, and taken possession of it in our name, that as he is there, we may be also. Precious LORD JESUS, we pray thee break through for thy people all that would oppose our following thee! Break for us all the chains of sin, all the devices of Satan, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And do thou, Almighty LORD, break in us all the remaining power of indwelling corruption, and open our prison frames, and prison doors, and bring us out into the glorious liberty wherewith thou makest thy people free. Then shall we, in thy strength, trample over all the power of the enemy, and be made more than conquerors through thy grace helping us. Yea, we shall then pass through the gate, and go out by it; JESUS *our King is before us, and our LORD on our head.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter is much in the strain of the general tenor of the Prophets, full of reproof mingled with gracious promises. Through the whole of the Chapter we find much of the love of GOD, even in the midst of threatened judgment.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! we thank thee, that amidst all our unworthiness and departures, like Israel, thou hast not withdrawn our sabbaths, nor made the sun to go down upon our Prophets. Still there is in our midst, the blessed word of thy Gospel, the means of

grace, and the cry proclaimed every returning LORD's day; *he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches!* And though in the present hour Zion is plowed as a field, and the mountain of the LORD's house lieth low; yet thou hast said that thou wilt visit thy people in the latter day, and gather them together as the sheep of *Bozrah*. Do, LORD, as thou hast said: and hasten the auspicious hour, when *a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*; for thou hast said, *I the LORD will hasten it in his time.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Here is a Chapter which looks into Gospel days, and is indeed full of blessed promises concerning the Messiah's kingdom, from beginning to end.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not dismiss this precious Chapter, until you have again and again pondered well the contents of it. Think at what distance this blessed prophecy was delivered. Behold the fulfillment of it in the coming of the LORD JESUS. See what positive assurances are given for its complete accomplishment. Then consider the days in which you live; upon whom the ends of the world are come; and then in fervent earnest prayer, get into the very retirings of the LORD, and give him no rest nor peace until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Oh! that the cause of JESUS was more generally and warmly taken up, by those who call themselves his people! Oh! that men were less selfish, and instead of seeking their own, would seek the things of JESUS CHRIST. Reader! let you and I beg of GOD to give us grace to prefer Jerusalem's interest above our chief joy. LORD! I would say, *Do good in this good pleasure unto Zion!* Hasten the blessed hour, when thou wilt establish thine house upon *the tops of the mountains, and cause all nations to flow unto it.* LORD! *cause the law of the glorious gospel to go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem!* Amen.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

This is a most blessed Chapter, for the precious contents of which the Church of CHRIST hath found occasion in all ages since possessed of it, and will find occasion to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for it till time shall be no more. We have in it the memorable spot predicted where CHRIST should be born; with assurances of his spiritual government and kingdom, and the gracious marks by which his spiritual Israel should be known!

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! I would leave all other subjects, all other considerations, to follow thee thou LAMB of GOD, wherever I find thee in thy scriptures of truth. And as here in this Chapter thou didst commission thy servant *Micah* to tell the Church, ages before thine incarnation, where thou wouldest be born; at *Bethlehem Ephratah* would my soul meditate the mysterious birth of Him, whose name was, and is, and ever will be, Wonderful! Take wing, my soul, this morning, and fly to the honored spot. A greater light than the ministry of a star, which guided the wise men, will guide thee; for JESUS himself, by his blessed SPIRIT, will go before, and pointing to the place, will say, as in his own blessed words, *this man was born here!* But, oh! Almighty JESUS! even when in sweet meditation at *Bethlehem*, shall I not in devout thought run back into the contemplation of eternity, and call to mind that *thy goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*. Indeed, indeed, my honored LORD, it was before all worlds that thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for their salvation wert thou then the anointed. So that all thou hast done afterwards in time, and all that thou art unceasingly engaged in now in eternity, and will be forever and ever, is on the same blessed design, for the glory of thy FATHER, in the redemption of his and thy chosen. Hail! thou Almighty GOD! Hail! thou Wonderful Man. Thou art, and wilt be, the peace of all thy redeemed, when the whole troops of *Assyrians*, even the whole host of the Church's enemies, shall come into our land. Thou will stand and feed thy flock in the strength of JEHOVAH, in the presence of their foes, and make their cup run over! And thy remnant shall be in

the midst of many people, as a dew, so numerous, so beautiful, so refreshed and comely, from thy comeliness put upon them. And all this, yea, and more than eye, hath seen, or ear heard, or the mind can think, wholly from thyself, and to thyself, and thine own glory; not waiting their cry, or their deservings, but like the sweet influences of heaven in the falling showers, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. LORD! be thou thus according to thy promise, as the dew unto all thine Israel. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

This is a beautiful Chapter, inasmuch as it sets forth the graciousness of the LORD in his expostulations with Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what are all the controversies the LORD hath with his people, but on account of their transgression and sin? And how gracious must it be in GOD, still to bear with his people, and not cast them off as their iniquities deserve! And may it not be said, as in this Chapter, so in all ages of the Church, was there ever mercy like that which the LORD hath manifested to his Church? How tenderly doth the LORD call upon the people to become witnesses against themselves, and to his grace and kindness towards them? How did the LORD then, and how doth the LORD now, guard and fence his redeemed from all the *Balaams* and *Balaks* that would destroy them. And what doth the LORD require in return? Surely nothing but what common policy and common honesty would direct, even if thankfulness to the LORD was out of the question. Can we show justice to men, if we keep back and withhold justice to GOD? Convinced as we must be, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, can be no acceptable service to the LORD; shall we not delight to offer that which is? And if infinite love, and infinite grace hath provided a full ransom for sin in the blood of CHRIST, shall we not in justice confess, that without it we are lost forever? If JEHOVAH hath set forth JESUS as the first born in the womb of mercy, yea, mercy itself in all the fulness of it, shall we not love JESUS for

his great salvation, and GOD the FATHER for giving it? And if all that is required of a poor sinner, that is so poor and insolvent that he hath nothing to bring, is, to do this justice, and love this JESUS, and to walk thus humbly with his GOD; can there be terms more gracious, more blessed, and condescending? LORD! give both to Reader and Writer this grace, that we may hear the LORD's voice thus crying to the city, and under divine wisdom, *see thy name*, and rejoice in thy salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Prophet laments his solitary situation as a child of GOD. He takes comfort in the view of his rich consolation in the LORD. He closeth the Chapter in words of admiration at the free and gracious mercy of GOD, in Covenant love.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us beg for grace to follow the Prophet's example, and in times of general corruption, as the present, instead of lamenting that we are constrained to dwell with *Mesech*, and to have our habitation among the tents of *Kedar*; make these situations profitable by accepting them as they are really meant, to compel our hearts to leave the society of unfaithful and false men, for the sweet communion of our faithful and true GOD. Help me, thou dear EMMANUEL, to be looking unto thee, and waiting for thee, as the LORD GOD of my salvation! Take, my soul, the same assurance as the Prophet did, for sore thou hast equal cause, since now redemption work is finished, and complete; and say, as he did, *My GOD will hear me*. Yes! if thou canst really and truly call JESUS *thy GOD*; surely thou canst with confidence really and truly say, *my GOD will hear me*. And though the enemy may for the moment rejoice; though thou mayest for the hour walk in darkness; yet still, amidst all, thou knowest thy GOD is *Mine everlasting light, and thy GOD thy glory!* And, my soul! let not the Prophet exceed thee, either in admiration, or in love, at beholding the peerless grace of a covenant GOD in CHRIST. Hath not the LORD in thine instance, as in his, remembered

his faithfulness and truth to a thousand generations; and for JESUS sake pardoned thy sins, and cast them into the depths of the sea of JESUS blood! Hail thou blessed LORD! still shall that song swell in every note, and be the last on the trembling lips of time, and the first and last through all the periods of eternity; *to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us Kings and priests to GOD and his FATHER, be glory for ever.* Amen.

Farewell Micah! farewell faithful servant of thy GOD! I bless the LORD for having sent thee into his service, and having commissioned thee to the delivery of so many precious things as are contained in this prophecy; and if there were no other, for that blessed one concerning my LORD's place of nativity. Surely thy GOD meant that this part of thy prophetic writings should be peculiarly directed to counteract the dreadful heresy of the last days, concerning the GOD head of my LORD. For how could any Being, less than an eternal Being, have his goings forth from everlasting! Thanks be to GOD for the services of his Prophets! Blessed, blessed for ever be JEHOVAH for the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

NAHUM

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

NAHUM is placed as the *seventh* of the *twelve* minor Prophets, in his prophecy or vision, as his writings are called, and as it stands in the sacred canon. His name in the original signifies *consolation*; from *Nachah* to guide. He is called the *Elkoshite*; probably a native of *Elkoshai* in Galilee; though some have thought that his father's name was *Elkoshai*. The particular period of his ministry is not exactly ascertained; though in the margin of our Bibles the translators have made it about seven hundred and thirteen years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The burden of his prophecy seems to be principally directed to *Nineveh*; but in reality the great design of his labour was intended for the spiritual consolation of the Church. I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with an account gathered from early writers concerning this man. For the most part, these things are merely conjectural. And as GOD the HOLY GHOST, while condescending to make use of his ministry, hath thought proper to observe silence concerning the man, it should seem to be our wisdom to do the same. Many of the LORD'S faithful servants which are hidden from our knowledge, who have served the Church in their day and generation, will be brought forward at the great day of the LORD, in their sphere of glory in JESUS; *though while upon earth they flourished as the flower of the mountain, which shed its fragrancy, and is but little known or noticed of men.* Reader let us enter upon this sacred Book, as we have all the other inspired writings, with prayer and supplication; that all the blessings intended from it to the Church may be in our enjoyment, and that it may prove an *engrafted word*, which in and through the LORD JESUS, *is able to save our souls!*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The chief points in the opening of Nahum's prophecy, are to set forth the LORD's just judgment on his enemies, and his mercy over his Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think how gracious the LORD is in his attention to his people, even when their sins are calling forth his chastisement. The Church was now going into captivity, but still, though deserving correction, it is the correction of a father; and though the enemy be permitted to afflict, yet they shall not destroy; and in due time the LORD will reckon with them for it.

And what I beg the Reader more especially to regard in this delightful Chapter is, the method the LORD takes to comfort his people, with the tidings of salvation. It was at a period when many hundred years were to run out before the coming of JESUS. But notwithstanding this, as the glorious events of salvation, like the Almighty Author of it, was the same yesterday and to day, and forever; so the Church of GOD shall be comforted with the assurance of it in all, ages. Reader! do not overlook this! It was this that became the joy, the comfort, the consolation of the faithful through all periods of the Church. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, all alike lived in the enjoyment of it, and all died in the full assurance of it. The covenant of redemption was, and is the covenant of eternity. And consequently they are, and must be the same things with all the redeemed; in trouble or joy, in death or in life. Hence *Nahum*, hence *Isaiah*, hence *Paul*, yea all, both Prophets and Apostles, welcome CHRIST; and the very feet of the publishers of salvation are beautiful. Precious, precious JESUS! what unknown, unexplored, and ever to be admired and adored beauties, are centered in thy One glorious Person! *thou altogether lovely and fairest of ten thousand!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter a very awful account of the LORD's judgments. The excellency of Jacob and Israel is said to be turned away; and the Chapter is one continued account of solemn dispensations.

REFLECTIONS

I HAVE often thought that if the ungodly and carnal world could but consider, that all the opposition which they are making against the Church is overruled to the LORD'S glory and his people's furtherance; they would, even from motives of ill will, desist sometimes from the exercise of their unprovoked malice. And I have as often thought, if the people of GOD could but keep in view that the malice of their opposers is not only permitted, but even appointed of the LORD; and like the clouds, pregnant with refreshing showers, must at length break over their head in blessing; how would they bless GOD for raising up to them enemies, to thwart and call forth their graces into exercise. In the history of *Egypt*, the LORD himself so explains the persecutions *Israel* sustained. *He turned their heart (it is said) to hate his people.* Psalm 105:25. So that though *Pharaoh* stormed, and the *Egyptians* oppressed them, yet they were but the instruments, the hand was the LORD'S. Reader! whatever tends to lead the heart to the LORD, must be of the LORD. And whether *Egypt*, *Assyria*, *Babylon*, or *Nineveh*; whether corruption within, or persecution without; whether our own deceitful hearts, or the world, or the powers of darkness, assault and harass, and afflict the people of GOD; wait but the issue, and listen to the voice of the LORD. To every adversary of his Church, the LORD speaks in those decisive words, *behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD!* Blessed LORD JESUS, I would say for myself and Reader, *if thou be for us, what need we care who or what is against us!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have the continuation of the same subject, as in the two preceding chapters. Under the character of Nineveh, the LORD is declaring the final destruction of the Church's enemies.

REFLECTIONS

HERE Reader! let us pause ere we dismiss this short but striking prophecy. See how attentive the LORD the HOLY GHOST hath been, in all ages, in watching over the concerns of his church! And wherefore is it think you, but because all the Persons of the GODHEAD are engaged in the great design, and each find their glory in the great salvation. Oh! that you and I, thus convinced of the LORD's love and care of his Church, and watchfulness over it, may be watchful also on our part of that love, and never, never lose sight of it in any of the most trying occasions. What shall interrupt, or what shall destroy this care of JESUS concerning his chosen. Sin shall not; for JESUS hath taken away sin, by the sacrifice of himself. The world shall not; for CHRIST hath overcome the world. Death and hell shall not; for JESUS hath vanquished both. Oh! then, hear JESUS'S voice, my brother, in every conflict, which he speaketh to your and his enemies, as in this scripture; *behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts.* Precious LORD JESUS! be thou our strength, our shield, and our exceeding great reward!

Farewell *Nahum!* farewell thou faithful *Elkoshite!* I beg for grace to remember thy blessed words. *Beautiful, indeed, upon the mountains are thy feet, and the feet of, all them that bring good tidings, and that publish peace!*

HABAKKUK

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE name of this Prophet, *Habakkuk*, which seems to be derived from *Chabak* to embrace, may be supposed to mean an *Embracer*: though some derive it from *Nebac*, to wrestle. It is well calculated that he delivered his prophecy much about the same time as *Jeremiah*, which was not long before the destruction of the kingdom. So that what is said in the Apocryphal writings of the history of Susanna, concerning *Habakkuk* carrying a dinner to *Daniel* in the lion's den at Babylon, is doubly proved to be fabulous, both on account of date, as well as truth. The opinion of those who conclude *Daniel's dinner* to have been *Habakkuk's* writings, is better founded. For as *Habakkuk* in those writings declared, that *the just should live by faith*, it is possible *Daniel* might call to mind in the den this blessed truth, and feel, refreshed from it.

The prophecy of *Habakkuk* is a most precious portion of scripture, and which hath received very ample testimony, both of its authenticity and inspiration. It is quoted more than once by the New Testament writers: Acts 13:41. compared with Habakkuk 1:5. and so again Habakkuk 2:4. with Romans 1:17. Galatians 3:11. and again the same blessed portion is a *third* time quoted by the same Apostle, Paul: Hebrews 10:33. And in what numberless instances the LORD the HOLY GHOST hath stamped his seal to its divine truth, in the hearts of the redeemed; who shall take upon him to say? We have many sweet glimpses given us of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in *Habakkuk's* prophecy, which I pray the Great and Almighty Author of it, who guided the Prophet's pen in writing, will guide us in reading of it, that here, as in all the other sacred records concerning JESUS, we may discover, that *to Him gave all the Prophets witness*; and that our faith in Him may be founded, not *in the wisdom of man*, but *in the power of GOD*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The title of the prophecy is said to be a burthen. In this Chapter we find the Prophet crying to the LORD, and calling also to the nations of the heathen concerning their sins, and the punishment to follow.

REFLECTIONS

READER! over and above the numberless precious things this Chapter holds forth to us in divine truths, we are here blessed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, with a sweet sample of an Old Testament Saint at his devotions; and the LORD'S gracious answer to his servant. When a child of GOD cries out, as *Habakkuk* here did, in contemplating the iniquity of the times, and feeling his own corruption also, see how gracious the LORD is? The Prophet no sooner calls to the LORD, but the LORD hears and makes answer. I cry out, because of violence, saith the Prophet; and wilt thou not hear? Yea, saith a gracious GOD, I will not only hear, but I will do such a work of grace in the gift of my dear son, as shall do away all the ruins of the fall. And yet, though I will work thus marvelously, there are thousands that will not believe. Reader! think what the LORD hath done in our day and generation, now redemption work is finished, and CHRIST returned to glory; and yet, may it not be asked in the Prophet's words, *who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* Oh! for grace, to cry out with the Prophet, *art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my GOD, mine Holy One?* LORD grant it never may be said, either to him that now writes, or him that reads, *behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet in the preceding Chapter having offered up his prayer; in this is represented as waiting for his answer. The LORD grants him a gracious one; the Chapter closeth with a solemn account of the LORD in his temple.

REFLECTIONS

I could dwell long, and with delight, in meditating the blessedness of what is here suggested, in the privilege of a gracious soul waiting constantly on GOD; and the LORD's grace, as manifested to those waitings. For certain it is, never did a child of GOD begin the sweet employment, and first call upon the LORD, before the LORD called upon his redeemed. For what the Apostle John saith, is founded in the unerring wisdom of JEHOVAH; *if we love him, it is because he first loved us*. I could dwell much on this blessed and precious point, and under GOD the HOLY GHOST gather many delightful improvements from it. But I must leave all these, and every other subject, to mark what is here said of the LORD JESUS, and to follow him wheresoever he goeth. Reader! what a sweet thought it is, and peculiarly so in the present awful times of degeneracy; that the promise is absolute; *the earth shall be filled, with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD*. JESUS shall see of *the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*. His glorious person shall be the one object of adoration, love, and praise, to all the Church, and to all the earth. *Men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed*. Who but must join in the earnest cry, LORD hasten thy kingdom, and cut short thy work in righteousness. Bring on that promised era, when the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet, and great voices shall be heard in heaven, and that glorious proclamation shall be made: *the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the Prophet still at his devotions; in which he celebrates the wonders of redemption, and yet more the glorious GOD of redemption.

REFLECTIONS

*HAIL! thou Almighty LORD JESUS! do I not behold thee in this precious scripture, set forth as the great Saviour and Redeemer of thy Church and people? Truly, LORD, thy goings forth have been, in this divine character, from everlasting. Before the earth was formed; yea, before thou hadst gone forth in any acts of creation, thou didst stand up at the call of thy FATHER, thy Church's glorious head and husband, from all eternity. And until the fulness of time appointed in the counsel of peace arrived, what were all the manifestations in the Old Testament Church, but tokens how ardently thou didst long openly to come and tabernacle in our nature, for the redemption of thy people. Didst thou reveal thyself to *Abraham*, to *Isaac*, to *Jacob*; didst thou call *Moses* at the bush, and go before thy Church, when bringing the Church out of *Egypt*; didst thou give the *law at Sinai*, and make the inhabitants of *Palestina* and *Midian* to tremble; what, dearest JESUS, what were all these, and numberless other revelations of thyself, but to testify how assuredly thou wert come forth for the salvation of thy people. And what is it now, O LORD, now thou hast finished redemption work, and art returned to glory, but every day, and all the day, renewed manifestations of the same, that JESUS will bring home his ransomed ones finally, fully, and completely; that where he is, there they shall be also. Hail then, thou glorious, gracious, great I AM; the visible JEHOVAH of thy Church and people! Oh! grant, that like thy servant the Prophet, whether fig-trees blossom or withhold their fruit; whether the olives fail, or fields yield their meat; JESUS lives and loves, and will live and love forever. *He is a rock, his work his perfect*: and He is the rock of my salvation. Farewell *Habakkuk!* thy GOD is my GOD; and He is the horn of his people. Blessed be the LORD for this sweet ministry of thine; and blessed be thy labours. Above all blessed, blessed for ever be the GOD of all mercies in JESUS CHRIST. Amen.*

ZEPHANIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Prophet *Zephaniah*, whose writings we are now entering upon, was the last of all the Prophets before the captivity of the Church, when carried away into Babylon; consequently a cotemporary with *Jeremiah*. His name, which *is* compounded of *Saphon*, to hide, and *Jah* the Lord, signifies *the secret of the Lord*. His genealogy is enumerated in the first verse. If the Reader will consult *Jeremiah* 21:1 and 37:3 he will find *Zephaniah* sent by *Zedekiah* to consult *Jeremiah* on the subject of the Church's distress. The chief purport of his ministry seems to have been directed to proclaim to the Church the sure overthrow of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*; and as the other Prophets did, so did *Zephaniah*, point to the blessings in their recovery, by the promise of the coming of the Lord. I think it unnecessary to enlarge on those general observations, and therefore shall enter at once on the Book of *Zephaniah*; only first begging the Reader to join me in prayer before the throne, that our attention to this portion of the word of prophecy may not be in vain in the Lord.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains God's judgments for divers sins.

REFLECTIONS

THINK Reader! from all that you and I have seen and gone through, in reading of the sins and sorrows of poor fallen nature, what an awful state was that nature in by the fall, and what a blessed deliverance from the guilt, dominion, and endless punishment of it,

by the gracious undertaking and accomplishment of salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ! Oh! thou Great, thou Glorious, and Almighty Benefactor of thy people. It was thine, O Lord, to bring us out from a ruin which nothing could have delivered from but thou. It is thine now, O Lord, to keep us from. A ruin that would still cast us down, did not thy grace preserve us. And it is thine, O Lord, for ever to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before thy throne, in thy kingdom. Precious Lord Jesus! do thou who hast been our preserver, and the preserver of thy Church in all ages, keep us to the end, and bring us to thine eternal glory. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this chapter is making a very pressing exhortation to repentance, and to the seeking of the Lord. He afterwards speaks of judgments to the nations around.

Reflections

READER! behold the different aspect this scripture holds forth us, and pause in the view! May we not ask, and ask with trembling, on hearing those awful judgments of God; *if the righteous scarcely are saved*; if they cannot be saved but in a better righteousness than their own; *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear*? I have often thought what a mystery it is, that men of no religion can live so secure, and die so quiet, with such trembling judgments over their heads. They have no promise to flee to; no earthly comfort secure to them; and yet live on regardless. The Lord's anger; the alarms of their own consciences; the prospect of death; the alarms of eternity; these are always as specters in their view when troubles come, and haunt them night and day. How is it that they live in such a state? How is it that they die in such a state?

Look on the other hand at God's people; the Lord's *may be's* support and carry them through all. Afflictions may come; afflictions will come; but Jesus comes with them and in them; and the consciousness of an interest in Him, and redemption in his blood, softens every evil, and takes out the sting of sorrow, yea, death itself.

Reader! see to it, that we have this interest in Jesus, and we are then prepared for every event. Though *Gaza* be forsaken, and *Askelon* become a desolation, though the earth be moved, and mountains cast into the sea, Christ is *our hope, and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens in sharp reproofs to Jerusalem, but ends in blessed promises. It contains much of Gospel mercies, and sweetly points to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflections

BLESSED Lord! how delightful is it to trace the footsteps of thy grace by the ministry of thy servants, in teaching and leading thy Church in all ages! How truly condescending was it, O Lord, to comfort the Church before their captivity, in the prospect of thy coming! And how truly gracious to open to their view such sweet features of thy person, character, and offices, as might direct their minds to the knowledge of thee in that day, when thou wouldest come to bind up the breaches of thy people, and to heal their wounds. Hail, thou holy Lord! Thou hast indeed fulfilled, and more than fulfilled, this prophecy of thy servant, in thy coming. Thou hast taken away the judgments of thy people, and cast out the enemy. Thou hast prevented the sight of evil any more, by doing away sin, with all its dreadful consequences, by the sacrifice of thyself! Do thou then, O blessed Jesus, manifest the truth of this precious scripture, by thine indwelling residence in the midst of thy Church and people. Gather every poor follower of thine to thyself. Save her that halteth, and get praise and fame to thy glorious name, in every land where thy redeemed have been put to shame. Yea! blessed Lord, prove by these sovereign acts of grace, that thou takest part in all that concerns thy Church, and that thou art, and ever will be Jesus, for thou wilt save thy people from their sins. And let thy people, as this scripture hath promised, be so completely and fully gathered to thee, that their name, in and from thine, may be a praise

among all people of the earth, when thou hast turned back their captivity before their eyes, and thou hast put thy great name to the truth of it, as the Lord God ! Adieu *Zephaniah!* thou art indeed *Zephaniah*, or *Zeph-neth-paaneah!* for thou art a revealer of secrets, and hast faithfully revealed to the Church the wonders of redemption by Jesus. The Lord be adored for thy ministry, and the ministry of all his servants, and their faithfulness in Jesus! Amen.

HAGGAI

General Observations

The Prophet *Haggai* is the *tenth* in point of order, among what is called the minor Prophets. It is supposed that he was born in *Babylon* during the captivity. His prophecy is but short, and it should seem to have been but of short duration. According to *Ezra*, *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, prophesied much about the same period. See *Ezra* 5:1. And we may conclude from what is said, *Haggai* delivered all his prophecies from the sixth month of *Darius* to the ninth; which was of short duration indeed. His name is remarkable, and is derived from *Chagag*, to dance; meaning a season of joy. The chief purport of his prophecy is, to comfort the builders of the temple in their undertaking with an assurance from the Lord, that by the building, it should be rendered more glorious than all the splendour of Solomon's temple. I only beg the Reader to join me in prayer before we enter upon the book of this prophecy, that the reading of it may be accompanied with divine teaching, to our mutual improvement, and to the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Chapter 1

Summary

In this Chapter Haggai reproves the people's negligence, and incites them to the building of the Temple, and God promiseth his assistance therein.

REFLECTIONS

Who can call to remembrance the desolated state of the Church, in the ruins at the return of the people from the *Babylonish* captivity, but must feel concern at the sad and deplorable visitation! And who

that beholds the backwardness of the people to remove the ruins, and to erect a place of worship to the Lord, but must be astonished at a conduct so highly blameworthy? What can be more awful than to see the house of God in ruins, and men's houses built with cedar, and painted with vermilion? In how many instances is it so now?, Reader! Have you never seen the house of God desolate, and the houses of the priests like palaces? I have. Precious Lord Jesus! Happy is it for thy people, that in thee, whatever the *outer buildings* are, they have in thee a temple indeed! Thou art the foundation Jehovah laid in Zion; and all new covenant blessings rest upon thee. Lord! Cause my soul to be founded in this foundation, that I may be growing up to thee in all things, and be found in thee, and through thee, *for an habitation of God through the Spirit*. Amen.

Chapter 2

Summary

This is a most blessed Chapter, full of Gospel, and full of Christ. The Prophet speaking by the Spirit of the Lord, encourageth the people to the work of the Temple. There are gracious promises in the close of the prophecy to Zerubbabel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Pause, and consider, while going over this blessed prophecy, concerning the person, work, character, and offices of the Lord; whether He, who is here said by Jehovah himself, to be the desire of all nations, is the first, and last, and comprehensive object of all thy desire; for life and death, for time and eternity? Behold the Lord Jesus in this most blessed and delightful point of view. Sweetly was it prophesied of Him by another Prophet, that *He should sprinkle many nations*. And when we discover him as the One great and glorious ordinance of heaven for salvation, *neither is there salvation in any other*: When we look at him as Jehovah's gift, for the common, and only remedy, for the sins of a whole world: When we know the suitability, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus on the one hand, and the freeness, fulness, greatness, and everlasting nature of that rich grace of God the Father on the other; surely the Lord

Jesus doth appear so blessedly answering to this character, as the desire of all nations. And did all nations but know him, all nations would be in love with him. As one sun in the heavens answers for all the world; and one ocean supplies all the earth; so one Lord Jesus Christ is enough for all, and answers the wants of all. Reader! Bring home the point to your own person, and enquire whether He is so altogether lovely in *your* view, as to be the fairest and chiefest among ten thousand? It is indeed truly blessed, when a man's own experience bears a correspondence to the divine testimony; and Christ is formed in the heart, as the one desire of the heart, and the hope of glory. Precious Lord Jesus! Thou, who by thine appearance in our flesh, in thy temple didst fill the latter house with greater glory than the former; do thou fill thy Church now upon earth, as thou art filling thy Church in heaven, with thy presence. Surely, thou thyself, O Lord, art the temple, the altar, the mercy-seat, the propitiation, the High Priest, and the sacrifice! All, all is centered in thee, for all before thee were but types and shadows. Thou, thou art He, whom Jehovah hath chosen, the signet of the Lord of hosts, and the seal of the covenant of peace between heaven and earth! Oh! then precious Jesus, grant that on thee, as the foundation, thy whole Church being built, all thy redeemed upon earth may be growing up *unto an holy temple in the Lord, for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, until we join the Church above, when the last stone of the spiritual building is brought home *with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it*. Farewell *Haggai!* We thank thy Lord, and our Lord, for thy ministry and testimony concerning our Jesus. Once upon earth, thou didst witness the weeping of some, and the joy of others, in beholding the second temple. Ere long thou wilt behold the whole body of Christ, forming one temple, of his body the Church, in glory. And then, when the Lamb is on his throne, and encircled by the innumerable multitude of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and all the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, and clime, then will the hymn of salvation be sung amidst the vast host, where all tears are wiped away from all eyes, and the song of redemption to God and the Lamb, will be the everlasting song of heaven! Amen.

ZECHARIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of prophecy we are now entering upon, is not only recommended to our most diligent attention on account of its length, but on account of its great importance in the Church of Christ. The very many rich and precious things contained in it, which point to Jesus, and the blessed testimony it bears to Him, and his glorious character, as Mediator, are in themselves ample inducements to make every lover of the blessed Jesus prize this inspired book of God. Over and above the internal evidence it gives of its divine authority, the references made to it by the inspired writers of the New Testament, give it a peculiar claim upon our hearts. I think it is quoted no less than eight times by the Evangelists, and once by our Lord himself. Matthew 26:31. with Zechariah 13:7.

Zechariah's name (or Zachariah, as read by some,) is truly significant. Our pronunciation of it in English differs from the original, and thereby lessens to our recollection its power. It is *Zachar* and *Jah!* meaning *remembrance*, and the Lord. And is not this, when compounded, (I merely ask the question, not determine it,) as an office under the Holy Ghost, to bring to remembrance of the Lord? The period of Zechariah's prophecy was at the same time as Haggai ministered, and probably he was one of those that returned with the captivity from Babylon, somewhat about five hundred years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord the Holy Ghost give to him that now writes, and to him that reads the words of this prophecy, grace to understand what is herein contained concerning Him, to whom all bear testimony, that we may with thankfulness receive the things which are freely given to us of God.

Chapter 1

SUMMARY

The Prophet soon enters upon the account of his vision, after giving his name, and descent, and the date of his prophecy. The close of this Chapter is with gracious promises to Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us both pause over this first chapter of the Prophet:, and beg for grace to bless God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, for the grace manifested by each, and by all, in their office, character, and work, in the glorious covenant of redemption, as set forth most blessedly in this precious portion of prophecy.

Surely, Almighty Father, nothing can more fully show the tenderness of thine heart, and the soundings of thy bowels towards the Church, than in thy gracious answers, as contained in this Chapter, to the all prevailing merits and intercession of thy dear Son.

And surely thy Church, blessed Jesus, must be lost to all sense of love and affection, if such views as are here set forth of thee, in thine unequalled condescension, when coming down among the myrtle trees of this lower world for our salvation, do not call forth every faculty of the soul in adoration, attachment, and praise to thy glorious person, both as One with the Father, in the essence of the Godhead, and as one with us in our nature; *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.*

And no less do we find cause to look up in love and praise to thee, thou holy and eternal Spirit, who from thine own sovereign power and Godhead, and in thy covenant engagements, as the Comforter of the Lord's heritage, thou hast given such a precious testimony of the same superintending care over the present, and eternal interests of the redeemed, as is here displayed, by the appointment of the ministry of thy holy Word, in bringing the Church acquainted with such wonderful things of salvation.

Hail! holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! in thy threefold character of Person, while existing in the union of the Godhead! The whole Church, in heaven and earth, do praise thee! And blessed forever be that wisdom of God, in a mystery, whereby we can and do approach the Lord, in and through the glorious mediation of an

Almighty intercessor. Blessed, blessed forever be God, for Jesus Christ! Amen.

Chapter 2

SUMMARY

The Prophet in this Chapter is engaged in the opening of it in visions; but soon enters upon most blessed things without figures, in describing the great events of Christ's coming and dwelling with his people.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED Lord Jesus! do I not behold thee in many of the precious things spoken of in this Chapter? Truly, Lord, it was said by thee, that Jehovah thy Father possessed thee in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; and that then thou wast set up from everlasting! And was it not, dearest Lord, as the Covenant Head of thy Church and People? Were not thy delights then with the sons of men, in this gracious Character? And when *Zechariah* beheld a man, as is here described, with a line to measure Jerusalem, was it not thou, O Lord, showing to thy Church thereby, that thou knewest not only the dimensions of thy Church and Temple, but all the chosen polished stones of it, the members of thy mystical body, whose *names are written in the book of life*? And who but Jesus is a wall of fire to his people, and a glory in the midst of them? To whom is the Church dear, and like the tender apple of a man's eye; but to Him that hath died for his Church, bled for his Church, is everlastingly interceding for his Church, and will not consider himself fully glorious until the whole Church is brought around him in glory? Who can be said to dwell in the midst of his people, or who is the Lord's portion, but Israel the lot of his inheritance? Precious Lord Jesus! do I not behold thee, my risen, exalted, and glorified Saviour; do I not behold thee in all these, and a thousand other endearing instances, of thine unequalled love to thy redeemed, and thereby proving that thou art indeed our Lord, and that the Lord of hosts hath sent thee unto thy people? Almighty Jesus! carry on, and finish, in thine own time, all thy blessed purposes yet to be accomplished.

Cause many nations to come to thy rising! Bring home thy redeemed ones, thine ancient people the Jews, and let the fulness of the Gentiles be completed. And oh! thou sovereign Lord God! when that great day of thine shall come, and thy feet shall again stand on Mount Olivet; then will the whole earth be silent in one universal act of wonder, love, and praise! Amen.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

This blessed Chapter, like the former, contains much of Christ. Under the type of Joshua, the High Priest, the cleansing and glory of the Church are set forth.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! look up with thankfulness to God the Holy Ghost, for the blessed information given in this Chapter, of the state in which poor sinners, both ministers and people, as they are in themselves, appear before God. Thank the Lord the Spirit, that since we have such an accuser of the brethren before God, we are made acquainted with his devices, And oh! bless the Great and Almighty Glorifier of the Lord Jesus, for the blessed view he hath here afforded the Church of the everlasting and all-prevailing Advocacy of Jesus. Yes! thou glorious Intercessor, thou complete justifying righteousness of thy people! Thou hast rebuked Satan. Thou dost, thou wilt rebuke him. Neither shall he prevail against us. We are indeed clothed with filthy garments; for our best robes, our prayer robes, our sacramental robes, all are unclean, unless washed from their impurities in thy blood. Do thou, O Lord, say concerning all thy redeemed now, as of *Joshua*, the high priest of old; *behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, I will clothe thee with change of raiment!*

And oh, thou blessed Lord! Do I not behold in thee the Branch Jehovah hath brought forth, raised up, and made blessed to all thy people? How fragrant, how everlastingly filled with verdure! How fruitful in all redemption blessings to thy redeemed! Under thee, Lord, and thy shadow, would my soul for ever sit with delight, and *thy fruit will be sweet to my taste.* On thee, O Lord, as the Stone

Jehovah hath laid in Zion, would my soul for ever gaze, and feast my ravished eyes! Blessed, and Almighty Jehovah! On this signet, this High Priest of my soul, grave my poor name, and give me to see my soul's interest, and everlasting security in that unspeakable mercy, since thou hast removed the iniquity of that land in one day; so that; now if the iniquity of Israel be sought for, there shall be none; and the sons of Judah, and they shall not be found. Blessed! blessed for ever be God, for Jesus Christ! *In him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* Amen.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still in the relation of the visions of God. A golden candlestick, and two olive trees, are made emblems of the Church. Zerubbabel is introduced as a type of the Lord Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

Hail! thou great, thou glorious Holy One, that art the true *Zerubbabel* of thy Church and people! Truly, in thee, Lord, and in thy strength, every mountain shall be made low, and the crooked strait, and the rough places plain. Thou, blessed Jesus, art the little stone, cut out without hands. But, by thine own sovereignty and power, thou hast broken in pieces every empire that opposed thy way, and art thyself become a great mountain, and art filling, and wilt fill the earth. Oh! Lord, give grace both to him that writes, and him that reads, to keep in view our nothingness, and thy all-sufficiency. To thee alone, may we both be continually looking, convinced that nothing is done, or can be done by our might, or by our power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. And do thou, blessed *Lord*, so reign in us, and over us, and guide and direct through all, that at length the head-stone may be brought forth *with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it.* Even so. Amen.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

The Lord is still instructing the Prophet by vision. In this Chapter we have the sad judgment threatened to thieves and swearers, under the image of a flying roll. And also by a talent of lead cast into the midst of an Ephah, the wickedness of the earth is described.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! we have presented to us in this Chapter under a double vision, the awfulness of sin, and the universal influence of it; for *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. Pause over the alarming subject. Think what circumstances of guilt, and an estrangement from God, our whole nature was involved in by the fall! And when you have duly pondered the solemn consideration, then look up for grace from God the Holy Ghost, to contemplate the glorious person, and the wonderful work he wrought in the accomplishment of it, by whom cometh salvation. Precious Lord Jesus! when thou sawest the state of our poor nature, oppressed, and bound with the talent of lead, unable to move, or even cry for help, our whole nature like the *Ephah*, filled with guilt; then the compassion of thine heart moved thee to fly to our rescue, and by a means so wonderful as the sacrifice of thyself, thou hast taken away our sins, and removed them into a land not inhabited. Hail! thou glorious Benefactor of mankind. May every knee bend before thee, and every tongue confess, that *Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*. Amen.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still favored with visions. Here are the vision of the four chariots; silver and gold crowns; and Christ represented under the well known character of the Branch.

REFLECTIONS

O Lord! help thy servants now with open face, as in a glass, to behold thy glory, and while reading these accounts of thy grace, manifested to the Prophet, give *to us a right understanding in all things*. Chariots, and horses, and mountains, and hills, all minister to the promotion of thy glory; and all go forth to execute the sacred purposes of thy will, when going forth before the Lord of all the earth.

And do thou no less Almighty Lord Jesus, give us to see thee, in thy type Joshua, crowned with silver and with golden crowns. Yea, Lord, since redemption now is finished, and thou art returned to thy glory, and thy kingdom, cause all hearts to bend to the sceptre of thy grace. Oh, thou wonderful man, whose name is the Branch! carry on thy blessed purposes in building the temple of Jehovah; for thou alone art capable of building it, and of bearing all the glory. And, oh! Lord, while thou sittest and rulest on thy throne, do thou, Lord, in both thy priestly and thy kingly glories, bless and govern all thy redeemed below, as thou art glorifying thy Church above. Give us by faith to behold thee, in those sweet exercises of manifesting grace to thy family upon earth, as thou art blessing thy redeemed in heaven. Amen.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The Lord is speaking to the Prophet in this Chapter, not by vision, but by revelation. The people of the Land come to ask questions of the Prophet, in the name of the Lord, and the Prophet is commanded to make answer for the Lord.

REFLECTIONS.

Reader! it is among the most important of all subjects to have a right apprehension of the method, whereby poor fallen man in every age of the Church, can rightly approach to God. Mankind have been always fond of commuting with God for sin, and when the Lord in grace saith return to me, and I will return to you, with the same

boldness as those of old, we are apt to cry out, *wherein shall we return?* And then fastings, and almsgivings, and a few forms of prayer are set up, by way of atonement for the sin of the soul. Alas, alas! here is more spiritual pride in all this, than any real repentance, or true fasting, or sorrow. Amidst a thousand plans of false reform, and a thousand substitutions, instead of the real return of the heart to *God*, there is but one the Holy Ghost teacheth, and that is indeed infallible, namely, with an eye to Christ. *Without faith* (saith the Lord the Spirit by his servant the Apostle) *it is impossible to please God*. There will be no real sense of sin, no true compunction of the heart towards God, but where the Holy Ghost hath given a spirit of grace and supplication, to look unto Him whom we have pierced, and mourn. In every heart, where God the Holy Ghost hath arraigned that heart with an indictment for sin, there sin is felt, and known, and acknowledged to be exceeding sinful. And in every case of this kind, repentance and fasting will be the *effect*, and not sought to as *a cause*, to come before God with. Hence the Apostle strongly and satisfactorily reasons; *if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin*. Reader! do you feel prompted to ask, with the *Sherezers* and *Regemmelechs* of the present hour, should I weep, should I fast in the fifth month as I have done these many years? hear the Lord's answer, and mark it well. Oh! for grace to eye Jesus *in all*, to go to Jesus *for all*, and to make him what God the Father hath made him, *the all in all* of the covenant. He, and He alone, in his glorious person, blood, and righteousness, is the only propitiatory, the only mercy seat, sacrifice, and sacrificer, for poor sinners to look to in all their approaches to God!

Chapter 8

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here commissioned by the Lord to give many rich and precious promises concerning Jerusalem. The Lord will restore her waste places.

REFLECTIONS

Who that reads a Chapter, full of such exceeding great and precious promises as this is, but must rejoice for the consolation. Precious Lord Jesus! I would pray for grace to be looking unto thee for all, and eyeing thee in all. For it is in thee, and for thee, and solely on thy account, all that is here said of the joy of Jerusalem is founded. Thou art the cause of all; the one source and fountain of all, and the sum and substance to every individual in the enjoyment of all. By thy great undertaking, in thy person, offices, and character, thou hast accomplished all the grand purposes of redemption. And hence thy Jerusalem, thine holy mountain, shall rejoice in thee. Young men and maidens, old men and children, all find their felicity in thee, and thou art not only the purchaser and giver of their mercies, but thou thyself art their portion for ever! Lord! hasten the many blessed promises here given, and yet to be fulfilled! All thy redeemed upon earth long to see the day of thy coming. And the souls of thy redeemed under the altar of heaven, are still sending forth the cry, Lord, how long! Oh! for our Jesus to come forth in the sovereignty of his grace and power, conquering and to conquer; subduing his people to the sceptre of his grace, and calling his redeemed out of all languages of the nations; that that wonderful event may soon be accomplished, when numbers in one and the same time shall *take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you of a truth.* Amen.

Chapter 9

SUMMARY

Here are more views, and very glorious ones, of Christ's love to, and rejoicing over his Church; and the Church is called upon to rejoice in her God and Saviour.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! was it said in the opening of this Chapter, that the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the

Lord; so let mine eyes fix themselves eternally on thee, and feast themselves in endless rapture on thee; a sight most lovely, and most completely satisfying! Like the Old Testament saints, who beheld thy day at a distance, and rejoiced and were glad; and like New Testament believers, who never cease beholding thee, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; so would mine eyes look unto the Lord my God, until he hath answered all my longings, and desires after him. And whilst thou art calling home thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth; and Zion is rejoicing greatly at the coming of her meek and lowly Saviour; do thou, blessed Lord, carry on and fulfil all those gracious promises concerning thy kingdom of grace in every heart. Almighty Father! do thou remember thine everlasting covenant, and send forth by the blood of it the prisoners of hope out of the pit wherein is no water. Oh! let all grace abound, and cause the travail of the Redeemer's soul, to be abundantly satisfied in the multitude of redeemed children, born to our God. Yea, let every heart be satisfied with his beauty, and every tongue sing praise to his goodness, until all the ransomed sons and daughters of *Zion*, shall return with songs of salvation to God and, the Lamb.

Chapter 10

SUMMARY

This Chapter is full of gospel promises, like the former, and particularly with an eye to the restoration of Judah; the close of the Chapter abounds with an assurance of many blessed things.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Jesus! thou hast promised to be as the dew to Israel, and here thou commandest thy people to ask those blessings of thee. Lord! when thou art coming forth in grace, thou inclinest thy redeemed to meet thee at the mercy seat, and then preventest them with thy goodness. We beseech thee, Lord, to fulfil thy promises to thy redeemed. Let the souls of thy people know thee, under all thy gracious characters. Thou art the Chief Corner Stone in thy spiritual building. On thee would I rest all my hopes, for life, for death, for

time, and for eternity. Thou art the nail in a sure place; for on thee is firmly fixed the whole hopes of the Church, not only in respect of the life that now is, but for that which is to come. Oh! do thou strengthen thy Judah, and bless thine Israel. Save the house of Joseph, as thou hast said; yea, save all thy redeemed, both of Jew and Gentile, and bring the whole as one fold into the land of spiritual *Gilead*; and into the everlasting mountain of *Lebanon*, thy glorious kingdom. To thee the whole Church are looking, and on thee, they are resting for those blessings. Do, Lord, as thou hast said. And, oh! that the Lord may hasten his blessed purpose for his people, when righteousness shall cover the earth, as the waters do the channel of the great deep; and when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and incense shall be offered to the Lord, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same. Amen.

Chapter 11

SUMMARY

This Chapter in its opening, seems to contain a prophecy of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and which took place after our Lord's return to glory. Under the figures of two staves the Lord teacheth concerning his Church.

Reflections.

Reader! how awful this Chapter begins, and how awful it ends. The doors are to be opened, to burn the whole dwelling that rejects Christ; and the foolish shepherd, and the idle, that directs men from Christ, are to be set forth awful, and tremendous examples, of suffering vengeance from God, The sword is to be upon the arm, and upon the right eye; the one sinew shrank, and the other utterly darkened. Lord! in mercy, send pastors, faithful pastors, to thy people, after thine own heart, that shall instruct them with true understanding and knowledge!

Precious Lord Jesus! relieve my soul from such awful contemplations, as unfaithful, idle, and foolish shepherds raise up to the view of thine unequalled Pastorage, men after thine own heart,

for care over thy people! And was it so, dearest Lord, that a price so low and contemptible was given for thee, thou Great and Almighty Shepherd! A goodly price indeed, ye Jewish rulers, you gave for my Lord! Lamb of God! be thou to me the pearl of great price! All the riches of the earth are not to be compared to thee, thou Lord of life and glory. Lord! enable me by thy grace, as a goodly merchant-man seeking pearls and finding thee, to go and sell all I have, and purchase thee, *without money and without price*. And may I be enabled, thou blessed *Lord*, in beholding the staves of Beauty and of Bands, to value and prize thine everlasting Gospel, and no longer cleave to a covenant of works. Oh! for help to bless God, that I am not under the law, but under grace, and *alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Chapter 12

SUMMARY

The Prophet, still prosecuting the same blessed subject, of the auspicious events included in the coming of Christ, prophesieth of many singular blessings to be given to the Lord's people in that day.

REFLECTIONS

Almighty Lord! we desire to praise thee, for thy tender mercies to Jerusalem. Do, Lord, as thou hast said. May the Church of Jesus be a cup of trembling to all that dare oppose her great salvation in her Lord. Smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness that would trample on thy peaceable followers; and may all the inhabitants of thy Jerusalem, thine holy city, bare their strength in the Lord of hosts, their God!

Reader! see, I pray you, whether the Lord's strength is made perfect in your weakness; and as you know where, and in whom your confidence can alone be found, enquire whether the sweet promises in this Chapter be in your experience. If he that is feeble among the *Lord's* people, be as David; and the house of David as God; are these testimonies made personal with *you*? If it be among the gracious promises to the seed of Christ, that the Lord will pour out upon them both a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplications; do

you know that you are Christ's seed by these sure marks and characters? Doth the Holy Ghost lead you, teach you, guide you, and help you, in your approaches to the mercy seat? Doth He glorify to your view the Lord Jesus? Doth He take of the things of Christ, and shew to you? Doth He shew Christ's fulness to your soul, and your want of him, in such a way as to make it appear, that Christ is exactly suited to you, and you to Christ? This is to take of Christ, and shew to the people. And this is to glorify Christ, and comfort a poor believer. It is in this way the Holy Ghost confirms those sweet and blessed promises, in becoming, both a spirit of grace, and a spirit of supplication; a spirit of truth, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader, daily testimonies both to this scripture, and to all the promises, which in Christ Jesus are yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us.

Chapter 13

SUMMARY

The Prophet is still looking by faith into the Gospel days, and describing under the spirit of prophecy, many blessed things to be accomplished in the days of Christ, and the after ages of his Church.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! here is a fountain indeed opened for sin and uncleanness; Jesus hath opened it, and supplied it with his heart's blood. The grand question is, are we washed in it? Have we found it to be peace-speaking blood, and heart-cleansing blood? Can we truly say of it, as David did of the whole covenant; *it is all my salvation, and all my desire!*

Precious Lord Jesus! the sword hath indeed awakened, at the command of Jehovah, against thee, when thou stoodest as the surety of thy people. But, oh! thou sin-bearing Lamb of God! what shall I offer thee of thanks and praise, since by thy stripes my soul is healed, and thou wert made sin for thy redeemed, that they might be made the righteousness of God in thee!

Lord! I thank thee, in all the exercises of my warfare, when bringing me through the fiery trials of sorrow and temptation; the

conflict is not to know, whether I am thine, for that is already proved, and the issue is not doubtful; but it is to prove me, and to show me what is in mine heart; that thy grace may have all the praise, and all the glory, from beginning to end. Oh! for unceasing grace while Jesus owns me to be his, to say with the Church of old, *my beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me.*

Chapter 14

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Prophet closeth his predictions; and a blessed close he makes of them. Great events are foretold in the Church of Jesus; in the coming of Christ, and the blessed effects thereof.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! take a short review of the wonders contained in this Chapter, with which the Prophet closeth those rich visions of God. Mark well the characters by which the great day of God is here spoken of. See, if the gracious visit of our Jesus, when at his incarnation he tabernacled among us, can be supposed to be the only thing implied in what is here said. It is true indeed, *Zechariah* delivered this scripture under the spirit of prophecy, somewhat more than five hundred years before the Lord Jesus came openly in substance of our flesh. And no doubt, that coming, laid the foundation of all our blessings in time and to all eternity. But, when we have considered what is here said, and connected the whole with the blessings, both of his first and second coming; it should seem, that many blessed things are here delivered, still to be accomplished. The Lord prepare both Writer and Reader for this great day of God! And the Lord bless every ministry of his servants, both Prophets and Apostles, to this end. Farewell *Zechariah*! We find abundant; cause to praise our God for having raised thee up in his Church, to the blessed use of giving his Church this sweet portion of prophecy. But, while we give due honor to the servant, we would give all the glory to the Lord. Hail! thou glorious Lord Jesus, thou Almighty Prophet of thy people! Condescend, great God, by the ministry of these thy

servants, still to teach and instruct thy Church, until that great day here spoken of arrives, and thy feet shall again stand upon Mount Olives; and until all the great events of thy kingdom of grace be completed, and thy kingdom of glory be fully come. Then, O Lord, will the whole choir of angels cry aloud, the heavens, and all the powers therein. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets, Apostles, and all the ransomed sons of Zion, in one hymn of praise to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Israel's Jehovah ascribe praise for ever! Amen.

MALACHI

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are arrived to the last of the minor Prophet's writings, with which the Sacred Canon of the Old Testament closeth; and a very sweet portion of the inspired work this forms. *Malachi* signifies angel or messenger; and it should seem from that passage we have in the first Chapter, and 13th verse of *Haggai's* prophecy, that in that period of the Church, the servants and messengers of the LORD were called *Malachi-JEHOVAH*, Angels or Messengers of the LORD. We have not the smallest account in scripture concerning *Malachi*, who he was, or from what tribe he sprung; and hence some, have conjectured, that he was in reality what his name signifies, an angel. But this must be wholly conjectural, and very improbable. The time of his ministry appears to have been somewhat more than three hundred and fifty years before the coming of CHRIST. The scope of his prophecy is to prepare the Church for the LORD'S appearing; and this is done in pointing expressly to the person and office of John the Baptist, as CHRIST'S forerunner. And as GOD the HOLY GHOST was now with this servant's ministry, about to close the whole tenor of prophecy, and a long dark night was to take place, until that harbinger of day should come as CHRIST'S herald; we have sketched some more striking features of the LORD JESUS ministry, in addition to what the other Prophets had been commissioned to give, concerning our LORD'S person and character. And the several quotations made from this prophecy of *Malachi* in the New Testament, not only serves to confirm the authority of it, but to recommend it more strongly to the heart. See Matthew 11:10. Mark 1:2. Luke 1:17. Matthew 17:12. Mark 9:11, 12. Luke 7:27. Romans 9:13. I only add a prayer to GOD the HOLY GHOST, that both on our entrance on this blessed prophecy, progress through it, and in our closing of it, as the scripture with which the Almighty LORD hath sealed up the visions to his servants the Prophets, the minds both of

Writer and Reader of this Commentary, may be graciously guided by the SPIRIT of truth, into all truth, to his glory and our happiness in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The LORD is expostulating with Israel in this Chapter; on their ingratitude; and pointing out in his providences and grace, his distinguishing favor to Jacob, and his judgment on Esau.

REFLECTIONS

Almighty LORD! grant both to Writer and Reader grace, in receiving the message of this prophecy, from thy servant the Prophet, that we may indeed accept the whole of it as the burden of the LORD, bringing to us the great things of thy blessed word. We pray to mark the distinguishing grace of our GOD, in his choice of *Jacob*, and rejection of *Esau*. And we humbly beg the LORD to help our solemn meditations on this subject, with his divine teaching, that under the HOLY GHOST'S influence, we may give diligence *to make our calling and election sure*. Oh! for grace, to know thee as our FATHER; yea, our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS; and to offer thee that honor, and to worship thee and love thee with that holy fear, as becometh the redeemed of the LORD!

And, oh! thou glorious LORD JESUS! hasten, we beseech thee, the auspicious hour, when from sun rise to sun set thy name shall be adored from shore to shore, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. We long to see the dawn of that blessed day, when all the world shall see the salvation of our GOD; and the knowledge of JESUS shall cover the earth, as the waters the channel of the great deep. Raise up to thyself, O LORD, faithful disinterested pastors, who will not snuff at thy service, nor count it a weariness and a burden. Oh! for an heart to receive what my LORD hath said, and bow with holy joy and reverence to the revelation. Thou art indeed, O blessed JESUS, a Great King, and thy name is dreadful among the heathen. Prove the greatness of thy sovereignty and power, by reigning in me,

and over me, and in all the affections of my heart, the LORD of life and glory. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

This Chapter is not unlike the former in the opening of it; but the Prophet is soon led to speak in JEHOVAH's name of the LORD JESUS, under the character of Levi. The after part is in reproof for the people's infidelity.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! while we take part in the just reproaches of Israel, in their kingdom of priests, in beholding their transgression, and feeling our own; let us seek relief from the distressing contemplation, by directing our view unto the LORD JESUS, our covenant of peace, and our all-sufficient righteousness. Hear what JEHOVAH, in this blessed portion of the Chapter, saith of Him. *First*, the LORD GOD bears testimony to Him, that He is the LORD's covenant. *Secondly*, that the LORD gave the people, with all the blessings of the covenant to Him. *Thirdly*, observe the high testimony of JEHOVAH to his personal holiness and purity, *the law of truth was in his mouth*. And, *lastly*, the success of his undertaking; for he is said to have *turned away many from iniquity*. Pause, Reader! and think with holy rapture and joy, of those glorious credentials to thy precious Redeemer and Mediator. Then turn once more to thy JESUS, and behold Him as JEHOVAH hath presented him to thee, thy peace through the blood of his cross; and in his righteousness contemplate thy righteousness in Him. Yes! thou blessed, gracious, holy Redeemer! thou art indeed all this, and more to thy people! The covenant, in all its sum and substance, thou art. Thou wert present in its contrivance: the foundation, hope, and end of it, in its fulfillment; the Messenger of it to thy people in the delivery of it; the Administrator of all its blessings in its accomplishment; and the fountain and Keeper of all the grace of it here in this life, and the glory of the whole of it in the life to come.

Hail! thou glorious Covenant-Head of thy body the Church! *the fulness that filleth all in all.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Prophet is here opening to the Church some precious views of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in description of his person, glory, majesty and grace; as he was to appear in the days of his flesh to his people. The sad events of his coming to his enemies are also described. The Chapter closeth in sweet and gracious promises to the Church.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! behold in this Chapter the gracious goodness of the LORD, in promising to send his Herald, to prepare the way of the LORD! And mark the corresponding event with the prediction, in the account the Evangelist gives of the coming of John the Baptist. And think how every heart must have been big with expectation, and every eye on the look out in *Judæa*, when the messenger came, announcing the approach of JESUS. And did not JESUS then come to his temple, at the time predicted? Did not the angel of the covenant appear, as had been foretold? Yes! but when he came to his own, we are told, his own received him not. Alas! what was there offensive in thy person, blessed JESUS, or in thy doctrine, that they rejected thee, O thou LORD of life and glory? Was it thy humble appearance, thou meek and lowly LAMB of GOD? Did they indeed despise thee for that, which above all things ought to have endeared thee to thy people? Reader! is the offence of the cross ceased? Is not JESUS still *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence?* Oh! for the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to make known among the people the glories of CHRIST!

But, Reader! whatever others do, may it be your happiness and mine, to welcome the LORD CHRIST to his temple. Come, thou Almighty Refiner and Purifier! come and melt down all the dross and spots of our corrupt nature. Do thou as with fuller's sope, by the

gracious influences of thy blessed SPIRIT, take out the uncleanness within, and purify all thy kingdom of priests, as the sons of Levi. Keep my poor heart, dearest JESUS, by thy restraining and preventing grace, from going away from thine ordinances, that in thee, and thy perfect righteousness, my offering may go up, and find acceptance in the beloved. And, oh! thou blessed bountiful LORD of all, and Giver of all; open the windows of heaven upon thy Churches, thy Ministers, and thy People; and pour out such a plentiful effusion of blessings in grace, that every heart may be made glad, and refreshed in thine house of prayer. Let the public ministration of thy word be accompanied with such a visible display of thy presence, that all nations may know, that where thy Church is, there is a delightful land, and all shall call it blessed. And let the private communions of they that fear thee, be so sanctified with the holy conversation concerning Him that is always in their midst, that nothing but the name and sweet savor of JESUS may be known or heard among them. And do thou, dearest LORD, who art now hearkening, and hearing, and knowing all that passeth among thy people, and dost regard with peculiar tokens of thy favor, the affection of thy chosen; do thou remember all in that day, when thou comest to make up thy jewels; yea, Almighty JESUS! manifest then in full open display, as thou dost now in private testify by thy SPIRIT, whose are thine, and how dear they are to thee. Say of every one, in that solemn hour, when thou drawest the everlasting distinction between the righteous and the wicked, *these are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto them a kingdom, as my FATHER hath appointed unto me. They shall eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Prophet in closing up his predictions to the Church, delivers a solemn message to the ungodly, and a gracious promise to the righteous. He declares the coming of Elijah before the last day of the LORD'S coming.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! pause over the solemn, the very solemn and awful account here given of the great and dreadful day of GOD, so often spoken of in scripture, and so certain and sure. Think how tremendous the judgments which will then overtake the ungodly. *For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear.* Oh! what paleness, horror, and everlasting dismay, will then seize every Christless sinner, when appearing before the Judge of all the earth without an Advocate to plead his cause, and void of all righteousness to justify his person.

Reader! what can I ask for you, or for myself, as a boon from a bountiful GOD in CHRIST, but that now, even now, while the day of grace continue, JESUS may arise as the sun of righteousness on our benighted souls, with healing in his wings. Be thou, dearest LORD, our light, our life, our righteousness, now, and forever. Oh! be thou the one great source of our peace, who hast been the confidence and hope of thine Israel; and as thou hast been made a curse for thy people, so may they be made the righteousness of GOD in thee. Farewell *Malachi!* farewell till meeting together at this great day of GOD. May it be the portion of both Writer and Reader to meet all the *Malachis'* and *Elijahs'* of our covenant GOD in that day, when JESUS shall come to make up his jewels, and amidst the host of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, to praise GOD and the LAMB forever and ever.

And now, Reader, as with this Part of my *Commentary*, I close the sacred volume of the Old Testament scripture, I beg once for all, and finally, and fully, that you will bend the knee in prayer as the author hath done before you, that the LORD will bless all that it contains, as far as it is agreeable to his holy and eternal truths, and pardon all that is amiss, which human weakness, ignorance, and infirmity, have given birth to, in this feeble endeavour to be helpful to the LORD's household. May that sin-bearing LAMB of GOD, that taketh away the iniquities of our most holy things, cleanse all that is here unholy and unclean. It is my intention, if the LORD favors such a design, to prosecute in the same plain and humble manner, the several Books of the New Testament, by way of Commentary. But this I leave, as I do all other events, bounded as they are within the limits of a life hastening now fast to a close, to Him who fixeth both

the time and place of His people's habitation. In the mean season, I here set up my *Ebenezer* afresh. *Hitherto hath the LORD helped!* And concerning my further wishes to write the Commentary for the *New Testament*, as the LORD hath permitted me to finish one on the *Old*; if the gracious Master should say concerning this, as David remarked upon another occasion, *I have no delight in it*; with him I would submissively say, *Behold! here I am, let him do to me as seemeth him good* Amen.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,

On my birth-day, making 59 years of sin and vanity! *April 13,*
1812

MATTHEW

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ONE general observation will meet the Reader, at his entrance, on all the four Books of the Evangelists: namely, that they are directed to one and the same interesting subject. They form a corresponding harmony and agreement, in giving the history of the blessed JESUS. And they form therefore, when taken together, the whole of those inspired records, which God the Holy GHOST hath thought proper to give to the Church, concerning the Person, Life, Ministry, Miracles, Discourses, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and unchanging Priesthood of the Almighty Savior of the world, *whom truly to know is life eternal.*

The word Gospel is borrowed from the Saxons, the early inhabitants of this island. They were accustomed to call our holy faith by this name. And hence, it is probable, that it hath been ever since distinguished by this title But perhaps it was not always pronounced, as we are now accustomed to do, by the name *Gospel*; but rather *God's-spell*, meaning *God's blessing*. And surely, it is in the highest and fullest sense of the word, the greatest blessing which ever the LORD JEHOVAH bestowed upon mankind, in the gospel of salvation, by God's dear SON.

In the present acceptation of the word Gospel, is meant *glad tidings; great joy to all people*. And in this sense also it must be allowed, that Christ and his salvation is the most joyful tidings which were ever proclaimed to sinful, dying men. So much so, that one of the Prophets declared the very feet of them who were sent to preach it, were beautiful. Isaiah 52:7. Nay, angels themselves, as if earnest to become the first heralds of such blissful tidings to a lost world, hastened to come down upon the earth the moment the news brake out in heaven, and in a multitude together sung the song of redemption: *Glory (said they) to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will toward men.* Luke 2:10-14.

The Gospel, according to St. *Matthew*, opens with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the time of *Joseph* his reputed father; as that of the Evangelist *Luke*, traces the pedigree in the line of the Virgin *Mary*. And *Matthew*, carries on the history of CHRIST through the whole of our LORD'S continuance upon earth; including a period of about *three and thirty years and half*. But the exercise of CHRIST'S ministry did not exceed *three years and half*. Luke 3:23.

The name of *Matthew*, or *Matthai*, signifies a *gift*, or a thing *given*. And this was not an unsuitable name for this Evangelist, for he might be truly said to be given to CHRIST. And thus the LORD Jesus speaks of his people, to whom he manifested his FATHER'S name, that they were the men whom he had *given* him out of the world. Of such, JESUS said, that all whom the FATHER had *given* him, must *come to him*; and *him that came, he would in no wise cast out*. John 17:6, 9, compared with John 6:37. But besides this name of *Matthew*, he was also called *Levi*. Luke 5:27. And this double name seems to decide, that though a *publican* by office, yet was *Matthew* a *Jew* by birth. For it was common with the children of Israel to give two names to their children; but not so generally with other nations. The history of *Matthew*, and his wonderful conversion, will meet the Reader in its proper place. I only here detain him in those general observations, to remark, that as a Son of *Abraham*, his engaging in the odious calling of a tax-gatherer for the *Romans*, which they called a *Publican*, and which the children of Israel considered as oppressive, must have been the more intolerable to them when performed by any of the seed of *Abraham*.

The Gospel of *Matthew* is supposed by *some*, to have been written as early as within *eight* years after our LORD'S ascension. But *others* place it at a later period, even to *fifteen* years. However, in either case, supposing the latest of the *two*, it may serve to teach us how graciously GOD the HOLY GHOST watched over the Church, that before that generation was passed away; among whom the wonderful actions of the LORD JESUS had been wrought; the records were made for the benefit of all succeeding ages of the Church, to the consummation of all things.

I shall make no further observations in a way of preliminary to the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, but proceed with the Reader to, the perusal of the Gospel itself: praying only, that the gracious LORD

who called *Matthew* from the receipt of Custom, may, by the ministry of his writings, call many *from darkness to light, and from tire power of Sin and Satan to tire living GOD*. And, if the LORD will condescend to make this *Poor Man's Commentary* upon it useful to the blessed purpose, that both Reader and Writer may find the unction of the HOLY GHOST upon it, as they prosecute the delightful subject: may they be enabled to invite the LORD JESUS to their houses and hearts, as this Evangelist did; and call many Publicans and Sinners to sit down to the holy feast with JESUS and his disciples; that many, many may be the partakers of *this glorious Gospel of the ever blessed God*.

CHAPTER 1.

SUMMARY

The Gospel opens with the relation of the genealogy of Christ after the flesh. We have an account of the miraculous conception: CHRIST'S birth and name.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! at this opening of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the SON of GOD; and while beholding the relation of the pedigree of CHRIST, after the flesh, who was made *not after time genealogy of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*; well may we both cry out, with the astonishment of the Prophet, *Who shall declare his generation?* Oh! for grace to discover the wonderful relationship between Christ and his people; and to exult with the Church, in the glorious truth: *Unto us a child is born: unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and he shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor; the Mighty GOD; time Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!*

And, Reader! as we have both such abundant cause, so let us seek from the Lord all suited grace, to bless him for the discovery here made; how the human nature of Christ was produced, by the body which GOD the FATHER prepared him; and by the overshadowing power of GOD the Holy Ghost, by which. he was conceived in the womb of the virgin. Let us both bless God for the

gracious revelations of this stupendous event; whereby the necessity of atonement, and the infinite importance of it, is most fully shown. And oh! thou dear Lord Jesus; never, never, may any of the children lose sight of thine infinite condescension, who, though in the form of God, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with GOD : yet didst thou make thyself of no reputation, and took upon thee the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, and didst humble thyself even to the death of the cross!

Lord Jesus! give us to know thee, to love thee, to delight in thee, by every endearing name, and office, and character, in which thou standest revealed to thy people. Thou art indeed Emmanuel; GOD with us; God in us; GOD for us! Thou art JEHOVAH our righteousness. Thou art indeed JESUS, for in that sweet name is comprehended every other. And what endears it yet more to our hearts, thou hast commanded us to call thee so; For in this blessed scripture it is said, *Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for lie shall save his people from their sins.* Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here related to us the birth of Christ; the visit of the Wise Men from the East, led by a star to worship him; the consternation induced in the minds of Herod, and the whole city of Jerusalem, at the event of Christ's birth; the ministry of an angel to Joseph, and the flight of Joseph, with his family, into Egypt.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I ponder well the sweet and interesting record here given of the birth of CHRIST. If angels, who needed no redemption, praised *God* at his birth, with what holy rapture and joy ought our songs to go forth in thanksgivings for the same. Behold! with what unequalled humbleness the SON of GOD, as man, when he came and tabernacled in our flesh, manifested himself to the church. But behold! how GOD the FATHER honoured his nativity, in not only sending wise men from the east to worship him, but in causing a star to point to the SAVIOUR. Was not this indeed sweetly

fulfilling that blessed scripture; *the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.* But did the Lord God, in order that his blessed SON should be known, grant such a starry influence to the wise men ; and will he withhold the light of his grace from the hearts of his people? Will he not reveal CHRIST in all his glory, and suitableness, and all sufficiency, that, like them, we may fall down and worship him, and present him more than gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, even those graces of his Holy Spirit which are his own?

And was it needful that the Lord of life and glory should go down into *Egypt*, that what the Prophet had said of calling God's dear SON out of Egypt might be fulfilled? Surely then, LORD, it must be needful to call all thy sons from the Egypt of this world; for all by nature are in that house of bondage, before that an act of sovereign grace hath called them out. Was JESUS, the holy, harmless, undefiled Lord Jesus, here also, as in a thousand other instances, the forerunner and glorious Head of his redeemed? Oh for grace to follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth

But Oh! thou true and only real Nazarite of GOD! Precious Jesus, thou art indeed the Branch, the Plant of Renown, the Spiritual Joseph of thy people, whose branches ran over the wall. Blessings be on the Head of Him, and on the Crown of the Head of Him that was the *Netzar*; the Separate, from thy brethren! Methinks I hear my LORD again say, as he did once in the days of his flesh: *for their sakes I sanctify myself!* Ever precious; and dear name, JESUS CHRIST *of Nazareth!* Thou art thy church's *Nazarene!*

Chapter 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of the ministry of John the Baptist. The description of his office and ministry. The Chapter closeth with an account of his baptizing the Lord Jesus CHRIST, and the glorious manifestations on the occasion.

REFLECTIONS

WELCOME, John the Baptist, thou faithful herald of thy LORD! As the star of the morning becomes the sure pledge of day; so thy coming plainly foretold the LORD of his temple was at hand. But thrice welcome, yea, everlastingly and eternally welcome, thou glorious Sun of Righteousness, precious LORD JESUS, art thou in thy arising, with healing in thy wings, to all thy people. Oh! do thou, LORD, thou great Baptizer with the HOLY GHOST, bring my soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, under the continual and unceasing baptisms of thy Spirit: fill our hearts, fill our houses, fill thy church, thy whole people, with grace!

And from this blessed unction given to the souls of thy people, grant, LORD, to every one, grace, *according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST*; that we may bless and adore the HOLY THREE IN ONE, who bear record in heaven; for the record given in this chapter, to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, on his entering upon his public ministry, at his holy baptism. And may the LORD mercifully grant, that the whole church of GOD, through divine teaching, may be enabled to keep in unceasing remembrance, the FATHER'S testimony to his dear Son. And while my soul, and the souls of all his redeemed, are thus continually hearing, and receiving, the precious assurance of GOD'S being well pleased with his dear SON, for his redeeming love to his church, and his finished salvation for his people; oh, for grace to love Him, whom JEHOVAH, in all the persons of the GODHEAD, loves; and to delight in Him, in whom JEHOVAH delighteth. Precious LORD Jesus! I would say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth my soul desireth but thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

CHRIST'S temptations. The call of his Apostles. His Preaching and Miracles.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Let you and I pause over the view of CHRIST'S temptations, and ponder well the wonderful subject. And was it needful that CHRIST should be thus exercised? Yes! The HOLY GHOST has said; *that in all things it behoveth him to be made like unto his brethren. For as much as the Children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.* The destruction of the devil was folded up in this. And the deliverance of his people from the power of hell was accomplished in the same. Hence therefore, in the victory of CHRIST in his seasons of temptations, the children of CHRIST discover their victory in their seasons and temptations in and by Him. And during the exercise, they know how JESUS, from fellow-feeling can, and will, minister to them every suited relief. *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* The issue therefore is never doubtful. The children may be tempted, as Jesus was, to unbelief, to a distrust of GOD, yea, to self-murder. Perhaps there never was a child of GoD but what, more or less, bath been so tempted. Yea, it should seem to be a sweet testimony of our fellowship with Jesus, as members with the Head. *Blesscd is the man, saith the HOLY GHOST by James, That endureih temptation.* But the issue is never doubtful. As CHRIS^T overcame every assault of Satan, so Christ's redeemed must also in him. Reader let you and I carry all our trials and temptations to Jesus. He knows them all before. But by our taking them to Him, we testify that we are looking wholly for strength from Him, and engaging CHRIST on our behalf. And, oh! the blessedness having JESUS for our strength. The devil will leave us as he did Him, and the LORD of angels himself will come and minister every suited relief to our necessity!

Behold Reader! on the close of this chapter, how He, who in the opening of it, is said to have been assaulted by hell, is here manifesting, forth his sovereignty as God. Oh! That that dear LORD, who thus in the days of his flesh, went about preaching his gospel, and healing the bodies of the diseased, would now, in the day of his Almighty power, come forth in a preached gospel, and heal the souls of his redeemed. Precious LORD JESUS! behold the diseased state of thy church, and in compassion to *Zion* take the glorious cause into thine own Almighty hand. And as then, so now,

LORD, cause the multitudes of thy people to come to thy standard, until thou shalt have brought all thy blood-bought children home to thy church, and all the blessed purposes of thy temptations and ministry be abundantly answered in the salvation of thy chosen. Amen.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY

We have in this chapter, and the two which follow, our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. A great variety of beauties is contained in it.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou Almighty Prophet of thy people, blessed Lord Jesus! We praise thee for thy gracious proclamation in the Mount. Oh! grant thy people to be poor in spirit, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Holy mourners we shall be when the Lord hath convinced us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. And Oh! for that meekness in Jesus, that hungering and thirsting for Jesus and his righteousness, as those who are conscious that they have neither in themselves, and seek all in the Lord. Defer not, O our God, to induce all those graces of thy Spirit in the hearts of all thy redeemed, that *mercy* they may learn from thee, *purity of heart* find in thee, and as children of God, may walk in peace and love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. And to all the persecutions and revilings of life, be looking stedfastly to Jesus, *who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high!* And grant dearest Lord, while learning under the influences of thy Holy Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body that we may live. Oh! for grace to be living out of our selves upon thee and thy fulness, and never to lose sight for a moment that thou art in our stead and law-room all that is here enjoined, and hast both magnified the law and made it honorable, and fulfilled the whole for us and our salvation. Yea! blessed Jesus! thou art the Lord our Righteousness, and all thy people are righteous in thee. Amen.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY

This Chapter is a continuation of the former. Most blessedly the LORD JESUS prosecutes the subject of his Sermon through the whole of it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Pause over this part of our REDEEMER's sermon, as over the preceding portion of it, and let us both look up for grace in the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHosT, to gather the many precious instructions it contains. Jesus presupposeth that his redeemed give alms according to the ability he hath given them. And if you and I have received of the *upper* springs of the Lord's grace, shall we not be ready to give, and glad to distribute of the *nether* springs of the LORD'S bounty? Not dear LORD to be seen of men, no! nor with the most distant view to recommend ourselves to thee, All we have is thine, and of thine own do we give thee, in imparting of what we have to refresh the bowels of our poorer brethren. Oh ! for grace that all may be done from thee, and for thee, and from love *to* thee.

And in our approaches to thy throne in prayer, oh! grant that all may be in and through the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. For if Lord we have found peace in the blood of thy cross, our access to the Father will be by one Spirit through thee. Not to be seen of men, but graciously accepted of GOD in CHRIST, *through* CHRIST, and both in the words and works of CHRIST.

In the abstinence of the body, and in the humblings of the soul, in dying daily to the world, and crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, oh! for grace from CHRIST to be walking daily *with* CHRIST, casting all our care upon him who careth for us. And while seeking, above all things, the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness, may we be for ever on the look-out for *the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our SAVIOR* Jesus CHRIST. Even so Lord prepare us for *thy* coming! Amen.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus in this Chapter concludes his Sermon on the Mount, and a very blessed close he makes of it, in comparing the wise hearers of it to those who build on the Rock, and the foolish to those who build on the Sand.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! having gone over the whole of this blessed Sermon of Christ, let us sum up the contents, and beg of God the Holy Ghost to write all the gracious truths contained in it in our hearts. And while we hear the Lord giving to his Church the Whole Gospel of Salvation, oh! what a blessed consideration is it, that Jesus himself hath fulfilled all, and is all to his redeemed. Never may, the Church of Jesus forget this, but receive Christ as the Father's gift, and the complete salvation of Jehovah to the end, or the earth!

Precious, blessed Lord Jesus! so may my soul hear these sayings. of thine, and embrace them, that building upon thee as the foundation, the superstructure, and the whole, both of Law and the Prophets, when the Lord shall arise to shake terribly the earth, I may be found firm on the rock, *against which the gates of hell shall never prevail*. Despised as thou hast been, and still art, by Jews and false

Christians, and a stone of stumbling and rock of offence; yet to me be thou more precious than the mountains of spices. In thy person, work and offices; in thy character and relations; in thy complete righteousness and salvation; be thou my Lord, my hope, and everlasting portion. Lord grant that I may never build on the sandy performance of any thing of my own, or mix up with thy complete work the hay and the stubble of any legal righteousness, which can stand no wind of the day of God's wrath; but be thou the all in all, of all grace here, and of glory for ever. Amen.

Chapter 8

SUMMARY

We have here the Lord Jesus confirming his word by miracle. Jesus cleanseth a Leper, healeth the Centurion's servant, the mother-in-law of Peter, with many others; stilleth the waves of the sea, casteth out devils from two poor creatures; and permitteth them to enter into the swine.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I look on, and behold the wonders of our wonder-working God. See the leprous man cleansed; the paralytic healed; the raging fever subdued; yea, the winds, sea, and devils, in a moment brought under the word of our Jesus. But let us not stop here. He that cleansed the poor leper in his body, can and will cleanse all the leprosy of soul in his people. He that gave strength to the palsy of nature, can and will make the crippled in soul to leap as an hart; and all the feverish lusts of his redeemed, Jesus will subdue! Oh! thou gracious God of our salvation! no storms of hell, nor storms of indwelling corruption, nor storms of the world, shall drown thy people! Jesus, though for a while may appear to our impatient minds as inattentive, but he hath said, *For the sighing of the poor, and the oppression of the needy, now will I arise, saith God!* And oh! with what tenderness and fellow-feeling, the Lord Jesus enters into all the concerns of his redeemed. Truly Lord, it may be said of thee, thou dost thyself take our infirmities, and bare our--sicknesses! Oh! vouchsafe thy continual presence with us! and never, never Lord, do thou depart out of our coasts!

Chapter 9

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here represented in the exercise of his ministry; working miracles, and going about through all the cities and villages, preaching his gospel, and healing every disease of the people.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold your God and Savior in this Chapter. See how he manifests who he is by what he wrought. As God! he pardons sin, as in the instance of the Paralytic! He reads the thoughts and reasonings of men's hearts, as in the case of the Scribes. He cures the souls, gives health to the bodies, raiseth the dead, casts out devils, and as man, yea the God-Man Christ Jesus, he is moved with coma passion, and his bowels yearn over the lost estate and misery of our poor, ruined; and diseased nature. Oh! who that had seen his grace to Matthew; to the woman with the bloody issue; to the ruler of the synagogue, and his dead child; to the blind and the dumb; but must have said with the Prophet, *behold your God is come to save you!* And who that had seen him, at the table of *Matthew*, encircled with Publicans anti Sinners, but must have said, was ever grace like this, in the unequalled condescension of the Son of God!

Oh! blessed Lord Jesus! do thou now still regard thy people, still behold them in all the miseries and sorrows of a state of nature and sin, in their palsied, blind, dumb, dead, and dying circumstances. Oh! thou Great Shepherd of thy blood-bought flock! Exalted as thou now art, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, send forth thine under pastors in thy fold, and let thine heritage be no longer scattered. Yea! dearest Lord Jesus! come thyself and visit them as thou hast said with thy great salvation, and bring them home to thy fold in heaven, from all places whither they are now scattered *in the dark and cloudy day!* Amen.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have the call of the Apostles, and Christ's mission given to them, to work miracles, and preach the Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

Let all the followers of the Lord Jesus, and especially his Ministers, behold in the commission here given by him to his Apostles, the love of his heart, and the interest he takes in all that

concerns them. And let not our view of the unfaithfulness of hirelings in any age of the Church, give the smallest distress to true Pastors. Jesus chose a *Judas* to mingle with his faithful Apostles, though he knew that he was a devil when he chose him. But though he went in and out with the disciples, yet had he no part nor lot in the matter; and when he died, he went, as it is said, *to his own place*. Tares with the wheat, goats with the sheep, are nevertheless as distinguishable and separate as though they had never come together. *The Lord knoweth them that are his*. In the end, an everlasting separation will take place.

In the mean time, the persecution, hatred, and frowns of every enemy, shall minister rather to the Redeemer's glory, than to the smallest injury of the Redeemer's cause. And it never should be forgotten, that Jesus is *with his people always to the end of the world*. Jesus, therefore, looks on, knows all, sanctifies all, and blesseth all to his people's good! And Jesus speaks as in this chapter, to drive away all fear from the heart of his redeemed. *To him that over cometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also over came, and am sat down with my Father in his throne*.

Chapter 11

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the Message of John the Baptist to Christ, and the Lord's answer. Towards the close of it, Jesus upbraids the cities around him for their hardness of heart, and unbelief, and thanks his Father for revealing his truths to his people.

REFLECTIONS

Will any send my soul to question, whether Jesus be indeed He that should come: or can there be a possibility of cause to look for another? Oh! no. He is the altogether lovely: and the chiefest and the fairest among ten thousand. Now, even now, as well as in the days of his flesh, the spiritually blind, are receiving from him their sight: the lame in soul, Jesus makes to leap as an hart; leprous sinners are cleansed in the fountain of his blood; the deaf hear the words of the book; the dead in trespasses and sins are raised; and the poor in

spirit, hear and know the joyful sound, and through grace walk in the light of God's countenance. And can there be another Jesus: another Gospel which we have not received? Oh! thou dear Lord! blessed for ever blessed be thou for having said, *blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me!*

Lord! grant if it be thy blessed will, that it never may be the condemnation of our land like *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida!* Great Gospel privileges we have indeed; but what must follow if we neglect, or reject *such great salvation?*

Reader! let you and I listen to the sweet and gracious invitation, which Jesus gives to the weary in sin, and to the heavy laden under the burthen of it, Oh! for grace to learn of thee, thou meek and lovely Savior! Thou art indeed, both a rest and resting place, for thy people. In thee, my soul would rest from sin, and rest to God. Thou art both a shelter from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. Thou art my hiding place, thou will preserve me from trouble. Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Haste, haste my soul, to thy rest, thy Jesus for the Lord *hath dealt bountifully by thee!*

Chapter 12

SUMMARY

We have our Lord represented to us in this Chapter going on with his ministry. The sin against the Holy Ghost is here spoken of.

REFLECTIONS

Hail thou glorious Lord of the Sabbath! Do thou blessed Jesus, manifest to my soul, and in my soul, that thou art both Lord of the Sabbath and of my heart; by reigning there, and ruling there, and giving me to eat of the show-bread of thy body, which is the bread of life, that I may have eternal life abiding in me. And do thou by me, O Lord, as thou didst to the poor man in the Synagogue, to all the withered affections of my poor nature; both bid me, and enable me, to stretch forth the hand of faith, and lay hold of eternal life in thee!

And oh! Almighty Father! in thy gracious office-work in covenant mercies, give me to hear thy sweet proclamation of thy servant whom thou hast chosen, and in whom, as the Church's }lead and Surety, thou art well pleased, and hast delighted. Oh! for the teachings of God the Holy Ghost, to know Jehovah's chosen and Jehovah's beloved, as my beloved, a meek Savior, a tender hearted Savior, a well qualified and powerful Savior; who though so gentle as not to break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, yet so mighty as to send forth judgment unto victory, and in whose name the Gentiles shall trust.

And no less Almighty Spirit, do thou so teach, and guide me into all truth, that out of the good treasure by regeneration, and the daily renewings of thy grace which thou hast put into my heart, I may bring forth good things, while the generation of vipers, by their evil things, manifest the seed from whence they spring, yea! Lord give me to see and know, by heartfelt experience, from thy sovereign work there wrought, that I am of the mystical relationship of Christ, and among the number whom Jesus will own as his brother, and sister, and mother.

Chapter 13

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here instructing his disciples in Parables. Towards the close of the Chapter, the Lord assigns his reasons for this mode of teaching.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I pause over this sweet Chapter, and mark the condescending love of Jesus, in thus adopting his discourse, under the imagery of parables, surely it serves to teach us the tenderness of his heart towards his redeemed, as if to come down to the humblest capacities of his people; and that none might err in the apprehension, he varies his subject by illustrating under various similitudes the important truths relating to his kingdom. But that all might be impressed of the everlasting line of distinction between his children, and the children of the wicked One, under whatever figure,

or parable, he states the subject Jesus never loseth sight of this. The good *seed*, or the *leaven*, the *treasure* hid in the field, or the *good* gathered into vessels, all are made to represent the very reverse of the *way-side* hearers, the *stony ground*, the *thorns*, and the *tares*; which uniformly set forth the state of the reprobate and the seed of the devil. In every part of this blessed Chapter, the Lord Jesus hath drawn, as with a sun-beam, the striking difference, and shown that characters, springing from such different stocks, never can coalesce; so that the good seed may become tares, or the tares good seed. Lord Jesus! give thy people grace to discover, that amidst all their complaints of unprofitableness, and the like, still thy redeemed are thine, and the Lord. will own them. Oh! for grace, to have all our fruit in Jesus, and the end everlasting life.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an account of Herod's having murdered John the Baptist. In the after part we have the relation of some of the miracles of Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us gather a short lesson from the history of John the Baptist. To look at John, when falling a sacrifice at the instigation of a worthless woman, and to overlook the Lord in the appointment, is to consider second causes, and not the first; and very sure will it be, that we shall then make wrong conclusions. Here is a faithful servant of the Lord, borne down by oppression; and here is an incestuous woman triumphing in the godly man's death. But what follows? Aye, there's the grand concern. *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him. Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him.* Oh, for grace, to eye the Lord's sovereignty in all: for this alone will give energy to the lively actings of faith, and keep the soul in peace.

But let me turn from the servant to contemplate the Master! Oh, for grace to eye Christ, in the several blessed views here given of him; in feeding and supporting his people, and healing all their diseases, Precious Lord Jesus! do thou manifest thyself to my poor

soul under that endearing character, as, Jehovah Rophe, the Lord that healeth the people. And oh! for grace and faith in lively exercises upon his person, blood, and righteousness; that while Jesus is coming forth to bless, my soul through the Holy Ghost, may be going forth to meet him; and like the people in this Chapter, may my faith be so strong in the Lord, that I may be convinced even the hem of Christ's garment, touched by faith, will make me perfectly whole. Amen.

Chapter 15

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have Christ's discourses with the scribes. The woman of Canaan, seeking to Jesus for her daughter: and the Lord feeding the multitude in the wilderness.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read in the opening of this Chapter, the pitiful substitution of outward acts of religion for the defect of inward purity, but with painful mortification, when we consider in such proofs to what a sad state of ruin, our whole nature is reduced by the fall? Alas! what are these Scribes and Pharisees, but representatives of all men in the Adam race, until a work of mercy in salvation hath passed upon the soul?

Do we not all draw nigh to God with our mouth, and honor him with our lips, while our hearts are far from him; until God the Holy Ghost, hath revealed Christ to us, in his person, offices, and character, and *we are brought nigh by the blood of his cross?*

What a beautiful relief, from such a universal corruption of nature is the subject this Chapter introduceth us to, of the woman of *Canaan*. Oh! ye parents of perverse children, and children under the dominion of Satan; oh! may ye learn for them, for yourselves, yea, for the whole Church of Christ, how to come to Jesus. Who shall say what mercies Jesus is continually manifesting of the same kind? And if we feel interested, as that we cannot but feel interested, for our own, and their everlasting welfare, that neither we nor our offspring should remain under the worst of all distresses, even soul-distresses

in Satan's influence; oh! let us come out of all the coasts of the *Tyre* and *Sidon* of this world, and look unto Jesus: and beholding his mercy here, let us hope for mercy for all Israel: for with him is plenteous *redemption*.

Jesus! do thou have compassion, Lord, as thou hadst in the days of thy flesh, and beholding the multitudes in the wilderness, send us not empty away, but feed us with thyself; and command a blessing upon thy bounty for thou Lord art the bread of life, of which *whosoever eateth shall live for ever!*

Chapter 16

SUMMARY

The sign of Jonas, the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees guarded against; Peter's profession of Christ, and the Lord foretelling his death, are the several subjects of this Chapter.

REFLECTIONS

Lord, I pray thee! keep my soul from every leaven, which, mingled with the complete justifying righteousness of my Lord Jesus Christ, would rob my God of his glory, and my soul of happiness. And doth my God and Savior demand of my poor soul who Jesus is, amidst the varieties of creeds and professions of the present day? Oh! for the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, the revelation of God my Father, and the blessed manifestation of the Son of God to my heart, that I may bear a fixed, unalterable, and decided testimony, before Angels and Men, that thou art the Christ of God, the Lord, my righteousness. Oh! yes! thou Holy One of Israel! thou art indeed the Christ of God, the Word of God, the Lamb of God, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for salvation to every One that believeth. And oh; my honoured Lord, as thou hast said, flesh and blood cannot reveal it, and none but God the Father can give a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, hath the Lord given to me this spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of my Lord; then let me take to myself the blessedness of the discovery, and *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*. Oh! for grace to savour the things which are of God, and not

those which are of men. Give me, blessed Jesus, grace to follow thy cross, and learn all the necessary exercises of self denial, that being conformed to thy image here; *I may be satisfied When I awake up after thy likeness hereafter!*

Chapter 17

SUMMARY

We have here an account of Christ's Transfiguration. A Lunatic is healed by Jesus. The Lord again foretels, his approaching death. The Tribute Money.

REFLECTIONS

What a lovely chapter is this to read to us the interesting events in the life of Christ, when God the Holy Ghost is here leading the Church by the hand, to contemplate Christ in his glory, and Christ in his humiliation. We follow him, by faith to the Mount of Transfiguration, and we hear him informing his disciples, soon after, of his sufferings which were shortly to follow at Jerusalem! Precious Lord Jesus! cause both views to have their gracious influences upon the hearts of thy redeemed! Oh! may it be my portion to follow thee often, by faith, both to the Mount of *Tabor*; and to the Garden of *Gethsemane*. Surely every meditation will tend, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, to strengthen my soul in the belief of Jesus. What, though the privileges of thy people now, are not like those highly favoured disciples, to behold Moses and *Elias* ministering to my Lord, yet in Jesus himself I have all. In the sweet communion with the Master, I shall miss not the absence of all his servants, Yea! I shall rejoice to be alone with Jesus, having to communicate to my Lord, and to receive from him those precious soul-transactions, in a joy with which no lookers-on can meddle. It is blessed, yea, very blessed, my honored Lord, to behold the inability of thy disciples, that my God and Savior's power and grace may be more fully known. And whatever fears, from the weakness of faith in my poor heart, and nature's feelings by reason of the remains of indwelling sin, may arise on entering the cloud, yet will my soul receive an holy joy, unspeakable, and full of glory, when I hear my God and Father's

gracious voice proclaiming the divine approbation; *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

Chapter 18

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here teaching his disciples humbleness, He speaks of his own, and his Father's good pleasure, for the salvation of every one of his little ones. The Chapter is closed in a parable.

REFLECTIONS

How truly blessed is it to have our hearts brought under divine teaching, and made like the simplicity of a weaned child. See my soul in the instance of these disciples of Jesus, how much our minds are wedded to the concerns of this world. Oh! for grace to be converted, and become as little children, that we may be truly great in the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed Lord Jesus! may I never lose sight of this promise that thy presence is eminently manifested in the assemblies of thy people: for sure I am, that all the beauty and glory; all the power and efficacy; all the success and blessing, which can be derived from ordinances, can only be derived, because Jesus hath assured his Church, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is in the midst of them, and that to bless them.

Thanks to my dear Lord for this beautiful and instructive Parable, Yea, Lord! my debt was so great, in ten thousand talents as made me insolvent for ever. In vain were it for me to say, Lord have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Never to all eternity, could I have done it. Oh! then add a grace more to the merciful forgiveness of all; and incline my heart to be merciful, even as my father which is in heaven is merciful! Precious Jesus! help me to imitate thee in all things!

Chapter 19

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus *is here prosecuting his ministry; healing the sick; conversing with the Pharisees; receiving little children; discoursing with his disciples.*

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou glorious and gracious bridegroom of thy Church! Everlasting praises to thy name, it is not lawful for Jesus to put away his wife, whatever the world may do, for every cause. The Lord God of Israel hath said, that he hateth putting away. And while Jesus himself hath said by his Apostle, Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them; will Jesus be bitter against his? What! though she hath, since from everlasting he betrothed himself to her, fallen away, and sunk into misery and sin; will not Jesus recover her from this state? Yea, will it not be to his glory so to do? Yes! thou dear Lord! it will be to thy greater glory to recover her, than though she had never fallen. And the whole inhabitants of heaven will praise thee, and love thee the more also when thou shalt bring her home, cleansed from all her sins, in thy blood, and shalt present her to thyself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but shall be without blame before thee in love!

Blessed Master I would humbly enquire of thee concerning eternal life, as this youth; but not what good thing that I must do to attain it. For alas! if the possession of heaven could be obtained with only a single act of goodness; never to all eternity should I find it. Where I should do good, evil is present with me. Oh! then for grace to know thee, to love thee, to follow thee, as my only good; my hope, my righteousness, my portion for ever! Amen.

Chapter 20

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains, the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard: Jesus' discourse with the mother of Zebedee's children: and the cure of two blind men.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read in this Chapter, the striking Parable of the householder hiring laborers into his Vineyard, and not feel conviction at the free, sovereign, purposing, appointing, carrying on, and completing grace of God? Is not the Vineyard of the Lord of hosts, his Church: and every plant in it of the Lord's right hand planting? What! if Jesus sends his under servants his ministers to labor in his service; or calls his people to sit down under his shadow, do either lessen the right and property of the Almighty owner? Is not the whole his, by gift, by purchase, by right, by conquest, and by power? And is it not separated by redeeming grace from the world's wide wilderness, and fenced in with love? Ye ministers of my God! esteem it the highest honor, to labor within the sacred inclosure, and be more anxious to win souls than to win kingdoms. Ye children of the Lord! whether in the early, mid-day, or later calls of his grace; bless God for the distinguishing mercy. Soon will the evening of life come; and the Lord of the Vineyard will call ye home, from his courts below to his heaven above.

Precious Lord Jesus! I behold thee by the eye of faith in thine ascent to Jerusalem! Yes! truly there thou wast delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification! Grant me dearest Lord to be more anxious to be brought under the continual baptisms of thy spirit, than to arrive at the highest temporal honors. A door-keeper in thy house, far exceeds the golden tents of the ungodly.

In the review of my Lord's mercy to those poor blind men, and the grace imparted to them to be so earnest with Jesus for bodily sight; teach me, thou gracious giver of eyes to the blind, to imitate their cries for spiritual apprehension of my Lord's person, work, and righteousness. Oh! for grace to see the king in his beauty, and to have my soul so awakened to desires after Christ, that I may follow

my God and Savior by faith here, till in open vision I *shall see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever!*

Chapter 21

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here described as riding into Jerusalem. He casteth the buyers and sellers out of the temple. We have also the account of the withered Fig-tree, and the parable of the husbandman.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, my soul, over this view of thy Redeemer! Did the Prophet, ages before Christ was born, call upon Zion to rejoice greatly, and Jerusalem to shout aloud, because her king was coming to her, meek and lowly, and having salvation; and did the Son of God, in his character as King of Zion, actually make his entry in the very manner the Prophet described; and did all those effects follow in confirmation of the glorious truth? And wilt not thou, my soul, join the heavenly Hosannas, and sing aloud, *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest!*

And is it one and the same person who is here described as hungry, and needing the common sustenance to support nature, yea looking to a fig-tree to supply a pressing occasion? Oh! precious Jesus! how sweetly accommodating is thy lovely example, to the wants and indeed *behoove* exercises of thy people? Yes! thou dear Lord, it, did *thee to be made like unto thy brethren, that thou mightest be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.* And having suffered being tempted, thou, knowest *how to succor them that are tempted.*

Lord! give thy people grace to see, that, while unawakened, unregenerate sinners, like those husbandmen in the parable, though living in thy Church, and outwardly feasting upon the good things of thy vineyard, have no inward joy or communion with the Lord of his vineyard, there are those redeemed of the Lord whose right it is in Christ, and who will finally be brought home to the joy of their Lord; while those miserable men will ultimately be destroyed, and

have their portion with hypocrites in outer darkness, *where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Chapter 22

SUMMARY

We have, in this Chapter, the Parable of the Marriage-feast, and Christ's discourses with the Scribes and Pharisees.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! Was there ever condescension like thine, to marry our nature? To pass by the nature of angels, and to take on thee the seed of Abraham! And didst thou, Lord, so fix thy love upon thy Church, that though thou knowest from the beginning that our whole nature would deal very treacherously, yet this did not prevent thy gracious design, but thou didst determine to pay our dreadful debt, to rescue us out of the hand of every enemy, to disannul our agreement with sin, and to call back thy spouse, the Church; who, as a treacherous wife, had departed from her first husband? Did Jesus indeed, in the prosecution of this great design, send forth his servants in all ages of the Church; Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, to call home his own, and to bring all his redeemed to the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven? Oh! peerless, unequalled love! Oh! matchless sovereign mercy! Lord Jesus! grant that when thou comest in at the last day to see thy guests at thy table, my poor soul may not be found like the man without a wedding garment, and from being Christless now, I should be speechless then. But oh! thou dear Lord! may my soul be found of thee in that all-decisive hour, so adorned in thy spotless righteousness, that both now, and then, my soul may sing the holy triumphs of the Church, and find the blessedness of it. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

Dearest Lord Jesus! while Pharisees, and Herodians, and Sadducees, all confederate against thee; Oh! do thou cause my poor

soul to be attached to thee more and more. Give me to enter into a proper apprehension of all the mysteries of faith, and the doctrine of the resurrection; that, convinced of an interest in the covenant of redemption made with *Abraham*, and the heirs with him of the promise, I may make the study of Christ, and the knowledge of Christ, the great essentials of everlasting life? and esteem Christ, and him crucified, the *one thing needful*, beyond all the knowledge of the earth. Oh! the blessedness of this living to Christ, and rejoicing in Christ, and making him, what God hath made him, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of salvation; convinced that *there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Chapter 23

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Lord Jesus is engaged in exhorting his disciples, and the multitude, against the doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees. The Chapter closeth with Christ's pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, as a City given up to destruction.

REFLECTIONS

Pause Reader! pause my soul, over the contents of this Chapter. Surely nothing can be more solemn, nothing more affecting. Behold the Son of God, who came to seek and save that which was lost; pronouncing sure and certain destruction upon a class of men, whom every age have stood up with pretensions for greater holiness than others, and like one of them in the Parable, all of them more or less ready to exclaim: God! *I thank thee that I am not as other men are!* Hear the Lord calling them serpents; a generation of vipers, which cannot escape the damnation of hell. And what were they considered in their department among men? How were they distinguished *then?* How are they known *now?*

The Lord calls them Pharisees. Men unhumbléd in their minds. Who never felt the plague of their own heart. Uncircumcised in heart and ears. They never tasted the wormwood and the gall of a fallen state. They never were pricked to the heart under the deep

conviction of a fallen state. And not feeling the want of Christ; they utterly despised him.

Lord Jesus! keep my soul humble at the foot of thy cross. Every day, and all the day, may I learn the infinitely precious consolations of salvation as alone in thee, and more and more from a deep sense of the want of thee, be led to see and enjoy my complete interest in thee. And oh for grace like Paul, to count *all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: and to count all things but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God but faith.* Oh! the blessedness that Christ is made of God to all his redeemed; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that he shall glorieth may glory in the Lord!*

Chapter 24

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the Lord Jesus instructing his disciples, and in particular he foretells the destruction of the temple: and with it is blended the promise of his future coming.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! be thou everlastingly loved and adored, in that thou earnest forth from the bosom of the Father, to make known the sacred purposes of his holy will and which were all purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. And blessed be thy name for that love and grace in thine heart, in having taught thy people their safety amidst all the judgments going on in the world; and amidst all the deceptions of devils and men lying in wait to deceive. Yes! yes! thou dearest Lord, in this blessed Chapter we learn, that it is impossible so to deceive thine elect, or that any real injury can follow. Oh! Lord! give thy people grace to trace their mercies to the fountain head; and to know that their safety as well as their happiness, ariseth from their being chosen in thee, and not from any thing in themselves. And my soul, in a day like the present, let no reports of false christs, or false prophets at all move thee. Jesus will

keep; Jesus will preserve; Jesus will secure his own. And the day is hastening, when *he will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in fill them that believe*. In that, all-decisive hour, Lord grant that I may be found in thee, waiting thy approach, and *not be ashamed before: thee at thy coming!* Amen

Chapter 25

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we have the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and of the Talents, together with an account of the proceedings of the last day.

REFLECTIONS

Let both Writer and Reader, ponder well the weighty contents of this Chapter, before they c[lose the book, looking up to the great Author of his holy word, to commission it to their hearts, and to make it a savour of life unto life, that the name of Jesus, may be *as ointment poureth forth!*

And oh! for grace, to be as the wise virgins, not going forth with the lamp of a mere profession; which from not being fed, nor kept alive by the Lord, cannot but go out in the midnight-hour. Neither may my soul be as the unprofitable servant, whose end could be no other but to be cast into outer darkness, *where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!* Oh! precious Lord Jesus! what a relief is it to my soul that when thou shalt come in thy glory, and all thy holy angels with thee, thy redeemed shalt be set on thy right hand; and their introduction into everlasting happiness, will then be proclaimed before a congregated world, to be the result of thy grace, not their merit. Yes! thou glorious Head of thy Church and people, it will be then seen that thou art the sole *cause or* all their salvation and joy, their everlasting portion and happiness, in time and to all eternity. Lord! grant in my heart all the blessed effects of thy love, that I may love thee and thy members, as streams from the fountain of thy love, and manifest whose I am and whom I serve, in the gospel of *God's* dear Son: and seeing that all thy redeemed have received *a kingdom*

which cannot be moved, we may have grace whereby as we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear!

Chapter 26

SUMMARY

We here enter upon the concluding scenes of Christ's life. The Rulers conspire against Jesus. He celebrates his Passover. Judas betrayeth him; Peter denieth him; and all the disciples forsake him and flee.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! in looking back upon the many wonderful events related in this Chapter, let us admire as well we may, the boundless love of the Lord Jesus, in the tender institution of his holy supper. For as the type and shadow of the Jewish Passover, was now for ever to cease, when He the true Christian Passover to which that service ministered, was sacrificed for us; it was an act of the highest love and mercy, in our dear Redeemer, to set up this precious ordinance in his Church, as a standing memorial of his death, until his coming again. And surely Jesus hath endeared it and recommended it by every affecting circumstance, when we consider the *time* when he instituted it; the *manner* in which he observed it himself, and commanded *its perpetual* observance by his people: with all the blessed effects he hath promised in it, from his gracious presence, in those holy seasons of communion: and the sure mercies, which shall accompany the faithful use of it. Oh! for grace, frequently thus to *set forth the Lord's death till he come!*

And oh! thou dearest Redeemer! grant both the Writer and Reader the blessed unction of thine Holy Spirit, as often as we follow thy steps by faith, to the garden of Gethsemane. Here may we oft resort in spirit, as Jesus in the days of his flesh oft resorted with his disciples.

And Lord grant, that we enter into thy retirings, and by watchfulness and prayer, go over in review again and again, the soul-agonies and soul-travails of Jesus: taking interest in all that we behold, of his sorrows for us and our salvation. Oh! for grace thus to

read and thus to meditate on the person, work, offices, characters, and relations of the Lord Jesus Christ! To behold him, and to know him, who was made *sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Chapter 27

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with the relation of hurrying away the Lord Jesus to Pilate; from thence to Herod. Christ is examined; Barabbas, a robber and murderer, is preferred before him. He is led away to be crucified. The awful signs attending his death, He is laid in the Sepulchre.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! if there be an interesting moment in the life of Jesus while upon earth, to call forth the tenderest sympathy of his redeemed, in one instance more than another, surely it is here. Who indeed can, dry eyed, or without a weeping heart, follow the Redeemer from the hall of Pilate, to the Mount of Calvary, and behold the Lamb of God in those unequalled hours of suffering, offering his soul an offering for sin? Yea, who that from being enabled by the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, to enter into the suitable apprehension of the mysterious subject, and stands convinced, that all which Jesus suffered, was the sinner's due, and must have been his sufferings to all eternity but for Jesus's interposition, can, unmoved, behold such scenes of sorrow? Reader! let you and I behold the Lamb of God, in this light! Let us listen to the declaration of Jehovah on this point, and while we look up at the cross of Christ, behold what but for his sufferings must have been our own; and then we shall rightly prize the voice of God, when he saith, speaking of Christ; *He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken!*

Under these impressions, let us behold the Lord Jesus, the sinner's surety, taken from prison and from judgment. I see him bearing my sins, and my curse due to them; and hurried away to execution. An armed band seizing upon him; he is bound hand and

foot as the sacrifice to the altar, The Scribes and Pharisees, like the bulls of *Bashan*, beset him around. He is made naked to his shame, publicly scourged, and his body torn with thorns, until the blood streamed in every direction. While the shouts of the unfeeling rabble, and the blows of the cruel soldiers, worry the Lamb of God to death. His cries on the cross loudly manifest what were the feelings of his soul; and above all, the frowns of Heaven when he hung upon the accursed tree, made the cup of trembling bitter indeed. Who that hears the words of Jesus, can enter into their full extent of sorrow. *Reproach hath broken my heart: I am full of heaviness. I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none!*

And must all this have been my case, had not Jesus been my surety? Yes! all, and every portion of it, and that for ever. For if the holy, and harmless, and undefiled Lamb of God, was made both sin and a curse for his people; certainly but for his taking both upon him, the sinner of every description must have borne the whole for himself. And when at death, the unregenerated sinner had received the awful sentence and is hurried away to punishment, that curse will light upon him, and remain upon him undone away to all eternity. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being found in Christ, and having him as our surety, both now, in this day of grace, and thereafter in the day of judgment. Reader! may the Lord give us the faith of thus looking to the cross of Christ, and there behold Jesus as our surety! *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed.*

Chapter 28

SUMMARY

In this close of the Gospel according to Matthew, we have the wonderful Relation of Christ's Resurrection. The Lord's several Appearances to the Women and his Disciples: Christ's Commission to his Disciples, to preach his Gospel and baptize.

RELECTIONS

OH! for grace to receive and believe the record God hath given of his dear Son. Surely, the Lord hath furnished for his people, every evidence that God can give or man receive, to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. By signs in heaven from above; and wonders in the earth beneath, was my Lord's triumph over death, hell, and the grave manifested. Every witness calls upon me, like the Angels to the women at the sepulchre; *Come! see the place where the Lord lay.* Yes! I would answer. My soul desires to take the wing of faith, and light down at the memorable sepulcher, and see the sacred spot! Yes! I would flee there, but, not stay there, but hasten to look upwards after a risen and ascended Savior! Yea! I would seek grace to pursue my researches after Jesus, until I beheld him in that bosom of Jehovah, where he hath lain from all eternity!

And now my honored Lord! my soul would lay low at thy footstool, and hail thee Lord of heaven and earth! Glorious, gracious, Almighty Head of thy Church and People! It is for thee to send forth thy servants, to call *thy sons from far and thy daughters from the ends of the earth!* Thy kingdom of grace shall be established until thou hast brought home all thy ransomed to thy kingdom of glory. Not one shall be left behind: but shall be brought under the baptisms of thy Spirit to the joint praise and honor of the holy Three in One, Father Son, and Holy Ghost. Lord! hasten thy gracious purposes; and confirm the sacred promises of thy will.

Farewell *Matthew*, faithful recorder of my Lord's history! Thanks to God the Holy Ghost, for thy services in his Church in those written memorials of the conception, incarnation, birth, baptism, fastings, temptations, ministry, miracles, parables, prophecies, agonies, conflicts, sufferings, death, resurrection, and return to glory, of our Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed be my God and Saviour, in calling thee from the receipt of custom to be an Evangelist! Oh! may the ministry of thy word be made blessed to my soul, and to the souls of thousands. And then as thou broughtest home the Lord Jesus to thine house, and then madest him a feast with publicans and sinners; so ere long Jesus will take thee and me, and all his redeemed home, to *the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven;* and feast our ravished souls, with the enjoyment of himself;

and in him and through him, the whole persons of the Godhead in one unceasing banquet of holy joy for evermore. Amen and Amen.

MARK

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

WE would enter upon this blessed Gospel, written by Mark, as we did that of Matthew, both, evidently, having been indicated by the SPIRIT of the living GOD, and with the same earnest waitings upon GOD the HOLY GHOST, to make it blessed, both to the Writer and to the Reader of this Poor Man's Commentary. And when we call to mind what are the blessed contents of it, every feeling of the soul is called forth, in beholding the interesting records of the LORD of life and glory. Oh! who can go over the wonderful relation unmoved, which sets before us the life, ministry, miracles, discourses, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Oh! LORD the SPIRIT, be mercifully pleased to write the blessed contents in my heart!

Concerning Mark, the penman of this Gospel, we have but little account. It is probable that he was one of the seventy disciples, but it is not certain. He is spoken of by Paul and Peter. And some have thought that Peter was engaged with Mark in forming the work. But one thing is certain; the HOLY GHOST gave the record. And it will be our mercy, if the same Almighty LORD makes it a sweet savor to our souls, that the name of JESUS may be as ointment poured forth!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Evangelist enters upon his records of the LORD JESUS with an account of John the Baptist. To this follow the Baptism of CHRIST, his temptation, preaching, the call of his Apostles; and the performing miracles.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us, while opening this precious record of the beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, the SON of GOD, look up for grace from the SPIRIT of GOD, that the outward ministry of the word may be accompanied with inward instructions in our souls, to make us wise unto salvation through the faith that is in CHRIST JESUS. May the Holy Three, which bear record in heaven, grant to us such sweet testimonies in our hearts and consciences of the truth as it is in JESUS, that we may enjoy that life eternal, to know the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, to be the only true GOD and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent. Precious beginning of the Gospel, I would say; beginning, as it did, before all worlds, when hid in GOD, who created all things by JESUS CHRIST, and now made manifest by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of GOD!

Here LORD I behold thy herald, the Baptist, preparing thy way. before thee! Come, LORD, and bring my soul under the baptism of thy HOLY SPIRIT. Prepare me, by His enlightnings, to stand against the temptations of the devil Oh! for the distinguishing calls of my LORD, as to his disciples. LORD! dispossess every unclean affection from my heart; and do thou reign there, and rule there, the LORD of life and glory! So will my soul, by thy grace, be made clean, though, in myself, polluted as the leper; and JESUS will be my LORD and my GOD, my portion forever!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The HOLY GHOST is pleased to record, in this chapter, the cure which the LORD JESUS wrought on the Man sick of the Palsy; CHRIST'S call of Matthew; his sitting at meat with Publicans; and his divine Discourses at the Table. The chapter closeth with an account of his passing through the corn-field on the Sabbath-day.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL thou glorious LORD JESUS! Thou hast indeed, fully manifested thy power on earth to forgive sins; and as in this instance of the man with the palsy, thou hast healed the body, in confirmation of having saved the soul. Speak LORD but the word to my soul also, and sure I am of salvation. And oh! thou dear LORD, hast thou not taught, by thy freeness of thy call of *Levi*, that all thy calls on sinners, are the result of thy free sovereign grace, and not their deserts? Had *Levi* done anything to merit thy favor? Yea, had he not done everything to merit thy displeasure? And notwithstanding all his undeservings, was he called; and JESUS found of him, who sought him not? And is not JESUS as much now, in this day of his power, as then, in the days of his flesh, passing by, in ordinances, and in providences, and calling his redeemed from this world's custom, to follow him in the regeneration? And is it not JESUS who calls, and JESUS, who by his HOLY SPIRIT inclines, the hearts of them he calls to follow, and to take JESUS home, as this poor publican did, to their hearts and to their houses; and make JESUS a feast of his own bounties of the grace, JESUS gives them? Yea, is it not the wish and desire of every poor sinner, whom the LORD makes willing in the day of his power, to invite all poor sinners made sensible of sin, to come and sit down with JESUS and his disciples? What, though proud, unhumbled, self-righteous Pharisees, murmur at the grace of JESUS; let those who never felt the want of redemption, proudly reject it: but let every poor broken hearted sinner rejoice, in what the SON of GOD hath said: *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

And let it please thee, my gracious GOD, to bless all thou receivest with thy favor as thou didst *Levi*. Never, never, may any poor sinner fast, while JESUS is with them, and in his fulness they have enough for the supply of all their poverty. Never take a part of JESUS' robe of righteousness, to mend their tattered rags, but receive whole CHRIST as suited for a wholly ruined sinner; and be completely covered with CHRIST'S garment of salvation. Never receive the new wine of the Gospel, into the old skin of a withered nature: but may the LORD, who sitteth on the throne, making all things new, give the new heart, and the new nature together, and make all his redeemed new creatures in CHRIST JESUS! And be thou,

dearest LORD, both the corn and the wine, and the oil, yea, the very sabbath of all thy people, till thou shalt bring them all home, to thyself, in glory!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

We have here the case of the Man with the withered hand: the call of the Apostles: the Scribe's Blasphemy: and the LORD JESUS speaking of his relations.

Reflections

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! do thou come by thy blessed SPIRIT into thy Church, and among thy people, now in the day of thy power, as thou didst in the days of thy flesh, into the synagogue; and there manifest, that thou art LORD of the Sabbath, by thine acts of grace and mercy, to the souls of thy redeemed. Many a withered hand and an unawakened heart, is there, of thy people for JESUS to heal. Oh! do thou speak, in the word, and by the word; and very sure will it be at thy bidding, the withered and the halt, yea the dead in trespasses and sins will come forth to life and health, and new creatures. And oh! blessed LORD! what read we here in this chapter? Do the very devils and unclean spirits proclaim thy power and GODHEAD? Oh then for grace, that all thy redeemed may know thee, from the least to the greatest. And do thou, dearest, and most compassionate LORD JESUS, give thy poor, fearful, and deeply exercised trembling ones, grace to see, that thou hast undertaken to keep them, from the unpardonable sin, in their union with thyself. Thy beloved Apostle hath said, under the authority of GOD the HOLY GHOST, that *whosoever is born of GOD, sinneth not*, but he that is begotten of GOD *keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not*. Oh! let the sweet consolation of this, be made blessed to thy people; that while the malice of hell, is breaking out, in the minds of the children of darkness; all thy dear redeemed ones may know and rejoice, in the assurance, that they are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation. Oh! the precious thought! CHRIST is not ashamed to call his people brethren. And as he condescends to own

his poor relations in this life; so will he own them in the world to come. Never may my soul forget those sweet words of my LORD. *Whosoever* (saith JESUS) *shall do the will of GOD, (and this is the will and work of GOD, to believe on him whom he hath sent,) the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter, the Parable of the Sower; of the Seed in its secret growth: and JESUS, on the Lake in a Storm.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I pass over numberless other considerations, which arise out of this Chapter, in order to attend to what is always, and ever must be, the first and last, and comprehensive object, and subject of every Chapter; the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself and our salvation in him. He is both the Seed and Sower; that corn of pure wheat, cast into the ground of our hearts, which soil, when renewed by grace, brings forth, in all his redeemed, sure fruit; *some thirty fold, some sixty fold, some an hundredfold.* And he it is; to sow the pure seed in his Churches. And none sown by CHRIST can fall to the ground. What though his servants, and those who minister in the word and doctrine, too often find their labors in the wayside, and in thorny ground and stony places, unproductive; yet, wheresoever JESUS sends his word, he saith himself, *it shall not return void, but it shall prosper in the heart to which he sends it.* To thee, then, LORD! let thy people look, both for direction, where to sow the seed, and from whom alone to expect a blessing. Sent and commissioned by thy sovereign power, *in due season, they shall reap if they faint not.*

Precious LORD JESUS! however to the unawakened and unregenerated all thy truths appear as parables, do thou speak thy sweet word to all thy redeemed, as they are able to bear it. And oh! do thou make it doubly sweet and blessed, when we are alone with thee, by expounding to us all things concerning thyself. And if we are called upon to enter upon the water, or pass through the fire with

JESUS; oh! let the consciousness that JESUS is with us, hush all our fears, and make us more than conquerors, through thy grace helping us. LORD! do thou speak peace to our troubled souls, as thou didst to the troubled sea, by speaking pardon to our sins. Both winds and storms, and guilt and fear, must all be still at thy command.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS healeth the Man possessed with a Legion: he cures the Woman with the Bloody Issue, and raiseth the Daughter of Jairus.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! to what a desperate state is our whole nature reduced by the fall! Where Satan reigns, unrestrained by grace; see my soul, see in this man, (and while beholding look up and wonder at thy mercies) to what a length the human frame is capable of going in madness, while governed by devils! And what makes the subject yet more truly awful is, the consideration, that Satan's empire over our nature is a lawful empire: for as Scripture truly saith, *of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought into bondage.*

But oh! the mercy of that promise: *Thus saith the LORD: ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money.* Hear, my soul, hear what is said. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty; or the lawful captive delivered?* But thus saith the LORD: *even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.* And see, as in this instance, one of CHRIST'S little ones though long held captive by Satan, yet gloriously delivered by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And where is he now, who when recovered by grace on earth, sat at the feet of JESUS; but sitting with JESUS on his throne and kingdom of glory in heaven? Oh! my soul, go tell all thy friends of this wonder-working Savior!

Behold also the power and sovereignty of thy LORD, over unclean spirits, and unclean beasts. See what efficacy flows from

JESUS, to the touch of faith in his divine person; yea, behold, how even the dead JESUS raiseth. Never then call in question his power over all the uncleanness thy nature, nor his grace to answer the desire of that faith, which he himself hath created. Thy deadness, and dying frames, JESUS can take away, and his command to arise must always be attended with power. He saith to thee, my soul, as to the ruler of the synagogue, be not afraid, only believe. LORD, *I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS is here spoken of with contempt by his countrymen. He sends forth his Disciples. Herod hears of CHRIST, and is alarmed. JESUS feeds the Multitude. He is seen walking on the Sea. He heals the sick.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou who was in the form of GOD, and with whom it was no robbery to be equal with GOD! give me to see the blessedness of thy humiliation, in condescending to labor for thy daily bread, in order to remove the whole curse of the fall, in becoming a curse for thy people. Do thou, dearest LORD, give grace to all thy poor and toilsome family to learn the blessedness of being conformed to thy lovely image in all things. Let all thy sent servants learn by thy Apostles how to return to JESUS, and lay before him the account of their ministry. In the awful history of *Herod*, give all thy people grace, to know how to value a peace of mind in JESUS, which nothing of this world's greatness can procure. And while thy redeemed behold their GOD and Savior feeding the thousands to the full with a scanty provision, and healing all the diseased with a word speaking; oh! let neither poverty nor sickness induce a moment's fear in the heart of thy people. Precious LORD! do thou realize, day by day, thy gracious and refreshing presence to our wants. And oh! for grace to have such views of GOD'S CHRIST, and GOD'S chosen, as GOD the FATHER hath set him forth by, in the word of his grace; and then will all the blessed effects of salvation be enjoyed by his

redeemed, in villages, and cities, and countries upon earth; as the redeemed now enjoy in the city of our GOD in heaven.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The Pharisees assemble to contend with CHRIST. JESUS reproves them. He heals a poor child and cures one that was deaf and dumb.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! Let us pause over the awful view of the deceitfulness of the human heart, as read to us in those Scribes and Pharisees! While full of uncleanness, and all manner of hypocrisy, see how they prided themselves on outside appearances!

But while such striking facts may serve to teach us, as they ought to teach us, the deepest humility, let a sense of it lead us to all-precious JESUS! Oh! how ought the consciousness of it to endear CHRIST to the heart. Gracious, and compassionate Redeemer! dispossess every evil, every unclean affection, from our souls. LORD! to thee belongs the curing, both of the spiritually deaf, and dumb. Oh do thou pronounce the soul-renewing word, *Ephphatha!* and every faculty will obey thee. Thy people now will be astonished at the riches of thy grace, as they of old were at thy power, Thou hast indeed done all things well in time, and to all eternity. My poor deaf and dumb soul thou hast made to hear and speak; yea, thou hast raised it to a new life, when dead in trespasses and sins!

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

CHRIST is here described in feeding the people by a miracle. He giveth Sight to a blind man, and sweetly discourseth with his disciples.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! see to it, that the frequent notice, the Gospel takes of those Scribes and Pharisees, the sworn foes to CHRIST, that thou do not overlook the important lesson to be drawn, from what is said of them. They were zealous in their profession, of what they called godliness; but it was a godliness only of nature, unawakened by grace. It consisted in outside appearance, honoring GOD with the lips, while their hearts were far from him. My soul! see to it, that an union with CHRIST forms the basis of all thy worship. It is with the heart, man *believeth unto* righteousness; and *with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation*.

Precious LORD JESUS! do thou keep me, by thine Almighty power, through faith unto salvation. Give me to see, that from an everlasting union with thee, in a covenant which cannot be broken; here lies the security of grace, to suit the wants and circumstances of all thy people. JESUS will say, *Ephphatha!* to the unopened eyes and ears of all his children, born in the Adam-nature of blindness, deafness, yea, *dead in trespasses and sins*. Thine LORD, is the work to accomplish, and thine all the glory. Cause me daily to see thy glory, to hear thy voice, and my whole heart and soul to speak thy praise!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

We have here the glorious Scene of CHRIST'S Transfiguration. The LORD begins to prepare the minds of his Disciples for his Death. The miracle of the Child healed of a dumb spirit. Our LORD'S discourse with his Disciples.

REFLECTIONS

LORD JESUS! While I read thy gracious promise, at the opening of this Chapter, to some of thy faithful ones; who, according to what was then said, did not taste death till they had seen this kingdom come with power; I bless thee that though not present at thy Transfiguration; yet seeing thee by faith and knowing thee as the

LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, all thy redeemed of the present day can say as holy Simeon of old, *mine eyes have seen thy salvation!*

Beholding thy rich mercy to the Child of the Poor Man, who, though his faith was so slender, yet thy grace was so great; help me LORD; yea, help all thy redeemed ones, to join in the same prayer, and may we experience the same mercy: LORD, *I believe! help thou mine unbelief.*

Oh! for a spirit of humility among thy Church and People, that each may esteem other better than themselves: yea, may we all be content to be nothing; yea, less than nothing, that JESUS, our adorable JESUS, may be all in all! In the awful view of the unregenerate, in their worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched oh! give thy people grace to mark, and rightly prize their distinguishing mercies. LORD! *How is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto us and not unto the world?* Oh! For the salt of the Covenant of my GOD! Oh! For the grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST, salting with the salt of his regenerating, cleansing, illuminating, strengthening, and confirming influence, my soul unto the day of eternal redemption!

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

Our LORD is here discoursing on the subject of divorcement. Little children are brought to CHRIST. The LORD again speaks of his approaching Sufferings. JESUS passeth through Jericho.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Bridegroom of thy Church! how sweetly hast thou answered all the cavils of the *Pharisees*, and silenced all the fears of thy people, in teaching thy Church in the opening of this Chapter, that JESUS hath not put away his wife, notwithstanding all her shameful departures. Oh! for grace to cry out with the spouse, *my beloved is mine, and I am his!*

Praises to the condescending grace of the SON of GOD, who receiveth now, as he received then, in the days of his flesh, little children. So LORD must it be indeed thy grace to receive me, for I

am but a child in understanding, and therefore I pray thee, thou tender LORD, to give me grace to sit at thy feet, and hear the blessed words which proceed out of thy mouth! And as thou hast taught me in the solemn example of this apparently promising youth, who for the love of this world's gain, could so readily give up CHRIST. Oh! for grace, to be kept from *the love of money, which is the root of all evil*. Bring my soul under the continual baptisms of the HOLY GHOST; and let my whole rejoicings be in the consciousness of an interest in that ransom, which my GOD and Savior hath given for many.

Oh! thou glorious covenant of thy people! Thou has indeed proved thyself to be JEHOVAH's Covenant in all thy words and works: LORD! I beseech thee give me grace to follow thee as *Bartimeus* did; let me cast away, and cast off everything of mine; for all must be, as I am myself, unclean. LORD, be thou all my salvation and all my desire; give me spiritual sight, and enable me to follow thee in the way.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The LORD JESUS entereth Jerusalem in triumph. The barren Fig Tree. CHRIST'S Conversation with the Chief Priests.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! I would call upon you, as I would call upon myself; And may GOD the HOLY GHOST mercifully call upon both, to behold the LORD JESUS, in the opening of this chapter, as manifesting his double nature in his one glorious person, the GOD-Man Mediator; both in his unequalled humility when entering Jerusalem, in *having salvation, and yet lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass*. And who less than GOD could have exercised the knowledge of Omniscience so as to direct his disciples where to find the colt; and the power of inclining the minds of those the disciples were to meet, to fulfil CHRIST'S wishes in the loan of the colt? Who less than GOD could have taught the children in the temple of CHRIST'S person and character? And what power less than divine, could have constrained those babes to shout *Hosannah* to the glory

of JESUS; when the elders, and many of them very probably the parents of those little ones, were doing all their malice could contrive to stop their hymns of praise?

Reader! behold the barren fig tree! Observe its fruitless verdure. Figure to yourself the state of a church, a people, a family; yea, an individual, thus! And calculate if you can the awful state of appearing flourishing to the eye of man, while under the blighting curse of GOD. Oh! the tremendous sentence, could it be heard, concerning the unauthorized, uncalled, unsent minister, or graceless people: *No man eat fruit of thee for ever!*

LORD JESUS! Increase our faith! Let mountains of sin and unbelief be removed through faith in thy person blood, and righteousness! And oh! let the malice of thy foes, and the opposition made by men to thee and thy Gospel, endear both to our heart. And grant such rich supplies of grace in the knowledge of thy person and work, that our faith may never be founded in *the wisdom of man, but in the power of GOD.*

Chapter 12

Summary

The LORD is here teaching in Parables. The Pharisees and Herodians try to catch JESUS in his words. The LORD blessedly discourseth on the Resurrection, and with a Scribe: he cautions against the Scribes. The Chapter closeth with the LORD's Commendation of the Widow's Offering to the Treasury.

Reflections

Pause my soul over the many precious contents in this blessed chapter! Both the Jewish nation, and the Jewish church, have been as the LORD'S vineyard. Oh! the boundless grace of JEHOVAH in setting apart that people with whom he deposited his Ordinances; *whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST came, who is over all GOD blessed for ever, Amen.* But oh! the wonderful provocations of Israel, in slighting the LORD'S servants rising early and speaking, but regarding them not; till at length they killed the LORD of life and glory! But, Reader! are we then by nature

or by practice better than they? Oh! no, in no wise. The LORD hath concluded all under sin, that the righteousness of GOD, which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST, might be given to them that believe. *Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!*

My soul! behold thy LORD attacked in every way, by men calling him *Rabbi*; and professing great regard to his person, for his teaching the way of GOD in truth; and by *Pharisee* and *Sadducee*, by *Herodians* and by *Scribes*, aiming to catch him in his words! Oh! thou divine and Almighty Teacher, cause thy blessed truths in this chapter to sink deep into my heart! LORD! be thou everlastingly blessed for thy gracious discoveries concerning the glorious truths of thy resurrection. LORD! be thou my resurrection, and my life! Give me to know Israel's GOD in covenant as one LORD! And oh! give me grace to love Him in his threefold character of PERSON, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, *with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength*. And in the love of GOD may my affections find sweet directions, to the love of my neighbor. So will David's LORD be my LORD, and his CHRIST my CHRIST. And like the poor widow, the LORD'S treasury will have my whole living; since all I have, and all I am, are the LORD'S, and of His own only do I give him.

CHAPTER 13

Summary

The LORD foretells the Destruction of the Temple; and the sad Calamities of the Jews. His solemn Cautions to his Disciples in the Expectation of those woeful Events.

REFLECTIONS

How little was it apprehended, either by the disciples or the multitude, that when JESUS went out of the temple, as is here represented in the opening of this chapter; he went out to return to it no more! Reader! so ought you, and I, to esteem ordinances, and our attendance on the house of prayer, each time as though it were our last. How differently would they be valued even by those who

valued them most, if this thought were always uppermost in our minds?

Reader! while perusing the many awful events foretold by our LORD, in this chapter; how precious the thought! CHRIST's people were *safe in the midst of danger. It is wonderful until explained by GOD the HOLY GHOST, how the LORD's people in all ages live, and are carried on, and carried through, a thousand perils which apparently, seem to threaten destruction to them as well as the ungodly; and yet Noah-like they live out the storm, secured in the Ark CHRIST JESUS. How may every child of GOD; yea; how ought every child of GOD to take to himself the comfort of the LORD's assurance; I know the thoughts I think towards you; thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Precious LORD JESUS! thou art my hiding place, thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance!*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

We enter here upon the History of CHRIST'S Passion. The Chief Priests conspire against him. A woman anoints the LORD. Judas selleth CHRIST, and betrayeth him. Peter denieth him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us look up for the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, while in the perusal of this sacred chapter, that all the blessed contents of it may be engrafted in our hearts. Who can read of the Jewish Passover, and here contemplate CHRIST our Passover sacrificed for us, and not earnestly desire to keep the feast. LORD JESUS! give to all thy redeemed which attend thy table, a portion of the same grace as filled the heart of this woman. Oh! for the Spikenard of the HOLY SPIRIT, to anoint the feet of JESUS at his table!

LORD! let thy sweet teaching be upon us, while reading the denial of *Peter*, and the desertion of all the Apostles, still to mark the essential difference between backsliding, and the total want of grace, as in the instance of the traitor *Judas*. LORD! give us grace to praise the great Author of his discriminating mercy! Dearest JESUS! let

Gethsemane be ever dear to the remembrance of thy people. Here in faith would the souls of thy redeemed delight to roam and meditate thy soul-agony and conflicts and temptations. And LORD when we see thee, taken from thence, to prison and to judgment! oh! for grace to behold thee; *as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace as upon thee, and by thy stripes we are healed.* Oh! the wonders of redemption, that He *who knew no sin, should be made sin for us; that we, who knew no righteousness, should be made the righteousness of GOD in Him.*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The Lord Jesus is here led away to Pilate. He is Condemned, and delivered to be Crucified. His Death and Burial.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not hastily pass away from this most solemn and interesting chapter. It is profitable to follow the footsteps of the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. And while from the High Priest's palace, to the palace of Pilate, we attend the lowly Redeemer, marking his footsteps with his blood, oh! for grace to ponder well the cause of all his sufferings. The HOLY GHOST in one line of his blessed word, hath explained the whole. CHRIST hath once suffered for sins; the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to GOD.

Reader! do not overlook that every hand, both Jew and Gentile, were embued in his blood; yea, above all, behold the hand of JEHOVAH engaged in the vast design. Look at the cross, and hear the voice of the LORD, calling to the sword to awake. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of HOSTS! Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered!*

Reader! let us both, as lovers of JESUS, attend the funeral. This is the office of near and dear friends. Remember, he is still the same, and the covenant in his blood cannot be dissolved by death. And in the contemplation of our own death, and our sure resurrection in JESUS, let us say with *Job, oh! that thou wouldst hide me in the*

grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until the wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

CHRIST'S Resurrection, and his Appearance to Mary Magdalene and to others. The LORD giveth his Commission to his Apostles; and returned unto Glory.

REFLECTIONS

READER while you and I hasten, with the ardent love of those godly women, to the Sepulcher of JESUS, and hear with the ear of faith, as they heard in sense, the invitation of the Angel; *Come see the place where the LORD lay.* Oh! for the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to follow JESUS from the cross to the throne, and behold where the LORD lay from all eternity, in the bosom of the FATHER.

Send down, thou risen and exalted SAVIOUR, all those precious gifts thou art returned on purpose to impart! And as in the case of *Mary, Magdalene*, such grace was manifested; so in the instance of all thy redeemed ones, prove, thou dearest LORD, that thou *art exalted as a Prince and a SAVIOUR, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* Oh! the blessedness of receiving the power of CHRIST'S resurrection, in the heart and conscience, when the LORD works with his holy word, and *confirms that word with signs following.* May the souls of all the LORD'S redeemed family, thus find the sweet testimonies to the truth of our LORD'S resurrection; when *first GOD our FATHER having raised up his SON JESUS, hath sent him to bless us in turning away every one of us from our iniquities.*

And now FAREWELL *Mark!* thou faithful Evangelist; surely thou hast well done the work of one, and *made full proof of thy Ministry.* For the testimony of thy Gospel is in the hearts of thousands, *to the truth as it is in JESUS, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.* Precious is the *written Word*, when confirmed as an *engrafted Word*, by the SPIRIT'S grace in the heart; and when that Almighty LORD, sets to his seal, in the heart, that *GOD is true.* All the

faithful will thank thee, *Mark*, for thy labour of love, as they daily read the wonders recorded by thee of JESUS. And all will find cause, who are taught of GOD, to say as *Paul* did concerning thee, though not called to the service of the sanctuary, as he was; for *he is profitable to me in his ministry!*

Precious LORD JESUS! while we thank the servant, we bow down with unspeakable thanksgiving to the MASTER! Be thou everlastingly loved, and praised, and adored, in thy Person, Work, Offices, Characters, and Relations. *Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.* Praised be the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all Covenant love, in JESUS CHRIST! Amen.

LUKE

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In entering upon this blessed Book of GOD, which carries with it, through every Chapter and verse, proofs of divine inspiration, I would beg the Reader to look up with me to the Almighty LORD, WHICH both directed and guided *Luke's* pen, for grace to attend to it, with that reverence and godly fear, as is suitable and becoming to such precious Memoirs of our LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. Surely, Reader, the HOLY GHOST would not have raised up the several Evangelists to this sacred service, neither have added the Gospel of *Luke* to those of *Matthew*, and *Mark*, but for the most blessed purposes. Oh! that they may all be unitedly made *a sweet savor; to make manifest his knowledge to his people in every place.*

Some have thought that *Luke* was one of the seventy disciples. It is possible he might have been so. And others have supposed, that he is the same person whom *Paul* calls *the beloved Physician*. Colossians 4:10. But there is no certainty whether either be right; the whole is conjecture.

Neither is it determinable, with any greater assurance, at what time *Luke* wrote this Gospel. Some make it as early as within *fifteen* years after our LORD'S ascension: So *Beza* saith in his Manuscript Copy: while others date it as late as *twenty-seven*. *Eusebius*, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates, that the Apostle *John* read it when finished, and gave his sanction to it. But GOD'S people have a yet higher authority of its truth, when the HOLY GHOST, in his divine teaching, gives to his regenerated children the testimony of its holy doctrines in their own hearts and consciences. I cannot upon this occasion help making an earnest request to my Reader, that he will make this the grand standard of decision, concerning the whole scriptures of GOD; namely, that when the HOLY GHOST teacheth *in* them, and *by* them, this forms of itself the truest test of their divine authority. May the Lord the SPIRIT do this, by this precious portion

of his Holy word, we are now entering upon, and render it in his Almighty Hand, the blessed instrument of good to his people. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

We have an Introduction by the Evangelist, in the opening of this Gospel. To which follows the Account of *John the Baptist*, as the Harbinger of Christ. An Angel appears to *Zacharias*, and to the Virgin *Mary*: the Hymn of *Mary* on the Occasion: the Birth of *John the Baptist*, and the Prophecy thereon of *Zacharias*.

REFLECTIONS

REAPER! let, you, and I, at the very portal of this precious Gospel, stand and pause, before we hastily enter into the perusal of its blessed contents, and look up, and praise the Almighty Author, of His holy word, for such a profusion of mercies, as are here made known unto us; while we entreat the same glorious LORD to be our teacher, into a right understanding of those mysteries of godliness, to make us *wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. Was it not enough to have given the Church the inspired records, concerning our LORD, in the precious relation by *Matthew* and *Mark*; but would our bountiful LORD add the Gospel, according to *Luke*, and *John* also? Oh then! do thou, blessed LORD the HOLY GHOST, accompany the whole with thy divine teaching, that we may know the things, which are so freely given us of GOD; *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.

Behold, Reader, in this chapter, the unbelief of *Zacharias*. Behold the faith of *Mary* and *Elizabeth*! To what, or to whom, shall we ascribe these things, but to distinguishing grace? Oh! may it be our happiness, *to believe the record, which GOD hath given of his dear SON*. And while we have faith, to this testimony of GOD; may we never lose sight of what the HOLY GHOST hath taught by his servant, the Apostle; when he saith, *Unto you it is given to believe in his name*.

Reader! let us ponder over, again and again, the wonderous subject here recorded, of the miraculous conception. Let us view the

distant prophecies, so many ages before, declaring the unheard of, unthought of, event: and then behold, as related in this Chapter, the accomplishment; until our souls are warmed with the contemplation, and we feel constrained to cry out with the Apostle, *Great is the mystery of godliness, GOD was manifest in our flesh!* And oh! for grace to join in those hymns, both of *Mary and Zacharias*, from a personal interest in the same subject. Surely our souls may well rejoice in GOD our SAVIOR, when *through the mercy of our GOD the day-spring from on high hath visited us.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The birth of *CHRIST*. His Circumcision. Simeon's Prophecy of *CHRIST*, and the declaration of *Anna* concerning him. *JESUS* teaching in the Temple, at the age of twelve years.

REFLECTIONS

READER! how little did the Roman Emperor *Augustus*, or his deputy *Cyrenius*, conceive, that the over-ruling power of GOD so arranged the taxation, that the chief object to which it should minister, should be to bring the Virgin *Mary* to *Bethlehem*, and mark the precise period of the birth of *CHRIST*! How unconscious were the Jewish shepherds, when keeping watch over their flocks by night, until the message from heaven informed them of the wonderful event of the arrival of the SAVIOR! And oh! the astonishing mystery, when GOD, who hath recorded from all eternity the names of his redeemed in the book of life, brings them acquainted with the unspeakable mercy, and manifests himself to them otherwise than he doeth to the world. Reader! can You and I mark down our personal knowledge of these things, so as with *Simeon* or *Anna* declare, our eyes have seen *CHRIST*'S salvation; and speak of the LORD *JESUS* to all them *that look for redemption in Jerusalem?*

Precious LORD *JESUS*! when I behold thy obscure birth, thy low circumstances and mean accommodation, a manger only to receive thee in thine entrance into this our world, and no room for thee in the inn; oh, what a lively representation was there in this, of all the

future circumstances of thy life. Truly didst thou say, and the truth holds equally good in all ages; *Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in thee!* My soul! delight thou more and more in the sweet testimonies of thy LORD'S humanity, while beholding him at the same time possessing all the proofs of GODHEAD. For by both only could JESUS be suited for thee as thy Surety, Husband, and SAVIOR. Oh! the preciousness of that mystery, which without controversy is great, *GOD was manifest in the flesh.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Introduction of *John the Baptist*, with the Time of his Entrance on his Ministry. His Testimony of *CHRIST*. Our *LORD'S* Baptism and Genealogy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! where are all those proud monarchs, in the *Cesars*, and *Pilates*, and *Herods*, of the day; whose looks frowned men for the moment into fear; and whose words, and actions, made men tremble throughout the earth? The flood of time hath gone over them, and they are no more! But He, who as a *little stone cut out without hands*, hath broken them all in pieces, and, as foretold, is become a mountain, and hath filled and is filling the earth. Behold the humbleness and austerity of his herald the Baptist. Then see the low estate of the SON of GOD. And in the midst of all that debasement, poverty, and meekness of character, hear the voice from heaven attesting to the glories of his person, while the HOLY GHOST bore testimony to the same; *Thou art my beloved Son! In thee I am well pleased.* Oh! for grace to be well pleased also with his person, work, offices, character, and relations! Precious LORD JESUS! truly thou art the seed of the woman; and in thee *shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Christ's Temptations. His Preaching in the Synagogue. He casteth out a Devil, and cureth many that were sick.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let it be our wisdom, in all our meditations on the sufferings and exercises of CHRIST, to connect with them the cause. *He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed!* And while we think of those things, let us in all our lesser exercises bless GOD, when at any time called to the fellowship in suffering of his SON JESUS CHRIST. *My brethren* (saith James) *count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations.* And, no doubt, when the strength of CHRIST is made perfect in our weakness, there is great cause of joy, to glory even in our infirmities, when the power of CHRIST doth rest upon us.

Reader! think what a sermon CHRIST'S first sermon was, as recorded here, which he preached after his ordination by the unction of the HOLY GHOST, in the Jewish synagogue? Oh! that all preachers of the word of GOD were to follow CHRIST'S example, and thereby prove that the spirit of the LORD, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST, was upon them. Might we not hope, that from the same blessed cause, as by the master, so by his servants, gracious effects would follow; and the LORD'S cause would be glorified in the earth. But let all such not fail to do as CHRIST did. However offensive to carnal reason, and to the free will of men, let the sovereignty of GOD be proclaimed. Many widows, and many *lepers* there may be in Israel now, as of old; but until GOD sends his word, there will be no commission to heal. Oh! do thou, blessed JESUS, who in the days of thy flesh didst heal all the diseases of thy people, now in the day of thy power manifest the sovereignty of thy grace and salvation, and preach by thy blessed spirit, as then in the synagogues of Galilee. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter the *LORD JESUS* teaching the People: the miraculous Draught of Fishes; the Leper cleansed; a Man with a Palsy healed; and the Call of *Matthew*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think what privileges the men of that generation possessed, which had CHRIST himself for their preacher! He, who was himself the whole of the covenant, to be the messenger, and administrator of it also! Well might the people press upon him to hear the word of GOD! And, Reader! see how immediately after the sermon was finished, he kindly rewarded the attendance of his disciples with the supply of fishes. What a testimony at the same time of his being LORD and proprietor, both of earth and sea. LORD! let such a display of thy sovereignty have the same effect on my heart, as on that of *Peter*; not to say LORD! depart from me, but to impress my mind as his was, that I may say, *Thou art my LORD and my GOD!*

Oh! for grace, when I read of this *leper*, and hear of the mercy shewn to the *paralytic*, to have faith in my GOD! Yes! blessed JESUS, all power is thine to cleanse both the leprosy of soul and body; and to remove the crippled state of all thy redeemed, until *the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing*. Like *Levi*, LORD! I would take thee home to my house, to my heart, and invite other poor sinners to the banquet of my GOD. No Pharisaical fastings would I set up, by way of recommending myself to the LORD; but rejoice in this, CHRIST came not to call the self-righteous, but sinners to repentance. No patched up garments, no new wine of the Gospel to receive in the old skin of nature; but pray that He who sits upon the throne, making all things new, while He himself remains eternally and unchangeably the same, would make my heart new, and renew a right spirit within me. LORD JESUS! do thou all this, and more; and cause thou me to drink of the old wine of thine everlasting love, *which goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak!*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

JESUS passing through the Corn Fields on the Sabbath, and his Disciples eating the ears of Corn, called forth the anger of the Pharisees. *JESUS'S* Answer. He healeth the withered Hand: calleth the Disciples: performeth miracles, and preacheth.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD! as oft as I pass through the corn fields, whether on the Sabbath day or any other, may the recollection of thine unequalled tenderness and condescension, in those seasons here represented, lead me to the contemplation of thy grace and love to thy disciples. And while I behold thy followers rubbing the ears of corn and eating them, I would call to mind how *JESUS* was broken and bruised for our sins, and his body given as the bread of life for all his redeemed. Oh! for grace to feed on thee by faith, until I come to see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever! And do thou, LORD, to all my withered and dying circumstances, do by me as this poor man in the synagogue; let *JESUS* speak but the word, and sure I am of being healed. And let thine effectual calling on my poor heart, cause me to follow thee, as did thy faithful disciples: surely, LORD, if virtue went out of thee, when upon earth, and healed them all, the efficacy is not lessened in the day of thy power! Oh! for that distinguishing grace which *JESUS* pronounceth to be blessed, which though found by them that are poor in themselves, and among the hungry and the mourners, are found rich in faith before *GOD*, and heirs of the kingdom. Standing firm on the rock *CHRIST JESUS*, they shall ride out every storm, and find *CHRIST* a sure sanctuary in the day of wrath.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

We have here the Cure of the Centurion's Servant: the raising of the *Widow's Son*; *CHRIST'S* Answer to the Messengers of *John the Baptist*; and *Mary* anointing *CHRIST'S* Feet.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! behold thy LORD, in the many sweet views of Him presented in this chapter. See him in his mercy, hastening to the relief of the centurion's servant. Behold him manifesting what the HOLY GHOST had marked of his character, when exercising his sovereign authority as GOD, blended with the tenderness of his manhood, at the gate of the city *Nain*. Oh! who that beheld my GOD and SAVIOR, in that moment, of turning the widow's tears into joy, and raising her son from the dead, but would have cried out with the Prophet, and echoed to his blessed words, *behold! your GOD is come to save you!* And who that beheld the poor penitent in the house of the proud Pharisee, and the gracious mercy and condescension of JESUS to her sorrows, but would have hailed the happy hour of GOD's faithful promise confirmed; *I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins.*

And is it not the same in the present hour? Is the LORD's arm shortened that he cannot save? Is his ear grown heavy, that he cannot hear? Precious, precious LORD JESUS! how sweet to my soul the assurance, that as thy person, so thy purpose admits of no change. JESUS CHRIST! the same yesterday and to day, and for ever.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here an Account of some Women who ministered unto CHRIST. The Parable of the Sower. JESUS on the Water. The Man dispossessed of the Legion: the Daughter of Jairus raised from the dead; and the Woman healed of the bloody Issue.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! ye poor and afflicted of the LORD's tried ones, how JESUS, the SON of GOD, when he humbled himself to be made man, condescended to have his wants supplied by the bounty of his people. Oh! how hath he dignified the path of honest poverty by his bright example! Never, then, forget what *Paul* was commanded to tell the church: *Ye know*, said he, *the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,*

that ye, through his poverty, might be made rich. Blessed LORD! while I read thy sweet parable of the sower, oh for grace to discover that the pure seed of thy Gospel is sown in my heart, by thy sovereign power: and, from the fallow ground of my poor heart being turned up, and planted with thy grace, the fruit of thy righteousness may, in thee, and through thee, be brought forth an hundred fold. Enable me to embark with thee, thou dearest LORD, in the roughest sea, never being alarmed as long as GOD-incarnate is with me in the storm; who guides the helm of all my affairs, and will rebuke both wind and tide. And blessed be my GOD, my SAVIOUR, my HOLY ONE! JESUS, the SON of GOD, hath dispossessed the enemy from my heart; and now let me, as this poor *Gadarene*, sit at the feet of JESUS, cloathed in my LORD's robe of righteousness, and in my right mind. Yea, LORD, if, like the poor woman, deeply and long diseased, or even as the ruler's daughter, dead, JESUS can and will recover. He saith himself, *I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.* Amen,

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* is here sending forth his Apostles. An Account of Herod. *JESUS* feedeth the Multitude in the Wilderness. *Peter's* blessed Confession of *CHRIST*. The Transfiguration. The Lunatic healed. *JESUS* going through Samaria.

REFLECTIONS

THINK, my soul, of the vast honour, the high privilege, the distinguished dignity of the apostles of thy GOD and SAVIOR! Sent forth, as his ambassadors, to call his redeemed Israel to the blessings of reconciliation and peace! Oh! ye servants of the LORD, what an honour was your's to cast out devils, to heal the sick, and preach the Gospel! But what an awful contrast in the character of *Herod*! And yet who that had seen the poverty of the poor fishermen of *Galilee*, and beheld the purpled luxuries of the *Tetrarch*, but would have connected every thing blessed with the latter, and misery with the former? See, Reader, how JESUS instantly supplied a wilderness with

food: and think, then, how soon the wilderness frames of his people he can make to blossom as the rose! Oh! my soul, what a view was that which the disciples *Peter, John, and James*, had of JESUS in the Mount of Transfiguration! But what was this, in point of glory, to that which all the church of GOD will see, and thou among the number, when he shall come in the mount Zion, *to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe?* Behold CHRIST'S power in healing the lunatic. Behold how JESUS predicted his sufferings when he should be crucified in weakness. Oh! for grace, that all the precious sayings of JESUS may sink down into my ears! And grant, dearest LORD, that while Samaritans refuse to receive thee; and the dead, in trespasses and sins, are too busily employed in burying their dead, to find time or inclination to follow thee, I may be found with having put my hand to the gospel plough; and never to look back, but follow my LORD in the regeneration, and enter with him into his kingdom.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The LORD appoints other Seventy also to go before him. CHRIST pronounceth a woe upon *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*. JESUS in sweet Communion with his FATHER. The Parable of the Samaritan. *Martha* reproveth.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in pondering the several weighty and important things contained in this chapter, let us both look again and again to the Almighty Author of his holy word, to accompany our reading of it with his gracious teaching. JESUS, when he sent forth the seventy disciples here spoken of, to the work to which he called them, sent them forth only to the city, or place, whither he himself would come. And without the LORD'S presence with us, what can we hope to enjoy of the LORD'S grace and blessing? We see in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida* the awful event of Gospel Ordinances, unaccompanied with the divine favour. LORD! in mercy grant the doom of *Capernaum* may never fall on our *British* Israel!

Amidst this awful view, help me, thou dear LORD JESUS, help every truly regenerated Reader to rejoice in what thou hast said of *Satan's* fall, as lightning from Heaven. Oh! for a heart renewed by grace to sing that song which *John* once heard in vision: *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our GOD, and the power of his CHRIST; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our GOD day and night.* And oh! the greater joy still, than that of treading on serpents and scorpions, to know our names are written in Heaven. Secured by this in GOD the FATHER'S everlasting love, we are One with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us; and sealed by GOD the HOLY GHOST, unto the day of eternal redemption. Oh! HOLY FATHER! taught by thy dear SON, let every renewed soul praise thee, that though these things be hidden, from men who are worldly wise, and prudent in their own eyes, yet hast thou revealed them unto babes. All which we humbly and thankfully refer unto thine own sovereign will and pleasure. *Even so, FATHER, for so it seemed good in thy sight!*

Precious LORD JESUS! give us grace to hail thee, thou great Samaritan! Surely it is thou, and thou alone, which fully answereth to the character, thou thyself hast drawn, when from heaven thou camest down to this our world, to seek and save that which was lost. LORD! thou wilt bring thy whole redeemed home, though wounded by Satan, and dead in trespasses and sins! And oh! for grace, that until that hour comes for thy return, thy people may not be found like *Martha* cumbered with the many things of this unsatisfying, dying, sinful state; but through thy grace giving the power, like *Mary*, we may chuse that good part which *cannot be taken away.*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter our *LORD* teaching his Disciples to pray. He works a Miracle in casting out a Devil. He preacheth to the People; and pronounceth a Woe upon the Scribes and Pharisees.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST LORD JESUS! I would say for myself, and all thy redeemed family, teach us to pray, and with what words to come before the LORD, in all our soul exercises, and wants, and conflicts, and trials. Do thou, dear LORD! by the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT, both spread thy fullness, cause us to feel our need, excite a spiritual appetite, and open a constant source of communion, *that, from thy fullness, we may all receive and grace for grace!* And oh! for a fervor in prayer, awakened by the HOLY GHOST! that, like the friend at midnight, and *Jacob at Bethel*, never may we go to the mercy-seat, and come away empty; but, like the great father of the praying seed, in the same spirit of faith to tell our GOD, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.* And, oh LORD! grant that neither the *Queen of the South, nor the Ninevites*, may bring reproach upon thy people! No Solomon like our Solomon—no preaching of *Jonah* like the preaching of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Precious MASTER! let neither the awful state of *Pharisee* blindness, nor the wretched delusion of *Jewish* ignorance, be in the lot of thy redeemed, in all generations of thy Church. Oh! for grace to sit at thy feet, to hear thy word! that through the blessed illumination of GOD the HOLY GHOST, *our whole body, as thou hast said, being full of light, and having no part dark, the whole may be full of light!* JESUS, the sun of righteousness, shining *as when the bright shining of a candle doth give the people light.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

JESUS is here preaching to the People. A Man from the throng complains to him of his Brother. The LORD takes occasion therefrom to reprove Covetousness, and discourseth on several Subjects.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the HOLY GHOST is blessedly teaching the Church, in this chapter, sweet lessons of grace and of providence. In the view of the multitude pressing upon JESUS to hear the word of GOD, we are taught how precious ordinances are, where the LORD is present to

bless them. And in the discourse of JESUS on the LORD's care over the birds of the air, and his glory displayed in the lilies of the field, we learn how everlastingly secure and provided for must be his redeemed ones. And in the contemplation of the foolish worldling, how strikingly doth JESUS shew the little value of riches, unsanctified by the blessing of the LORD. And should these reflections meet the eye of one of the LORD's timid fold, oh! for GOD the SPIRIT, to make that sweet Scripture blessed. *Fear not, little flock, it is your FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Hail! thou blessed Master of thine household, which promiseth such rich rewards to thy waiting servants! But wilt thou indeed condescend to such acts of humbleness as to gird thyself, and serve them? Was it ever heard of in the annals of mankind that ever a Lord did so? *Solomon* was struck with astonishment, that he, whom the heaven of heavens could not contain, should visit the house he had built with his presence. But what would this eastern prince have said, had he beheld JESUS the SON of God washing the feet of poor fishermen? Oh! for grace *to know that love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God!*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The *LORD* is here discoursing to the People. He speaks of the Galileans, and of the Barren Fig-Tree. He cureth a Woman of her Infirmary. Makes a circuit through the Villages; and laments over Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both, as we contemplate the LORD'S visitations on those *Galileans* and men of *Siloam*, gather improvement from what JESUS hath said, and solemnly remember, that without faith and repentance, which are both the gifts of GOD, and arising from the LORD'S regenerating the heart, we shall all likewise perish. And, Reader! in the barren fig-tree, growing without fruit within the pale of God's vineyard, the Church, let us behold the awful state of all those who have a name to live, but yet are virtually dead before

GOD. Oh! the blessedness of being found trees of the LORD'S planting, made fat and fruitful by his blessing!

Precious LORD JESUS! do thou graciously come into our synagogues, thy Churches, on thine own day, and every day in thine ordinances! Oh! how many of thine, like this daughter of *Abraham*, are bound in the *Adam*-nature of sin by *Satan*! And wilt thou not, dear LORD! call them all to thee? lay thine Almighty hand upon them, and make them whole? All thy redeemed will glorify thee for all the gracious manifestations of thy love. And do thou, dearest LORD! give thy people to see thy unremitting watchfulness and care over them. All the tenderness and solicitude of the hen cannot describe the boundless love of JESUS, in gathering his little ones to him, and covering them with his wings, while thy faithfulness and truth become their shield and buckler. And oh! thou gracious GOD of our salvation, cause us to note down, in the strongest characters, thy distinguishing grace! While nations and individuals, like *Jerusalem* of old, become Gospel despisers, and perish, and refuse to have thee to reign over them, do thou, LORD! strongly impress the wonderous truth upon the hearts of all thy redeemed, that it is all of grace wherein they differ, and that to thy grace they may cheerfully ascribe all the glory.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* dineth with a Pharisee. He healeth a Man of the Dropsy. He puts forth a Parable. Describes his Gospel under the Similitude of a great Supper; and adds a blessed Discourse.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not turn away too hastily from this beautiful chapter, and those soul-teaching, and soul-refreshing discourses of CHRIST, While the *Pharisees* watched JESUS, to find somewhat offensive, as according to their corrupt hearts they would have made it, let you and I listen to his heavenly doctrine, and behold, with delight and joy, his mercies to the body in healing the man with the dropsy, while mingling sweet words for consolation to the soul, and

oh! for grace in contemplating CHRIST thus discoursing at the *Pharisee's* table! to be earnest to discourse of JESUS at our own! What can be more suited, more grateful, more blessed than, while partaking of the LORD'S bounties, to speak of the Lord's love? and while sitting with our family at *our* supper, to mingle with our food gracious conversation of the LORD'S?

Reader! do not overlook the very wonderful condescension of JESUS in the various methods the LORD was pleased to adopt in setting forth the plentiful provisions of his Gospel. What a feast indeed of fat things it is! What bowels of mercy and grace in the Great Provider! And what company are the guests invited? such as the great ones of the earth would not look at, much less consort with. Oh! how utterly lost, how utterly inexcusable must those be who refuse such great salvation! Hasten, my soul! hasten, Reader! for it is the poor and the maimed, the most sensibly wretched and miserable, that are most welcome.

And doth my LORD say that his followers must be self-haters, must bear a cross, must hate all which would stop the way? Oh! for grace to be of that happy number! LORD! help me to pluck out an eye, cut off an arm, leave all for JESUS and his great salvation, so that I may be found the true disciple of the LORD! Amen.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The *LORD* is here teaching by Parables. Here are three contained in this Chapter; namely, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Piece of Money, and the Prodigal Son.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not hastily pass away from the review of this most blessed chapter, but ponder over again and again the sweet and gracious contents. And as from divine teaching in the Scriptures of eternal truth, we discover that the whole three persons in the GODHEAD have mercifully concurred in the salvation of the Church, let us delight upon any and every occasion, to behold an illustration

of their joint grace and favor, whenever the word sets forth their office-work, as manifested to the souls of the Lord's people.

Precious LORD JESUS! do we not behold thee in that lovely and endearing representation thou hast here drawn of the tender and affectionate shepherd? Surely the fold, the Church, is thine, both by the FATHER'S gift, thine own purchase, and the conquest of thine HOLY SPIRIT. And when one of thy little ones wander from thee, wilt thou not seek it on the mountains, until thou shalt find it? and. when thou hast found it, wilt thou not bring it home, as here described, on thy shoulders, rejoicing? Is it not JESUS'S joy, as well as the happiness of his redeemed, when this is done? Blessed be my LORD, my Shepherd, who, when in the *Adam*-nature of my fallen state, I had wandered on the dark mountains, JESUS sought me out, and found me; and hath not only brought me home, but now watches over me for good, and feeds me, and sustains me, and causeth me to lie down in green pastures.

And no less, thou HOLY and eternal SPIRIT, GOD the HOLY GHOST, do I pray for grace from thee, to look up to thee, and bless thy Almighty Name, that when, like a piece of lost money, I was fallen in the nature of sin, thou didst, by thy sweeping judgments and enlightening grace, find me, and restore me to the image of GOD in CHRIST. *Spirit of Truth! do thou lead me into all truth!*

And oh! thou FATHER *of mercies*, and GOD *of all comfort!* receive me, LORD, as the father in the parable did his returning prodigal. *I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost.* But thou, in thy rich mercy, hast received me; and by thy grace in me, caused me to return. Thy bowels of love yearned over me in my lost estate, *for thy mercy endureth for ever;* And now, LORD! through thy grace, I shall go out no more. Thou hast killed for me indeed the fatted calf, and clothed me with the robe of CHRIST'S righteousness. Oh! for grace to live to thy glory, daily crying out with the Apostle, *Now thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

We have in this Chapter our *LORD'S* account of an unjust Steward; and *CHRIST'S* Observation upon the History. The Relation, also, of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in beholding the character of this unjust steward, let us learn to seek from GOD grace, that we may be found faithful. And let us, in putting the question to our own hearts, which he put to every one of his Lord's debtors, do the reverse of what he recommended, and instead of lessening our account, learn to discover that they far exceed our own views of them. Oh! thou blessed LORD! I owe thee more in nature, providence, and grace, than any calculation can number. So much so, O LORD! that I am insolvent for ever. But, LORD! let thy grace still exceed even my unworthiness. Oh! grant that I may be received into thine everlasting habitations!

Blessed Jesus! cause me to learn, in the history of this rich glutton, how short-lived all pamperings of the flesh are; and what an awful close terminates the career of all who live without GOD, and without CHRIST, in the world. And let me be content to be as *Lazarus*, poor, if need be, here below, if *rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom*. Be thou, dear LORD! my portion, and then all is well. Every state sanctified in CHRIST is, and must be, blessed. LORD! grant that I may exercise an holy jealousy in all; and by making thee what GOD the FATHER hath made thee, both *Alpha* and *Omega*; my LORD may be the first in all my desires, and the close of all my joys; for then in life and death, both here and hereafter, JESUS will be my everlasting portion.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Some very blessed Discourses of CHRIST are contained in this Chapter. The History of the Ten Lepers. Some of *CHRIST'S* Prophecies.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou blessed LORD JESUS! well is it said by thee, that offences will come. Yes! thou, dear LORD! art thyself, to every carnal, unawakened sinner, *a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence*. Thy humble birth, thy meek deportment, thy cross, thy despised followers, to those who looked for temporal prosperity, was indeed an offence that nothing but sovereign grace could overcome. Blessed be that distinguishing grace of my GOD bestowed upon my poor heart, that I am no longer offended in thee!

Oh! for grace to every sensible, awakened sinner, to come to JESUS under the leprosy of sin. Would to GOD, I would say, like the poor captive servant in *Syria*, that all such were with my LORD, the LORD GOD of the prophets, that is LORD over Israel, JESUS. He can heal all of their leprosy of sin. Blessed JESUS! make all thy people sensible of this, according to the covenant promise *in the day of thy power*.

My soul! seek not for CHRIST'S kingdom, in the mere outward things of observation; but seek it in the power of grace within, in the LORD'S empire in the heart. Seek it in the FATHER'S testimony of his dear SON; seek it in the complete, full, all-sufficient, and all-justifying righteousness, and blood shedding of the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and seek it in the precious, blessed, regenerating, and renewing grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Here JESUS manifests his distinguishing love and mercy in the taking of one, and leaving the other; for while *many are called, few are chosen*.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the Relation of the Importunate Widow, The Parable of the *Pharisee* and *Publican*. Children brought to *CHRIST*. Our *LORD'S* Discourses; and the History of the *Blind Man*, near *Jericho*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST, for his sweet and gracious office it is, to lead to the mercy-seat, to endite our prayers when there, and to give us every thing suited to that sacred place; that He will of his rich mercy so help us in our infirmities, that we may be enabled to do as JESUS here commands, *always pray and not faint*. And oh! what unanswerable motives the LORD hath here furnished us with, in beholding a cruel, time-serving, unfeeling judge, at length prevailed upon to give way to a poor widow's unceasing importunity; when we call to mind that the LORD to whom we go in *CHRIST*, is our righteous, gracious, compassionate tender FATHER; and who himself hath expressly said: *It shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear!* Oh! for faith, *to believe the record GOD hath given of his dear SON!*

LORD hide pride from our eyes, that no child of thine may be tinctured with pride, like this haughty blinded *Pharisee*; but give to all thy redeemed grace to be humbled like this poor *Publican*, that with self-contrition as his, we may each smite upon his breast as he did, saying, *GOD be merciful to me a sinner!*

And oh! for the continual teachings and leadings of the HOLY GHOST, that as babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, we may come to JESUS; and never be sorrowful, as the young man rich in this world was, when called upon to leave all for *CHRIST*. Do thou, blessed LORD! do by us as by the blind man near *Jericho*, put a cry on our heart, and the more the ungodly rebuke for following JESUS, the more may our souls cry aloud for him, until JESUS heareth and answereth prayer, opens all the blinded senses of our spiritual faculties, and gives us grace to follow him in the regeneration; that

we may glorify the LORD upon earth, and praise him to all eternity in heaven.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Of *Zaccheus* the Publican. The Parable of the Talents. *JESUS* entereth *Jerusalem*, and goeth immediately to the Temple.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! do I behold thee, mine honored LORD, entering and passing through *Jericho*, the cursed city? Yes! I do. And is it, my soul, to be wondered at, when I know that that HOLY LORD, who knew no sin, was yet content to be made both sin and a curse, that his redeemed might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him? And was there a poor *Zaccheus* near *Jericho*, one of CHRIST'S, a son of *Abraham*, that JESUS went purposely to seek? And will not JESUS still seek his own, wherever they are scattered, in the present cloudy and dark day? Oh! yes! JESUS will call them down from every lofty imagination, or raise them up from every fallen state; for *the SON of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost*.

Almighty King! thou art indeed a nobleman gone to receive to thyself a kingdom, and to return LORD! give me grace to occupy till thou shalt come. The truest occupation, my honored LORD, is to live on thee, and to be everlastingly receiving of thy fulness, and grace for grace. And when my LORD shall come, shall I not, as those babes of Israel, hail thee with Hosannas; yea, with shouts and acclamations of praise? *Blessed, for ever blessed be He that cometh in the name of the LORD*.

And, oh! thou tender compassionate LORD! May my soul often call to remembrance thy tears over Jerusalem. JESUS wept! Oh! the largeness of mercies in the heart of the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. What shall ever keep my soul from going to Him, who knoweth my frame by his own; and whose mercies are the mercies of both GOD and man in one. Oh! the privilege of a throne of grace! Oh! the blessedness of such an High Priest!

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The Chief Priests and the Scribes demand of *CHRIST* his Authority for his Ministry. The *LORD* puts them to silence. He adds a Parable. In answer to a Sadducee, *JESUS* discourseth on the Resurrection.

REFLECTIONS

READER! observe in the opening of this Chapter, with what determined hatred the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and Elders, came upon *CHRIST*! What had *JESUS* done? He had preached the Gospel to the poor; and had gone about, healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And was this the cause of all their hatred and malignity? Yes! truly; and cause enough, to Satan and his seed. Look into the world now. Is the offence of the cross ceased? Oh no! Let any of *CHRIST*'S servants in the present hour preach the Gospel the master preached; and hold forth salvation alone in his name, throwing to the ground all goodness and righteousness of men, and declaring, that *CHRIST*'S blood and merits are the sole cause of acceptance before *GOD*; and the same effects will follow. The whole body of modern Pharisees will rise up, and like the hornet's nest will buz about to sting if they can.

What an awful, but just parable, hath *JESUS* here delivered of the vineyard and the husbandmen. The very enemies of *CHRIST* were compelled to acknowledge the application of it. How truly awful it is, to behold a professing Church wholly destitute of godliness. Husbandmen like foxes of the desert, destroying, but not cultivating, the *LORD*'S vineyard!

Reader! The *HOLY GHOST* hath not recorded the events in this Chapter for nothing. Let you and I learn, both from *Pharisee*, and *Sadducee*, to discover the melancholy state of a mind unenlightened by grace; and if so be, the *LORD* is our teacher, to bless *GOD* that we are the children of the resurrection. Blessed *LORD*! do thou reveal thyself in a covenant way, as the *GOD* of *Abraham*, and the *GOD* of *Isaac*, and the *GOD* of *Jacob*, to my soul; and then shall I live unto thee, and live in thee, and derive all life from thee, for ever and ever.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* foretells the Destruction of the Temple. He answers the anxious Questions of his Disciples, in fortifying their Minds with suitable Advice for the approaching Trials.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in beholding this poor widow, whose charity of soul the LORD himself hath recorded, and made her history memorable in his Church for ever; learn how very costly and precious in thy JESUS'S sight, is the love of man, when flowing from the love of GOD. Oh! who would not wish, among the children of the LORD, to give a cup of cold water, when we have nothing warmer to offer, in the name of a disciple, than to build alms-houses, and give thousands, without an eye to CHRIST.

Blessed LORD! how truly awful was thy prediction concerning the once beloved city; and how truly verified was the whole! Most fully was GOD the FATHER'S sentence accomplished on *Jerusalem*, when he said, in relation to his dear SON, *For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish*. And, in the instance of Jerusalem! how awfully fulfilled. LORD, grant that all thy redeemed ones, preserved by sanctifying grace, and gathered out of the city of destruction, may be enabled by thy renewing mercy and free salvation, to watch and pray; and be accounted worthy in the alone blood and righteousness of JESUS, to escape all these things, and *to stand before the Son of Man!*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

An Account of the Passover. *Judas* engageth to betray *Christ*. The *Lord's* Supper instituted. *Christ* apprehended, and led away to the High Priest's House. *Peter* denieth *Christ*. The *Lord Jesus* brought before the Council.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us ponder well the precious contents of this most precious Chapter. Behold! how Jesus delighted in his *last* Passover, and *first* Supper! *With desire* (said that dear Lord,) *I have desired to eat it with you before I suffer.* And doth he not still desire sweet communion with his people *now*, as he did *then*? Doth not Jesus say the same concerning his Word, his Ordinances, his Table, his Supper? And doth not the Lord, from the first moment of beholding his Church, long for the season of the conversion of each, and the comfort of all, until the whole redeemed are brought home to glory? Oh! then how sweet to follow up the Lord's desires with our own; and while Jesus is coming forth to bless, You and I may, through his grace, be going forth to meet him.

Reader! pause over the awful character of *Judas*! Behold the different features of *Peter*! Contemplate from everlasting the cause in the sovereignty of grace, and if so be we can find in our own souls, tokens of rich, free, unmerited love, causing us to differ from the traitor, in being children of promise; oh! for grace to ascribe all the glory to Him, to whom alone all is due. Lord! how is it, we may well say, *that thou hast manifested thyself unto us, and not unto the world!*

Praised be thy dear name, in that Jesus the Son of God took upon him to answer for his people, by which the Holy One of Israel was reckoned among the transgressors. And shall not thy redeemed be accounted righteous in thee, before God? My soul! all the ransomed in Zion are authorized to this conclusion. Bless thy God and Savior for this unspeakable mercy. It is Jehovah that hath so concluded, and therefore make it thy conclusion also; for so the charter of grace runs to the Church's joy. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,*

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

The *Lord Jesus* is hurried away before Pilate, and accused. He sends *Christ* to Herod; where he is mocked, and sent back to Pilate. The unjust Governor condemns him to Death; and *Christ* is led away to Execution. The *Lord's* Death and Burial.

REFLECTIONS

See, my soul! thy Lord taken from prison and from judgment. And *who shall declare his generations?* Behold *Pilate, Herod, the Chief Priests, and Scribes, yea, the whole multitude, all engaged in the foul act of Christ's crucifixion. And was there none beside? Think, my soul! how much thy sins, both in the original and actual transgression of thine Adam-nature, added to the vast account. Oh! for grace, that in a conscious sense of my own sins, upon this solemn occasion, I may look unto him whom I have pierced, and mourn, as one that mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first born!*

Precious Jesus! enable me to connect with the solemn view of thine unequalled sufferings, that thou hast made my peace by the blood of thy cross, and by thy stripes I am healed. And from the cross enable me to behold thee proclaiming peace to all thy people, and doing away, the whole of sin by the sacrifice of thyself. Yes! thou Almighty Lord! truly, in the instance of the dying thief, thou hast shewn the sovereign efficacy of thy finished salvation. Here may poor, despairing, self-condemned, and self-condemning sinners, find the sweetest encouragement. And, if Jesus in the days of his flesh offered up strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared, will he not have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, since he himself was thus compassed with infirmity?

Lord! I would take my stand at the door of the sepulchre. Like Mary, I would wait in humble sorrow until my risen and triumphant Savior shall speak to me, as the Lord did to that poor woman. Oh! for grace, to have the first views of Jesus, the first love tokens as she had of Jesus, that I might hasten with the same tender commission, and tell the brethren of Jesus of the glorious tidings of the

resurrection. Lord! give me the assured earnest, in a resurrection of grace, for that great day of my God, when all his redeemed will partake in a resurrection to glory!

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

In folding up his Gospel, *Luke* relates in this Chapter, the necessary Witnesses to the Resurrection of *Jesus*. The *Lord* makes a Manifestation of himself upon a great Variety of Occasions; and having given his final Commission to his Disciples, he ascends in their Presence, visibly to Heaven.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! ponder well the blessed contents of this chapter. Never, surely, was there upon earth any record given to any one matter of fact, as plainly, as fully, and as circumstantially, to bear down with a full stream of evidences all opposition, as the testimony to the Resurrection of Jesus. But while the vast chain of testimonies surround the glorious citadel of truth, as an impregnable fortress; to the full doctrine of the Person and Salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ; what will the whole be found, where the heart is not renewed by grace? Christ is indeed risen from the dead? but are we risen with him? *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power!* Oh! for the earnest of the Spirit, by which the souls of the faithful are sealed unto the day of redemption!

Farewell *Luke!* Blessed be thy God, and my God, the Almighty Savior of both, for the ministry of thy record of Jesus! Ere long, the whole Church will be called home, to enter upon the personal enjoyment of those glorious things which the Lord hath here commissioned thee to deliver to his people! And then will burst forth, from millions of the redeemed souls, the song of salvation to God and the Lamb. In the mean time, may my poor offering of praise be often awakened by grace, through this, and all the other blessed portions of the holy Scriptures of truth, to bless the united source of all covenant mercies, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all

their love and purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, in Jesus Christ.
Amen.

JOHN

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The Gospel according to *St. John*, comes home endeared to the Church of GOD in such a fulness of blessings, as cannot fail, under divine teaching, to call forth from every heart of the redeemed, unceasing praises to the Almighty Author *of every good, and every perfect gift*, for so precious a treasure given to his people. Some of the ancient Fathers, in their warmth of affection to this part of the inspired writings, were accustomed to call it a *spiritual Gospel* And such it certainly is; for GOD the SPIRIT is the Author of it. But then it should at the same time be remembered, that such are all the Gospels. For the LORD JESUS saith, *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*, John 6:63. And these divine and spiritual words of the LORD JESUS, are in the writings of all the Evangelists. But, perhaps the beloved Apostle, (for such John was specially called,) was led by the HOLY GHOST to dwell more largely on the discourses of the LORD JESUS than the other inspired writers of the Gospel; and therefore as the early saints of GOD, under divine teaching, felt the blessedness of his spiritual and heavenly writings on these subjects, they were prompted thus to distinguish them.

We cannot sufficiently bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for the ministry of this man, in all his writings, and eminently on account of this most blessed portion of the word of GOD. Here we have not only more contained in it of our LORD'S divine discourses than the other Evangelists were commissioned to deliver, but we have also, both in relation to CHRIST'S sermons and miracles, many glorious truths which were not noticed by the other Evangelists. And what tends, if possible, yet more to endear the Gospel according to *St. John* to the Church, is, that by this man's ministry herein, we have preserved to us those most blessed discourses of CHRIST, concerning the Person, Work, Offices, and Character of GOD the HOLY GHOST, without whose soul-quickenings, and life-giving operations, none can be

brought forth into spiritual apprehensions of union with CHRIST; and *be made wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. Every child of GOD, who is conscious of the great work of regeneration having passed upon him, and hath felt in his own soul the renewing influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST'S sovereign and Almighty power, will clasp this blessed Gospel of the ever blessed GOD in his arms, and press it to his heart, crying out in words like those of the Apostles, *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*

It were needless to tell the Reader what were the plain designs of GOD the SPIRIT, in commissioning his servant *John* to give those records of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to his Church. They are made manifest in every chapter. The Apostle opens with the fullest declaration to the GODHEAD of CHRIST; and then proceeds to make manifest, in equal terms of plainness, the *Manhood* of our LORD; and, from the most ample demonstrations of the union of *both*, he shews what all the Scriptures of GOD blessedly harmonize in to confirm, that *CHRIST is the power of God, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to every one that believeth*. These glorious truths the Reader will meet in every part of the Gospel according to St. *John*, if the LORD the HOLY GHOST be his teacher.

I shall not think it necessary to detain him any longer by way of Preface. *John* hath not related to us in this Gospel, any circumstances of his own history, but confined himself wholly to the one momentous subject for which he wrote, and which seems to have fully occupied his mind. The LORD JESUS, and Him alone, swallowed up the Apostle's sole attention. *John* hath not so much as dated the *time* of writing his Gospel; neither hath he made mention of the *place* from whence it was written. Various dates have been given to it by others. *Some* make it as early as about *thirty years* after our LORD'S ascension. And some place it so late as *sixty years* from that glorious event. But the whole is conjecture, It is our happiness that this is of no moment That the penman of it was *John*, the beloved Apostle, who lay in CHRIST'S bosom; that he was inspired in the writing of it; that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath blessed it in all ages of the Church; that He doth bless it, and will continue to bless it in the Church of GOD to the latest ages, while she remains in her present time-state, until the LORD JESUS, as her bridegroom, comes to take her home to glory; these are the grand points with which we are chiefly concerned, and these, blessed be our covenant-

GOD in CHRIST, are abundantly confirmed and assured. May the LORD the HOLY GHOST grant to both Writer and Reader his blessed teachings in the perusal of this, and every other part of the word of GOD, that as *John* himself said, so we may find, *we have an unction from the HOLY ONE, and know all things.* 1 John 2: 20. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

John opens his Gospel in this Chapter, with declaring both to the GODHEAD and Manhood of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Testimony of *John the Baptist* is here given to the Person and Glory of CHRIST. The calling of *Andrew* and *Peter*. An Account of *Nathaniel*.

REFLECTIONS

Reader let you and I, in the review of this blessed Chapter, do as *Moses* and *Israel* did, at the borders of the Red Sea; stand still, and contemplate what is here revealed of the salvation of the LORD. Never surely was there ever a proclamation from heaven more full, conclusive, and satisfactory, in confirmation of the GODHEAD of CHRIST; the glories of his Person, the infinite preciousness of his work, and the greatness of his salvation! Oh! what a thought for the Church of GOD to cherish, and to feast upon, to all eternity; that *the* Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And Oh! for grace, like the chosen disciples of the LORD, to behold his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!

Blessed for ever be the GOD, and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath so loved us as to give his only begotten SON! And blessed be GOD the SON, who hath so loved us as to give himself for us. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, whose everlasting love prompted his infinite mind to give all the precious manifestations of the LORD in his scriptures. Oh! how inexpressibly sweet are all those views of JESUS, which GOD the Spirit hath here given of the GODHEAD, Person, Work, Glory, Grace, and Love, of the LORD JESUS.

And LORD! give thy whole Church upon earth grace to praise thee, for the wonderful witness of that wonderful man, *John the Baptist*. LORD, the Spirit! do thou graciously be pleased to give to

every child of GOD, thy heavenly teachings, that we may enter into a full apprehension of the design of his ministry; and behold him as raised up on purpose, and filled with the HOLY GHOST, even from the womb, to testify to those two great features of the LORD JESUS, contained in this Chapter; namely, his GODHEAD, and the efficacy of his one all-effectual sacrifice. For surely, the testimonies alone, which this herald of the LORD hath given, are in themselves enough to carry before them all the infidelity of the present CHRIST-despising generation. Oh! for a boldness in the faith, to say as *Paul* did upon a like occasion, to the infidels of his day; behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish! Dearest JESUS! may it be my portion, with all the Andrews, and Peters, and Philips, and Nathaniels, of this age of the Church, having found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write; to testify to thy glorious name and character, and say, Rabbi! thou art the Son of God! thou art the King of Israel!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Christ at a Marriage Feast, converteth Water into Wine. He departeth to *Capernaum*. He drives the Buyers and Sellers from the Temple.

REFLECTIONS

How is it possible to behold my Lord, honoring the bridal feast with his presence and miracles without having the mind led to the consideration of that yet more astonishing miracle, when the Son of God first betrothed his Church to himself, in *righteousness, in judgment, in loving kindness, and in mercies; and in faithfulness for ever!* Here I would say, as often as my soul reviews the vast mercy, here my Lord, my *Ishi*, my Husband, is indeed everlastingly blessing his Church with his presence; supplying every want, and turning all my water into wine. Lord! do thou daily manifest forth thy glory; and cause me by thy sweet influences, unceasingly to believe in thee.

Blessed Lord the Spirit! praised be thy name for this precious record of my Lord's zeal in purging his Temple. Do thou, Lord, so cleanse my heart; for thou hast said, the bodies of thy people are the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in them. And if my God will drive out all the vain thoughts which lodge there, which like the buyers and sellers in the Temple, so defile my poor heart; then, by my Lord's indwelling presence, shall I be enabled *to glorify* God, in my body and in my spirit, which are his.

And praised be my Lord for the very precious sign he gave the Jews; and for the very precious confirmation of it which followed. Yes! thou glorious Lord; while both the power of God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost, were manifested in thy triumphs over death and the grave; thou wast most fully *declared to be the Son of God with power; according to the Spirit of holiness, by thy resurrection from the dead!* And is it not by this same blessed testimony, the whole Church rests in hope for the sure accomplishment of the same in all thy mystical members! Hail! thou that art the resurrection and the life! Sure I am, that because thou livest, thy redeemed shall live also!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

Christ hath a conversation with *Nicodemus*. The *Lord* discourseth on the New-birth; and declares its absolute Necessity, for an Entrance into his Kingdom. Some further Account of *John the Baptist*.

REFLECTIONS

Everlasting praise to thee, my honored Lord, for the sweet and precious doctrine of the New-birth, so graciously taught thy Church, in this discourse with *Nicodemus*. Oh! for the distinguishing grace of God the Spirit upon my heart, that I may have all the blessed testimonies, in the assurance of it there; that I may not only know it, in the written word, but enjoy it in the engrafted word; to make me *wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

Do thou, dearest Lord, accompany those thine heavenly discourses, with thine Almighty grace; that from the words of my Lord and the commissioned discourse of his servant the Baptist, my soul may receive the truth, and the truth may make me free. Jesus hath all things in his Almighty hand. May I then Lord look to thee for all things, in grace, mercy, pardon, peace, and every New Covenant blessing here; and all the fulness of glory in Jesus, and from Jesus, to all eternity!

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Christ discourseth with a Woman of Samaria. He visits the Samaritans. Many believe on him. He healeth a Nobleman's Son.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! we have reason to believe, that the history of this woman of *Samaria*, handed down as it is, and hath been for ages past in the Church of God, hath been blessed to thousands. And what encouragement, indeed, doth such a record of grace hold forth, to poor sinners? Think how gracious the Lord dealt with this poor adulteress? How blessedly the view holds up Christ, to our love and adoration? Do not overlook what the Lord Jesus said to her as the sad cause Christ is so little regarded, and God's love in Christ so little known. Men do not know the gift of God. They have no apprehension that Christ is the remedy of God's own providing, for the wants of sinners. They neither know Christ in his Person, work, character, offices, and relationship to his Church; neither God's love in the free and full gift, he hath made of him, to the Church. But when God the Holy Ghost, as in the case of this poor woman, opens to the sinner's view, who Christ is, both in himself; and in the gift of his Father; the heart and affections are won: and the soul's thirst for Christ is excited by the same power, and as blessedly assaged, in the knowledge and love of him. *With the heart*, (saith the Apostle) *man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation!*

Methinks I could long for parents, and all that are interested in the temporal and everlasting interests of children, to do as this nobleman did; hasten to Christ, for their little ones. Behold! what a sweet miracle is here held forth, for the encouragement of all such. But how blessedly doth it preach to the believing parents of soul-sick children! Dearest Lord Jesus! did thy people but know thee more; how would thy courts be thronged, from day to day, in sending in petitions to the king! Lord, be it my portion, not to wait for signs and wonders; but faithfully to believe in thee, and all thy gracious promises, to the salvation of my soul!

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

Jesus visits the pool of Bethesda. He healeth one there, after thirty and eight years disease. He preacheth most blessedly to the Jews.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Mediator! do thou still continue by thy Holy Spirit, to visit the *Bethesdas* of Ordinances, among thy people; and as in the instance of this poor man, the longest and most inveterate diseases, induced by the Adam-nature of out fallen state, will be done away, when Jesus speaks the soul-quickenings, the health-restoring word, to his people.

I desire to praise thee my honored Lord, for this sweet and blessed discourse of thine, thou hast caused to be left on record; for the joy and consolation of thy Church. What the infidel and unbelieving Jews of old, and all of modern times, which they say are Christians, and are not, call blasphemy, all the regenerated family of Christ embrace, as from the faithful and true witness in his own testimony, when he said, *I and my Father are One*. And must it not be then as God the Father hath appointed, that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father? Oh! for grace to honor Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in, and through, and by the God-Man Christ Jesus. And do thou, dearest Lord, unceasingly bless and

refresh my soul in the view of all thy powers, that they are thine, and thine to execute, because thou art the Son of Man.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Jesus feedeth a Multitude in the Wilderness. He retireth to a Mountain. At Night he walketh on the Sea. He preacheth to the people.

(John 6:1-14) After these things, Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea* of Tiberias: (2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles, which he did on them that were diseased. (3) And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. (4) And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. (5) When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? (6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. (7) Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. (8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, (9) There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? (10) And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. (12) When they were filled, he said unto the disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. (13) Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. (14) Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

If the Reader observes what is here said of the approach of the Passover, and compares it with the opening of the last Chapter, he will perceive, that there must have been very little less than a whole

year have passed between the one and the other. Here, therefore, we must bring in to our recollection what the other Evangelists have recorded of that portion in the life and ministry of Christ. The sea of *Galilee*, the same with what *Luke* calls *Gennesareth*, Luke 5:1. was made memorable upon many occasions for the manifestation of our Lord's glory, Luke 5:1-11. particularly after he arose from the dead. John 21:1. I do not swell the page with observations on this miracle of Jesus feeding the multitude. I sometimes purposely use shortness, (and I beg the Reader to remember it,) in order that he may be led to seek with more earnestness for the teachings of God the Holy Ghost. Let me therefore upon the present occasion, in addition to what hath been already said, Matt. 14:14. Mark 6:35. Luke 9:12. only observe, that the compassion of Jesus, manifested at those seasons, in working a miracle to supply the pressing wants of the body, and for a multitude, which the Lord then knew, and afterwards proved, were none of His, in the covenant of redemption, (see verse 66.) should be a constant source of comfort, both for the wants of body and soul, to his people, during the whole of their time-state upon earth. My brother! I would say to every child of God, let nothing tempt you to cast away your faith, or suffer you to be cast down with fear; both your bread that perisheth with using, and that which endureth to everlasting life, shall be given, and your water sure. Isaiah 33:16. Remember Christ's own words, *Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have store-house nor barn, and God feedeth them! how much are ye better than the fowls?* Read the whole passage, for it is very sweet. Luke 12:22-40.

REFLECTIONS

Precious Lord Jesus! while I behold thee, my God and Savior, as set forth in this Chapter, feeding the multitudes with the bread which perisheth with using, and becoming in the same moment to all thy people the living bread, imparting solid, substantial, soul-feeding, soul-nourishing food, for time, and for eternity; Lord, I praise thee for the distinguishing mercy, and beg of my God to excite in my heart such a craving appetite to be fed and nourished in the divine life, as none but Christ himself can satisfy! Lord! *evermore give me this bread! Lift up the light of thy countenance upon my soul, and it shall put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased!*

And art thou, dearest Lord, the sealed of the Father? Doth God the Holy Ghost prove to thy people his anointings, both of the glorious Head, and also of his members? Oh! for grace thus to receive thee, thus to come to thee, since such a rich provision is made for all the Father hath given thee, to come. Yea, methinks I would have every poor, awakened, and sensible sinner, to come. Hear, my brother, what Jesus saith. They shall all come which are of this description and character. And sure I am Jesus will accept all that so come, for he here saith, that *he will in no wise cast them out.*

Lord! I would say for myself, and all thy redeemed family, behold! *we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God! Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Jesus keepeth the Feast of Tabernacles. He teacheth in the Temple. The Scribes and Pharisees are more and more enraged at him.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! behold the glories of the Lord Jesus, as set forth in this chapter. Say! do not the accumulated testimonies to his eternal power and Godhead, shine like the rich constellation of the heavenly bodies, in one full cluster? And in his Mediator-character no less, behold, what rich and splendid proofs the Lord manifested, that his doctrine was of God! But yet we are told, that *even his brethren believed not on him!* How should they, who were no brethren in the grace-union of his body the Church, but only brethren in the Jewish nation and character, after the flesh? Ah! no. *All are not Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.* What hath the *Ishmaels*, and the *Esaus*, to do with the covenant? Oh! the distinguishing grace of God! oh! the blessedness of the children of promise!

Dearest Lord Jesus! do thou condescend still to come to our feasts, by the sweet manifestations of thy Spirit. For without thy

presence, the richest ordinances have no savor. All the stars in the firmament to our world, will not make one sun. And where Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness is not, it is in vain to look for light, or warmth, from all our services. But if my Lord come up to his banquetting house the Church, and cause his redeemed to sit under his shadow with great delight, then shall the whole Jerusalem of our God upon earth, like the Jerusalem of our God which is above, be feasted with the same love of Jesus. Then shall that scripture promise be fulfilled; we shall *suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, and milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory!*

Reader! let you and I be continually seeking grace from the Lord, that under this divine discourse of Jesus, brought home to our warmest affection by the gracious teachings of God the Holy Ghost, we may each for ourselves be enabled to set our seals *that God is true*. And Surely, my brother, if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, however you behold Jesus as *a stumbling block, and a rock of offence* to those blind rulers in Israel, to you he will be more precious, *more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey*. Every one who is made partaker of the grace in Jesus, will confess his graciousness, and know that *never man spake like this man!* Dearest Master! may it be my portion to derive all that is truly blessed and desirable in the present life from thee; for sure I am all that is truly glorious in another can only flow from thee. And be it, my honored Lord, my supreme happiness to live upon what Jesus is to me, and hath done for me, and not upon any supposed attainments of mine in following after thee. Indeed, indeed, thou Almighty Savior, the sole joy of the Church, both above and below, can only be in thyself, as that sweet scripture most blessedly confirms, *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory!*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

A woman taken in Adultery is brought to *Christ* for Judgment. The *Lord* pardons her. He preacheth a divine Discourse. The Jews

oppose him, and are about to stone him; but he passeth by, and escapeth their Hands.

REFLECTIONS

Precious Lord Jesus! may my soul gaze with rapture on every feature of thy divine Person, while by faith I behold thee, as in this Chapter, pardoning the poor Adulteress; and manifesting the mercy of thine heart. Oh! thou dear Lord! well is it for thine Adulteress Church, that thou art a God, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; or what would have become of all thy redeemed.

And Lord! I find new occasion to admire, to love, to adore, my compassionate God, in that he brings his people from the Adam-nature and servitude of sin, into the freedom and adoption of children, in my Lord's family. Truly Lord *thou hast loosed my bands!* Thou hast, brought all thy redeemed from the dominion and guilt of sin, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And as it is God the Son hath made his people free, they shall be free indeed. And although all thy children, thy blood-bought family, do still carry about with them a body of sin and death, which harrass and afflict the soul: though still the subjects of outward troubles, and inward fears: though many a fiery dart Satan still hurls at them; and many a wearisome path by his craft and cruelty, he causes them to tread in their pilgrimage: yet thou Lord hast brought them out of his servitude, where once they lived as his drudges; doing his work, and wearing his livery, and delighted with both: and art bringing them home, and wilt bring them all in, to thine heavenly kingdom! Blessed be my God and Savior, for all his love and mercy.

Reader! let us both join in thanksgivings to the great I am; both for his own eternal power and Godhead, and for thus drawing the line of everlasting, distinction as this Chapter hath it, between those awful characters who by denying Christ die in their sins; and those who believe in him to the salvation of their souls. Blessed, for ever blessed, be our great I am!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

Jesus giveth Sight to a Man which was born blind. The Pharisee are enraged at it. Jesus preacheth a sweet Sermon on the Occasion.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! contemplate in this man, thy state by nature; blind indeed, from thy birth, and in spiritual things, as ignorant as the very, brute that perisheth. And how long didst thou remain, stumbling over the dark mountains of sin, and unbelief? Nay, wouldest thou not have remained so for ever, had not Jesus passed by, and created life and light to thy spiritual apprehension? It was indeed the sabbath day when Jesus did this; for He himself became the very sabbath of thy soul. And in this sovereign act of grace, how sweetly hath he proved to thee his own eternal power and Godhead! Surely thou canst say, with this fellow-partaker in the rich mercy: *Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.*

Oh! ye blind Pharisees! How long will ye have to learn a right knowledge of the Person and righteousness of Jesus? An whole eternity ye will have to mourn over the darkness of blackness for ever! How awfully verified, in that day which unfolds all, will be the words of Jesus! *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man; then shall ye know that I am.* Yes! know it, to your everlasting condemnation; but not to your joy, as the Lord's people!

Reader! Doth Jesus now put the question to you, and to me, which he put to the man born blind, when he had opened his eyes; *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* Hath the Lord opened our eyes? Have we seen the king in his beauty? Seen ourselves in our deformity? Can we, from the heart, and from the soul, fall down and worship him? crying out, as one of old: *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!* Oh! the blessedness of being taught by him! Surely the Lord will say to us, as he did to the Apostle, on his confession: *Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for*

flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The *Lord Jesus* opens this Chapter with describing himself under the Character of the Good Shepherd; and his Church as his Sheep. He sweetly discourseth, and causeth a Division of Opinion thereby among the Jews. Many are brought to believe on Him.

(John 10:1-16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (4) And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (5) And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (6) This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. (7) Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. (8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. (9) I am the door: by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture, (10) The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. (11) I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (12) But he that is an hireling: and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (13) The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (14) I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And other sheep I have which are not of this fold:

them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

I beg the Reader, at his entrance on this most blessed Chapter, that he will not overlook the double mention of one of Christ's precious names, as Jesus opened his discourse. *Verily, Verily; or Amen, Amen.* There is somewhat more in the word itself, than is generally supposed. Some have said, let us set *our* Amen to the Lord's words, if we hope Christ will set *his* to our salvation. But though it may be, and no doubt it is, highly proper to be able to set *to our seal that God is true;* and the general acceptance of *Amen* is not amiss, when *from the heart man believeth unto salvation:* yet it is equally proper, the truly spiritual Reader should have a yet higher apprehension of the *Verily,* or *Amen* of Christ. If he will consult what the Lord Jesus hath himself said on this point, when sending his solemn message, unto the angel of the Church of the *Laodiceans,* (Rev. 3:14.) he will there discover, that the Lord introduced the whole of his awful threatenings with the authority of this great Name. *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness.* And his servant, the Prophet, commissioned by his authority, taught the Church, that whenever a child of God *blessed himself in the earth,* that is stood in need of blessings, and asked for them, they should be sought for *in the God of truth;* or, as the words may be rendered, shall bless himself in God, Amen, meaning Christ, Isaiah 65:16. John 14:6. 2 Cor. 1:20. Ephes. 1:3. So that in the two Verilys, or *Amen* twice uttered, by Christ himself, at his entrance on this Chapter, *Verily, Verily, I say unto you!* it is as if this glorious Amen, this faithful and true witness, confirmed the whole of his discourse, both with his word, and with his oath. The Apostle, speaking of God the Father, in his Personal office in the Covenant, saith, *that because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself* Heb. 6:13. In like manner, God the Son, in his Personal office God-Man-Mediator, doth the same in his doubled *Verily.* In the first *Amen,* Jesus takes his glorious name; *the Amen, the faithful witness.* And in the second *Amen,* it becomes as his word and oath, confirming, and making sure all he saith. I pray the Reader not to lose sight of this, in all the *Verilys* of Christ, which he meets with in the whole of his divine discourses. The Lord Jesus hath been pleased to use the word nearly *fifty times,* as we read in what the three former Evangelists have recorded of his ministry. And a double *Verily,* as in this Chapter, in

more than *twenty* instances as recorded by *John*. Well therefore may it merit our close attention.

But let us now enter upon the Lord's discourse in this Chapter. The general scope of which is, under the similitude of a sheepfold, to describe his Church, which his Father had given to him, as his flock; and himself as the Shepherd, under all the endearing characters of such an office. The Reader should recollect, that the chief treasure of the East, at the time of our Lord's appearing, and for ages before, consisted chiefly in flocks, and herds, and vines, and fig-trees, and corn, and the like; and all the riches of agriculture. And as our Lord availed himself upon every occasion, to raise subjects for discourse from the objects around, and from such things as his hearers were most familiarly acquainted with: that of a sheepfold seems to have been the one chiefly used by him, and his servants. Indeed not only Jesus takes to himself this character, but God the Father called him by that name: Zech. 13:7. And the Church herself, catching the words from the Lord, invites the Lord Jesus to hear her as the Great Shepherd of Israel, from between the Cherubim. Psm. 80:1. And if the Reader wishes to have a most compleat view of the Lord Jesus under this blessed office, he will find a whole Chapter, directed by the Holy Ghost in the ministry of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, to this one subject. Ezek. 34.

It should seem, by the manner in which Christ hath introduced his discourse, of a robbery, in an entrance into the sheepfold, in an improper way, that the Lord had in view the Scribes, which sat in Moses's seat, and assumed the office of teaching the people, unauthorized of God. Matt. 23:2. Mark 13:38. And it is of such the Lord again speaks in the 8th verse; of *all that ever came before him were thieves and robbers*: meaning all false shepherds and hirelings, *who feed themselves but not the flock!* Ezek. 34:2-4. But Reader, do not fail to observe, what Jesus saith concerning them. *But the sheep did not hear them*: that is, were not led away by their false leadings, into unwholsome pasture. Sweet thought to the true sheep of Christ! There hath indeed, in all ages of the Church, been such false Pastors. And tremendously awful must be their final doom. But Jesus the true Shepherd, hath watched over the whole of his flock, and not suffered one of them to be lost; neither shall one of them be found wanting, in the day he maketh them up. The Prophet was

commissioned to tell the Church, that *the flocks must all pass again under the hands of Him that telleth them.* Jerem. 33:13.

I must not indulge myself as I could wish, in entering into the several most interesting particulars, which the Lord Jesus hath here set before us under this beautiful similitude, of a Shepherd and his flock; as descriptive of himself and his Church. I must content myself with only calling upon the Reader to a few of the more prominent features of character by which Jesus hath set it forth. The Father is blessedly shewn by Christ in his Covenant-character, as the giver of this fold. Jesus delights upon every occasion to keep this in view to the Church. *Thine they were, (saith Christ,) and thou gavest them me.* John 17:6. And in this Chapter, when speaking of the everlasting safety of his flock; he ascribes both the gift of his sheep, and their security in him to the Father. *My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are One.* Christ declares himself to be the Great Shepherd of his sheep, both by speaking of himself, under this character, as entering in by the door; and twice in the course of his description of the office, calling himself the *good* Shepherd. Verses 11 and 14. See also Ezek. 34:23. Isaiah 40:11. Heb. 13:20. 1 Pet. 5:4. And God the Holy Ghost is in my view very blessedly represented by the Lord Jesus, as opening the door of the sheep-fold to Christ, which he doth most effectually, when that gracious Lord opens the hearts of his people to receive Jesus, as it is here said, *he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out.* And let it not be thought unsuitable or unbecoming to make application of the office of a *Porter* to God the Spirit, when using similitudes. Hosea 12:10. For if Christ calls himself, as he doth in this Chapter, *the door;* (verse 9,) there can be nothing improper in considering God the Holy Ghost, in that precious office of his, in opening to Christ as the *Porter.* Reader! pause over the review of the subject, as far as we have already gone. Behold! each of the glorious Persons of the Godhead, in their Covenant-offices, as here blessedly set forth, in reference to the Sheep-fold of Christ. Here is God the Father, giving the whole to Christ. Here is the Lord Jesus Christ, calling his Sheep his own by virtue of taking them for his own, and as the gift of the Father, before all worlds. Ephes. 1:4. And here is God the Holy Ghost, in his sweet office-work, in the same everlasting Covenant, opening to Christ for his entrance into his

fold; causing the sheep to hear his voice, and to follow Jesus, that they may go in, and out, and find pasture.

Let us now observe some of the more prominent features of character, in relation to the fold. Jesus not only owns them, and calls them all by name; but hath given several strong and leading marks, by which his sheep are known and distinguished from all the goats of the world, and from every false resemblance which might appear, of goats in sheeps' cloathing.

And *first*, they are said to be the Sheep of Christ, given to him before the foundation of the world, when as Jesus under one of his well known office-characters or wisdom, saith, *the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old, when I was set up from everlasting.* And in the same moment that the Son of God in his Wisdom-character was set up, the Head and Husband of his Church, and the Great Shepherd of his Sheep; then must have been set up with him, and from him, and for him, his Church, his Spouse, his Sheep. For in none of those relations could he have stood; neither have had ability to have acted in the office, without the relative characters to have exercised such relations and offices towards. And hence in the same scripture, where the Son of God speaks of being thus set up from the beginning, he no less saith, *that he was rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* And this at a time, (or rather before time,) when as yet Jehovah, in his threefold character of Persons *had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.* Prov. 8:22-31. And I beg the Reader, before he proceeds further, to consult some at least, of those many blessed scriptures, which both confirm this precious truth, of the grace-union between Christ and his Church, before all worlds; and also of the going forth of all the Persons of the Godhead in the after acts of creation. Ephes. 1:4. Coloss. 1:15-18. Ephes. 3:9-11. Gen. 1:26.

Secondly. When those great leading truths are fully impressed upon the Reader's mind, I beg him to go on to notice, in relation to this Sheep-fold of Jesus, that it is a gathered fold, out of Nature's wild wilderness, chosen, fenced in, made separate, and distinct; from the everlasting love of God the Father, the apprehending union of God the Son, and the blessed grace, and anointing influence of God the Holy Ghost. For it is a point of infinite consequence to be observed, when giving to the Holy Three in One, the honor due to

Jehovah's name; that as God the Father chose the Church in Christ before the foundation of the world, and God the Son betrothed the Church to himself from everlasting: Hosea 2:19. So God the Holy Ghost, in his gracious Covenant-office, respecting Christ and his Church, did equally manifest his everlasting love in the divine appointment, by anointing the head and members as one, revealing and making known to the Church the Messiah as God's anointed, many ages before Christ was born. And as Christ was thus anointed in this office and relation character to his Church; consequently God the Holy Ghost had an eye to the Church in this gracious act, and foreviewed the Church, and loved the Church in Christ, with an everlasting love, as the Church of Christ, and with proportioned love of the body, as he loved the glorious Head. The oneness and union in the divine nature of the whole Godhead prove this. John 17:23.

Thirdly. It forms a most sweet, and precious part, in the contemplation of this subject of Christ and his Church, the Shepherd and his Sheep; that while distinguished as the fold is, by the electing love of God the Father, the redeeming love of God the Son, and the regenerating love of God the Holy Ghost; the whole Sheepfold is but one, however divided into distinct branches, whether *Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free.* So the Lord speaks in this very Chapter; when he saith *there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.* And so he blessedly speaks elsewhere, when comforting his Church. *My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother: she is the choice one of her that bare her.* Song 6:9. Reader! do not lose sight of this. Christ's Sheepfold can be but one. Christ, the Husband of his Church, hath but one Bride. None can be added to his Church. None taken from it. The world's goats can never pass under his hands for sheep. No! neither goats in sheep-cloathing escape his eye. Here, in this world's wilderness, they may, and too often do, break over the fence, and mingle in the pastures of Christ's sheep. Indeed too often worry the Lord's sheep, and make them, as the Lord calls his oppressed ones, *the flock of slaughter.* Zech. 11:4-7. Rom. 8:36. But ere long, these things will for ever cease. Jesus the Great Shepherd will come and cause an everlasting separation. Matt. 25:31 to the end. Pause over this lovely subject. Christ and his fold as one. Jesus calls them by every endearing name, in a way of distinction and delight. They are a *little flock*: but yet a numerous body, *a multitude which no man can number.* Compare Luke 12:32.

with Rev. 7:9. They are black in their own esteem, but comely in the eyes of Jesus. Song 1:5. Ezek. 16:14. And elsewhere, the Lord calls them a *beautiful* flock. Jerem. 13:20. And what can the imagination form to itself more beautiful than the Church, made up of a vast multitude, as first presented to her Husband, in his eternal mind before all worlds; then recovered out of her fallen and polluted time state, in her *Adam*-nature, in being washed from her sins in Christ's blood, and clothed in his righteousness; and finally presented by Jesus *to himself, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish before him for ever.* Ephes. 1:4. Psm. 45:9-17. Ephes. 5:25 to the end.

I must not swell our observations on those verses any further. But otherwise, what a subject opens to our view in the contemplation of Jesus in the extensive office of a Shepherd? It is indeed endless. The personal knowledge Christ hath of every individual of his fold. How can it be otherwise, than that he must know them, when he hath received every one of them at his Father's hands; their names written in the book of life; they are every one of them married to his person, united to himself; yea, part of himself: He calleth them all by name. He hath died for them, shed his blood for them, become the Surety for them, cleansed them in his blood from all their sins, hath ascended for them to glory, is gone before them to take possession of his Mediator-kingdom in their name, is everlastingly appearing in the presence of his Father for them, and he hath promised to come again, and take them home to himself, that where he is, there they shall be also! Reader! under such precious views and assurances, can it be possible that Jesus can overlook, forget, and be regardless of each, and every individual of his fold, when his own glory is concerned in the event of their present and everlasting welfare? Yea, the very charge of his office, as Mediator and Shepherd, will not be fulfilled until he hath brought the whole home, and *not an hoof left behind* in that great day of God, when they *must all pass again under the hands of him that telleth them?* Reader, do not fail, in confirmation, to turn to the perusal of some of those sweet scriptures, such as John 17:2. Psm. 139:16. Isaiah 4:3. Dan. 12:1. Luke 10:20. 1 Cor. 6:17. 2 Cor. 5:15, Heb. 6:20. John 14:3. Exod. 10:26. Jerem. 33:13. Blessed and Almighty Shepherd of thy blood-bought flock! very sure I am of thy pastoral love and care. As the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our

souls, thou wilt everlastingly be in thy diocese. Thou wilt feed thy flock like a shepherd. Thou wilt cause them *to lie down in wholesome pastures*. And, as thou hast said, *thou wilt search, and seek out thy flock in the day* (this time state of our wilderness dispensations,) *in which thou art among thy sheep, to bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick*. Yea, Lord Jesus, thou wilt seek me, even me, *for I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost!* But Jesus hath said, *I must bring the other sheep which are not of this fold;* thousands, and tens of thousands, which were not in the Jewish fold of the Old Testament, but of the Gentile fold, under both the Old and New Testament dispensation. Jesus *must* bring them. Why must my Lord do so? Because they are part of himself, they are the body of Christ, the Church the Father gave him, and purchased by his blood, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Hence Jesus must bring them all home, and they shall be *for a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of my God!* Isaiah 62:3.

(John10:17-19) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. (18) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Reader! make a long pause over these blessed verses, for they are most blessed. The love Jesus here speaks of cannot possibly mean the love of God the Father to God the Son, as God; for then, in this sense, no such reason as is here assigned, would be given. Neither did God the Son lay down his life as God. And, moreover, the observation of God the Father loving God the Son would have been unnecessary in Christ to have informed the disciples. For unless the Church had faculties suitable to the apprehension, (which is impossible,) we never could have the least conception what that infinite love is, which One of the divine Persons in the Godhead bears to another. But the love of the Father to Christ here spoken of by Jesus, is the love he hath to him as God-Man-Mediator. He loved him for his voluntary undertaking to become the Head and Husband of his body the Church. He loved him for all the offices connected with it, in rescuing his Spouse, his Bride, which the Father gave him

before all worlds, from that dreadful state of sin and ruin into which, in the time-state of her Adam-nature, she had fallen. This, I venture to believe, was the love which the Lord Jesus here spake of, and which Jesus prized so highly. And well might all the persons of the Godhead delight in the God-Man love of Jesus to his Church. For the perfect unsinning obedience of the whole creation of God, yea, had the whole creation of God, added to that obedience, been offered up as one rich and full oblation, the whole would have been nothing in comparison to the holy life, and spotless death of Christ upon the cross, when doing away the whole penal effect of sin by the sacrifice of himself, and magnifying the law of God, and making it honorable. Reader! pause a moment longer, and then say, did God the Father thus love Christ on our account, think then how God the Father must love us. And if Jesus was so loved by the Father for us, how ought Christ to be loved by us?

I must not suffer the Reader to pass away from those sweet verses before that he hath also noticed, and with the due attention it merits, what Jesus hath said of his own sovereign power and Godhead. If no man had power to take his life from him, but as he elsewhere saith: *As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.* John 5:26. let the Reader receive from those precious words, the Lord's assurance of his nature and office as God-Man-Mediator! Oh! how infinitely great must be his nature, how full of glory and dignity his person, who thus possessed such infinite power? And how unspeakably great his love, who so loved us, as *to give himself for us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor?*

REFLECTIONS

Reader! you and I here plainly discover that Christ is the good Shepherd. Both his office, relation, and character, under this sweet figure, he is chosen into by God the Father, and all his sheep given by the Father to him as his own. They were his, in this appointment, from everlasting. And now in the time-state of a wilderness, where the Lord finds them wandering, he comes to seek and save that which was lost. Have you and I known Christ under this endeared character? Have we the features Jesus hath here described, by which we alone, prove, that we are the sheep of his pasture. Nothing can be more plain than what Jesus hath here marked to discover his sheep

from the world's goats. He saith, the sheep hear his voice, they know his call, they follow him. A stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of stranger's. Have we these undeniable tokens? Oh! for grace to be so distinguished! Blessed it is to lie down in his fold, to feed in his pastures, and to go in and out by those wholesome waters of comfort, beside which, *the Great Shepherd of Israel feeds his flock!* Reader! Jesus wilt do by all his fold as the Holy Ghost hath said. He will feed, protect, heal, strengthen, guide, and, in short, do all that pertains to the office of a shepherd; he will carry the lambs in his arms, and gently lead those that are with young. And, to crown all, he will most effectually preserve from all evil, and give them eternal life, so that *none shall perish, or any pluck them out of his and his Father's hands.* Hail! Almighty Shepherd of thy flock.

Reader! behold the triumphs of thy Lord over all the enemies of his Godhead, and against all the awful opposition made to his divine person and character. So was it then, so is it now, and so shall it be, until the Lord hath brought the whole under his footstool. Lord Jesus! establish thy people in their most holy faith, until that thou shalt bring them home unto *the fountains of living water; where, as a Lamb in the midst of the throne, thou art feeding them, and where thou hast wiped all tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of thy people thou hast taken away from off all the earth!*

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

Jesus raiseth Lazarus from the Dead. The Priests and Pharisees become more desperately enraged at *Jesus*. They gather a Council to deliberate on his Death.

REFLECTIONS

What a blessed thing it is, when at any time, upon the sickness of our friends or ourselves, we are enabled to tell Jesus, as those sorrowful sisters did: Lord! *behold he whom thou lovest is sick!* Oh! the privilege of knowing the Lord, and knowing that we are beloved by him! Reader! do you know the sweetness of thus daily, yea,

sometimes hourly, going to the court of this gracious heavenly King, and receiving a look, a love-token, from Jesus himself, amidst the crowds which attend his Levee? And my soul observe: Reader do you also observe, how graciously the Lord proposed to visit the sorrowful family of *Lazarus*, under their bereaving providence. And although *two days* elapsed before he went, yet this delay was all in greater mercy, as the sequel of the history proved. Learn then from hence, how to interpret silence in the Lord. It is for the greater glory of the Lord, and the greater good of his people.

Reader! look, and look again, to the Lord, as he approached the grave of him whom he loved. Oh! that I had the power of persuasion, methinks I would call all whom Jesus loves, and who love Jesus, to take their stand there, and by faith, and behold the Son of God in our nature, shedding tears and groaning in spirit, over the sad consequence of sin, in our death. And didst thou, dearest Lord, mingle thy tears with ours, at such a sight. Didst thou indeed give such a proof, that *because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, thou thyself hast taken part of the same*? Oh! for grace to have it always in remembrance. Jesus *wept*. Jesus knows, and hath felt, what human sorrows are. Never, never my soul be thou afraid to go to him, in all thy afflictions, He that wept at the grave of *Lazarus*, and took part in the weepings of the sorrowful sisters, will take part in thine. *He knoweth thy frame, and remembereth that thou art dust.*

Hail! thou that *livest and wast dead; and behold thou art alive for evermore*. Still by the ear of faith, I hear thy soul-reviving, body-quickenings words: *I am the resurrection and the life!* Lord Jesus! give me that sweet earnest and pledge of the first resurrection in grace, here below; and sure I am that in thee, and from thee, I shall have part in the resurrection to glory hereafter. And dearest Lord! while my soul rejoiceth in hope of the glory of God; in the awful character of this High Priest *Caiaphas*, and in all the awful characters beside in every generation, which like those who went their way to the *Pharisees*, unconvinced at the resurrection of *Lazarus*; most fully deciding that grace alone makes all the difference; teach me to whom to look, and to whom to ascribe the source of all my mercies. *Though one arose from the dead*, such will not believe. And wherein Lord do I differ from them, but what grace hath made? Oh! prepare me, by living wholly *upon* thee, deriving all

from thee, and ascribing all to thee; for the great and awful day of my God, when the dead shall hear thy voice, and come forth; some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt. In that all-decisive hour, be thou to me the resurrection and the life, and my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* is at a Supper. *Mary* anointeth his Feet. He entereth Jerusalem, as foretold by the Prophet. He maketh a very blessed Discourse; and is answered by a Voice from Heaven.

REFLECTIONS

PONDER well, my soul, the many blessed things contained in this chapter concerning thy GOD and SAVIOR. And while thou beholdest the gracious condescension of JESUS in the days of his flesh, granting his sweet presence and divine discourses, in supping with his people, as in the house of *Lazarus*, and *Simon the Leper*; do not for a moment question, but that now, in the day of his power, he will come, as he hath said, and sup with his people, and cause them by faith to sup with him. And what though thou hast no costly ointment, as *Mary* had, to anoint thy LORD'S feet, yet, when JESUS comes, he will bring every thing that is blessed with him. Remember, that thy LORD comes not to receive, but to give, not that He may be made more blessed, for that is impossible, but that thou mayest be made more happy. It is enough when through his grace enabling them, his people lay low at his feet, and *while the king sitteth at the table* of his own providing, he will cause the spikenard of his own graces, called forth into exercise from thine heart by his HOLY SPIRIT, *to send forth the smell thereof*

Blessed LORD JESUS! may I never forget that soul trouble of thine which is here spoken of! Give me grace to meditate on the wondrous subject. Oh! for a solemnity of soul always suited to the contemplation. The very recollection is enough to damp all unsuited and unbecoming lightness of mind at all times. Did JESUS feel soul-heaviness on the account of his redeemed, and shall they be light

minded? Did JESUS groan, and shall I be unconcerned? Blessed be my GOD and FATHER, who so graciously answered his dear SON by a voice from heaven. And blessed be the LORD for his mercy to all his redeemed by the act, since it came for their sakes. And oh! for grace, to rejoice with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, in what GOD the FATHER then declared to his dear SON, concerning his Mediator-office and character, that the LORD had glorified his name, and will glorify it again, yea, for ever! And blessed be GOD for that precious assurance, more precious than the gold of Ophir, it was the glory of CHRIST, which *Esaias* saw when he spake of Him. It is, and everlastingly must be the glory of CHRIST, which is the joy of all his people. Oh! thou dear LORD! write these blessed words of thine in my heart, to lift up my soul with joy for ever: *I am come* (saith my LORD,) *a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness.*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The *LORD* washeth his Disciples' Feet. He intimates to the Twelve, that One of them is a Traitor. The Sorrow of the Eleven at the Account. *Peter* is admonished of his Denial.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! do not close your view of this most blessed Chapter, which unfolds so sweetly the heart of CHRIST to his people, and shews them that his whole heart towards them is love, before that you have begged also of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who hath given the Church such a view of that love, that the LORD will cause all the gracious streams of it to flow from CHRIST'S heart into ours. Can the imagination form to itself any thing more lovely, than thus to behold CHRIST encircled with his family, and forgetting his own personal concerns in the tremendous exercises both of soul and body the LORD had then to go through, and now opening before him, but yet in the midst of all, washing his disciples feet? Was there ever an instance of the kind heard of among the histories of the world for a Master to act thus towards his Servants? And here it was the LORD of

heaven and earth performing the service to poor sinners? *Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, for the LORD hath done it!*

But, dearest JESUS! wilt thou not in some measure, (as far as our poor short-sighted capacities can have any suitable apprehension of thy gracious design,) wilt thou not shew us of thy meaning? Was it as a parting act to say, when I am gone, as no opportunity can then occur of demonstrating by any such an *outward* act towards you, of what my *inward* affections are; I hereby shew you that I think no condescension too great to serve and bless my people? If I have washed your feet upon earth, fear not but that I will wash your souls from sin when I am in heaven. And though I am now going to my FATHER, and for a while ye will see me no more, let this shew you, that though my state is changed, yet not my nature. There, as well as here, I am the same JESUS. And though I am going to my FATHER, and to my redeemed gone before, nothing will lessen or remove my affection for my redeemed below. As oft as my Church calls to remembrance this act of mine, in washing my poor disciples' feet, let such a love-token become, as among other designs which I have had in view in the doing it. I intended a palpable proof, that *having loved my own which are in the world, I love them to the end!* Precious LORD JESUS! may not thy redeemed venture to form such conclusions from this gracious act of thine, as if JESUS thus opened to us his heart. Think often of this, I pray the Reader, yea, the whole Church of God. May my poor soul think of nothing beside! And, oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST, the sweet Remembrancer of JESUS, may keep the thought warm in my heart, until the cold clay hand of death come upon me, and my soul escape from the prison of the body to enjoy the fruition of it for ever.

And, oh! my honored LORD! let even the awful view of the traitor *Judas*, make my mercies infinitely more and more precious, from learning therefrom how distinguishing they are. LORD! it is all thy grace, it is all thy rich, free, sovereign mercy. Be it my daily delight to receive the whole, and every part of thy Church's peace and safety, and happiness, to covenant love; and to ascribe the whole to the united grace of FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

The LORD is here comforting his Disciples, to prepare their Minds against the Time of his Departure. He describes the Person, Work, and Grace, of the HOLY GHOST

REFLECTIONS

Almighty Preacher! give me grace to sit at thy feet and hear by faith thy sweet and all-powerful voice in this unequalled sermon of thine, causing all the gracious truths of it to sink deep in my heart. Yes! thou dearest LORD! thou art indeed *the way, and the truth, and the life*. None can have access to GOD but by thee. GOD hath set thee up in thy Mediator-character. And in thee, and by thee, as the life and the light of thy people, thy whole Church hath access by one SPIRIT to the FATHER.

Welcome HOLY and Eternal GOD the SPIRIT, to thy Church! Thou art indeed the very Comforter: for LORD thy great work is consolation. Oh! give me to know thee in thy sweet manifestations, in comforting my poor soul under all discouragements, with the suitableness of CHRIST. Yea, LORD, in all thy gifts and graces, make known to me the glory, the grace, the love, the infinite tenderness, and compassion, of my GOD and SAVIOR, in taking of the things of CHRIST, and shewing them to me. Be it my unceasing happiness, to be brought daily, hourly, under thy quickening, refreshing, soul-reviving influences, that I may be filled with that *joy which is unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul*.

FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all grace! blessed, for ever blessed, be that everlasting love, which hath followed up the manifestation of *GOD'S* dear SON, in the manifestation of GOD'S holy SPIRIT. *Thanks be unto GOD for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The *LORD* continues his Discourse through the whole of this Chapter. Under the Similitude of a Vine and the Branches, *JESUS* describes his Union with his Church. In the close of the Chapter, *JESUS* again speaks of the coming of the *HOLY GHOST*.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to observe the intimate oneness and union between *CHRIST* and his Church. The vine and its branches are not more closely formed in one, than *JESUS* and his people. Indeed, there are no figures, no images, either in nature or art, which can fully come up to the resemblance. All figures must fall short of the reality. But while we observe the closeness of union, let you and I be still more anxious to know whether we are the happy partakers of it. Are we indeed One with *CHRIST*, and *CHRIST* with us? *He that is joined to the LORD is one SPIRIT*. One principle actuates both. What *JESUS* loves, we love; what *JESUS* hates, we hate. We look to *JESUS* for all things, and desire to eye *JESUS* in all things. Moreover, if one Spirit be in both, we shall undertake nothing but in his strength, and seek nothing but his glory. And as the branch wholly hangs upon, and is kept alive by the vine, so all our graces are kept alive by life *in JESUS*, and communications *from JESUS*. Oh! for grace to know these things in a lively, active, spiritual enjoyment of them, that we may be increasing in desires after him, and loosening from every thing that is not in him, till we come to see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever.

Blessed *HOLY Comforter* of the *LORD'S* people? Gracious *SPIRIT* of truth to lead into all truth! Oh! grant to me the knowledge of my *LORD* under all his sweet and precious offices! Send out *LORD!* thy light and thy truth to guide my poor soul continually! And, oh! for the daily, hourly renewing of the *HOLY GHOST*, to be shed abundantly upon the churches and people, through *JESUS CHRIST* our *SAVIOR*. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

The *LORD'S* Sermon is continued through this Chapter, and here it is ended. *JESUS* comforts his Disciples with many sweet and precious Promises, and again dwells upon the gracious consolations which they should receive from the *HOLY GHOST*.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD GOD Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come! Blessed for ever be GOD the FATHER, for his everlasting love, in having chosen the Church in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. And blessed be GOD the SON, for having betrothed the Church from everlasting, and having redeemed her from all the ruins of the fall, in this time state of existence. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for his everlasting love, and accomplishing the regeneration of the Church, when *dead in trespasses and sins!*

Oh! for grace, to be often contemplating the office acts and manifestations of love, as shewn towards the Church in the communications of all that is communicable in grace, from each glorious person of the GODHEAD. Do thou, blessed SPIRIT, daily make a sweet revelation of the whole to, and in the souls of the redeemed, that the glory of the FATHER'S provision for the Church, in the person and blood of CHRIST, and the full mercy of the everlasting covenant, may, through thy sovereign power, be brought home, and confirmed in the heart. Oh! for grace to know GOD the HOLY GHOST, in every sweet office-act in which JESUS hath here so blessedly represented him. Thou knowest, Almighty *Comforter*, that my poor soul can find no comfort but from thy gracious operations. I can have no access, can find no freedom at the throne, nay, can have no disposition to go there, unless thy sweet leadings influence and guide me thither. Oh! then do thou, Almighty *Quickener* of the LORD'S people, *direct my heart into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST*. Do thou become to my poor soul, the SPIRIT of truth; and sure I am, amidst all the heresies of the day, I shall be guided into all truth. Do thou *glorify* to my view the LORD JESUS, and then no Infidel amidst a Christ-despising generation, will for a moment raise a mist to

obscure my clear apprehension of His GODHEAD. Precious, precious *Teacher*; in the Church of JESUS! do thou but mercifully fulfil all thy sweet office-characters, in and to my poor soul, and more will be accomplished to the settlement of that peace of mind, and peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding in my heart, than can be wrought in ten thousand years of human endeavors without thee. Yes! thou Almighty SPIRIT of *Sanctification* and *Holiness*, if thou wilt condescend to communicate of thy divine unction, thou wilt bring my LORD JESUS, in all his fulness and suitability, so immediately home in union with my redeemed soul, that I shall know him as *the LORD my righteousness*, and live upon him, and live to him, as being made *the righteousness of GOD in Him*.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* having finished in the foregoing Chapter his Sermon, here follows it up with Prayer. He first makes the Subject of it Personal, in Relation to Himself and the *FATHER*. He next offers up Prayer for his Apostles. And, lastly, for his whole Church.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! do thou, with uplifted eyes, and thankful heart, behold thy GOD and SAVIOR, in this most blessed representation the HOLY GHOST hath made of him, in this Chapter, here entering upon His High Priestly Office; and through faith, come under the golden Censer of his Offering! Oh! what a sample hath he here given, of his all powerful, all prevailing, and unchanging Priesthood. Yes! thou blessed LORD! let my poor soul, I pray thee, never lose sight of *the Pillar and ground of the truth*, on which thy Church, in all her members, both Apostles and people, stand everlastingly firm and secure; the perfection of thy finished work, and the faithfulness of JEHOVAH'S word and oath, in the Covenant, *ordered in all things and sure*. It is indeed eternal life, and it is thy office-character, to give it, to know JEHOVAH, the only true GOD ; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; and JESUS CHRIST, whom JEHOVAH hath sent.

Oh, ye Apostles of CHRIST! what unspeakable mercies did JESUS, in this sweet prayer, confer on you! And ye no less, whom in all the after ages of the Church, GOD the SPIRIT hath called to the ministry; how are ye all, from age to age, included, in this rich priestly blessing of my GOD! Oh! for an holy jealousy, over the fold of CHRIST, in all the under pastors of the Church; to see and know that their commission is of GOD. JESUS! in mercy to thy Church, grant that none may run unspent; but that all may bear with them, the same sweet testimony as JESUS in this address to his FATHER gave, concerning his Apostles: *As thou hast sent me into the world; even so have I also sent them into the world.* Oh! the blessedness for all of this description and character, to have a consciousness of being interested in CHRIST'S prayer; from being sent forth to the ministry from CHRIST'S ordination: HOLY FATHER! *keep through thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are!*

And no less ye whole Church of CHRIST! Never, never, lose sight of those most precious words of JESUS, when he said; *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* Yes! thou dearest LORD! though thou hast given *some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers:* yet the whole is for *the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of CHRIST.* Thy little ones dearest LORD, are as dear to thee, as the greatest and the best; for all is derived from thee, and none hath ought, but what he hath received from thee. Precious LORD JESUS! the hour is hastening, when that will of thine will be fully accomplished; and from an everlasting Oneness of thy Church and People with thyself, the whole Church will appear as thou hast said: FATHER *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me!* Amen.

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

JESUS is here in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas, with the Band of Soldiers, apprehend CHRIST. He is arraigned before Pilate.

REFLECTIONS

OH! Gethsemane! sacred, hallowed spot! Did JESUS oft-times resort thither with his disciples? And wilt thou now, O LORD, by thy sweet Spirit, aid my meditations, that I may take the wing of faith, and often traverse over the solemn ground? It was a garden in which the first *Adam* began to break through the fence of GOD's holy plantation. And in a garden the second *Adam*, so called, shall begin the soul-travail of sorrow, to do away the effects of it. And, oh! what humiliation, what agonies, what conflicts in the arduous work? Oh! how vast the glory, when smiting to the earth his enemies, the LORD JESUS proved his GODHEAD by the breath of his mouth! Sweetly do I see thee, LORD, by faith, going forth a willing sacrifice. Lo! I come! said JESUS. SO come, LORD, now, by grace!

Hail, thou King of Zion, for thou hast here most blessedly borne testimony to this glorious truth. Then as a King do thou reign and rule over thy Church, thy people, both in heaven and earth. And let my soul continually discover *the goings of my GOD and King, in his sanctuary*. Surely, dear LORD, it is thine, both by nature, providence, grace, and glory, to maintain and order, to regulate and appoint, to establish and confirm thy royal laws, and the government of thy kingdom, in the hearts and minds of all thy people, whom thou hast made willing in the day of thy power! Reign thou, and rule in me, the LORD of life and glory! Amen.

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

The *LORD JESUS* is here scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked. He is crucified. He giveth up the ghost. His burial.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! never give over thy meditations of this unequalled subject! Follow the footsteps of thy LORD from place to place, the hall of Pilate, the hill of Calvary, from Gabbatha to Golgotha, and through all the painful process of the wonderful sights exhibited on that memorable day, and hear the voice of thy LORD at every one; *Behold! and see! if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger!*

But do not barely contemplate the astonishing scene, but meditate the cause. Read the inscription on the cross. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed! Matchless love! The SON of GOD becomes man that man might become a son of GOD. JESUS the HOLY, harmless, undefiled JESUS, is made sin who knew no sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of GOD in him.

From the cross let my soul in holy meditation follow the LORD to the tomb. And why not hear the same voice as the holy women did, which said, *Come, see the place where the LORD lay.* Never, surely, did the grave receive such a Prisoner, though but for a short space! Never had death and the grave their full triumphs, when in the same hour their empire received a full overthrow. Precious JESUS! thou hast the keys of death, hell, and the grave. Oh! for grace frequently by faith to visit the garden and the tomb where the body of JESUS hath lain. Here let my soul meditate the wonderous subject, until He who hath the key of David, opens my little spot and grave to receive my body. Even now I hear the voice of consolation, *blessed are the dead which die in the LORD!*

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The *LORD* appeareth to Mary Magdalene. Afterwards to his Disciples. Thomas doubteth the Resurrection of *JESUS*, is convinced of the Truth of it, and expresseth his Joy.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you behold the privileges of GOD'S people. JESUS will reward the humble waiting of his redeemed who seek him. They who went early to the sepulchre, and Mary, who remained there, at length had their full portion of the sight of JESUS. And now, what is it but the same? They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength.

And what a very precious encouragement is the first appearing of CHRIST to *Mary Magdalene*! She had the first view of JESUS. AS if to comfort every poor sinner, that *where sin hath abounded, grace shall much more abound*. That soul in CHRIST'S family shall have the first glimpse of JESUS, the first kiss of CHRIST, who most needs him. Precious LORD! let all thy Magdalenes, where Satan hath most cruelly wounded, be first healed!

Oh! dearest LORD JESUS! deal by the *Thomas's* of thine in the present hour, as thou didst by the Apostle of old. Thou knowest of the sin which doth so easily beset us, and thou knowest the cause. Oh! thou great and Almighty Author and Finisher of faith! keep thy redeemed from the sin of unbelief. LORD! *give us to believe, and help thou our unbelief!* Amen.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

The *Lord Jesus* renews his Appearance to his Disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. He feeds his Disciples: gives a particular Charge to Peter. John ends his Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed Lord Jesus! what praise, what thanks, what love, doth thy Church owe thee, dearest Lord, for the many repeated manifestations which thou didst so kindly shew to thy poor despised disciples, after thy resurrection from the dead. Miracles upon miracles: and grace for grace. Oh! let it teach my poor soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, from such striking testimonies as are here recorded, how very nigh Jesus is to his people, when they are

unconscious of it. Yea, Lord! how much thou art watching over all their concerns, and providing, both for their bodily and spiritual sustenance, when they can provide for neither. Oh! for the grace shewn *Peter*; to comfort all the exercised members of Christ's mystical body. Oh! for faith, and love, to be able to appeal, as *Peter* did to Jesus, saying, Lord *thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee!*

Praised be the Father, Son, and Spirit, for all the revelations which Jehovah hath graciously made to the Church of God's dear Son. Lord! grant that all thy redeemed under the Holy Ghost's teaching, may, with the disciple, *which hath testified of these things, and wrote these things*, be able to add, from their own assurance, and say, as the Church then did; *we know that his testimony is true.*

Farewell! for the present, thou beloved Apostle *John!* We hope to meet thy further records of thy dear Lord, and our dear Lord, when we come to those precious writings of thine, under the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost, which are in the same sacred volume. But here we thank thee, for thy labors in this Gospel, and for all the precious relations thou hast given, of Christ our Lord. And blessed, for ever blessed be He, that called thee to this service, in his Church. Shortly the whole Church of God will be called to see Him, in whose bosom the beloved Apostle lay, who wrote these things of his divine Lord. And then, all the redeemed with *John* will surround the throne, and sound their united praises, in one full hymn of thanksgiving, to God and the Lamb, for evermore. Amen.

ACTS

General Observations

In this book of GOD, we enter upon a very interesting part of the divine records, in what relates to the Church of CHRIST, from, and after our LORD'S ascension. The history of the Church from this period becomes highly important, in that it presents us with the account of the first open manifestation of GOD the HOLY GHOST, in his Almighty Ministry, agreeably to the promise of CHRIST, before his departure; and thereby becomes a confirmation of the whole. Here it is proved, that GOD the HOLY GHOST is the Founder, and Builder, of the Church, from the beginning. He had framed, and ordained the whole, in all the departments of it. But now, redemption-work being finished, by the Almighty Author of salvation, the LORD the SPIRIT is here mercifully pleased to reveal himself more openly, in the Almighty Ministry, which belonged to Him in his Covenant-office character.

The Acts of the Apostles, so called, because it contains the records of those holy servants of the Lord, takes up the subject from whence the Gospels had left off, at the ascension of the Lord Jesus; and carries on the blessed history of the Church, through a period of about thirty years, until the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul.

In respect to the Writer of it, there can be no question. Luke is allowed by every one to have been the inspired Pen-man of it. The preface with which he begins it, and his directing it to the same person, to whom he sent the Gospel which bears his name; are evident proofs, And the Church hath abundant reason to bless God the Holy Ghost, who is the Author and Giver of all Scripture, for the ministry of this man, on both those occasions.

I do not think it necessary to add any thing more by way of preface. I only very earnestly request the Reader, to enter upon the perusal of this sacred book of God, with prayer; because this will furnish a well-grounded hope, that the close of it will be in praise.

Blessed Author of the whole Scripture of inspiration! (I would say both for myself and Reader,) vouchsafe thy gracious teachings! Open to us both, if it be thine holy will, the precious pages here contained. And, Lord! do thou open our hearts to the right apprehension of all the great truths of God, contained in them. Oh! for an ear to hear, what the Spirit saith unto the Churches! Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

This blessed Record of Divine Truth, opens with the History of CHRIST'S Ascension. Peter's Address to the Apostles. The Election of Matthias to be of the twelve, in the Room of the Traitor Judas.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, Reader! on the very entrance at this sacred book of God, and mark well the blessed evidences here afforded of that most precious article of our faith, and hope; in the Lord's return to glory. Jesus! we hail thee, as our risen, and ascended Savior! Thou art indeed gone up on high: thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men: yea, Lord, in the manhood of thy nature, thou hast all grace for men, even for thy rebellious children, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Send down, O Lord, the choice effusions of thy Holy Spirit; and remember Lord thy promise, in which thou didst say: I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you. Even so. Amen.

Reader! let it be our daily exercise of faith, to make this article of our Lord's ascension, the constant subject of holy joy. There, would I say, as often as I consider the ascension of Jesus, there dwells the Lord Christ, in my nature, having accomplished redemption by his blood. The heavens must receive my God and Savior, until the times of the restitution of all things. And he is gone before, to take possession of the kingdom in his Church's name, that where he is there they may be also. Moreover, by my Lord's ascension, the justification of his whole redeemed is confirmed. Here, he offered his soul an offering for sin: and there, he presented it perfect before Jehovah. His sacrifice he made upon earth, as our

Great High Priest: and in heaven, he still ministers, going in before the presence of God with his own blood. And by virtue of the everlasting efficacy of that blood, all heaven is perfumed; and the redeemed are sanctified. Hail! thou glorious, and ascended Savior! Send down Lord all thine ascension-gifts upon thy people!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

God the Holy Ghost visits the Apostles in a wonderful and miraculous Manner. The Apostles, being filled with the Spirit, speak divers Languages, The Astonishment of the Multitude. Peter's Sermon; and the Conversion of three thousand Souls.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed be God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all the blessings vouchsafed the Church, in all the Covenant purposes, before all worlds: and for all the mercies in the time-state of the Church, through all dispensations. Oh! blessed hour, when Jesus, having finished redemption-work, returned to glory; and God the Holy Ghost came down, to render effectual his great salvation! Do thou blessed holy Lord, still vouchsafe thy Pentecost-days to thy Church; until, not only three thousand souls, but thousands of thousands, yea, every one to whom this promise is made, to all that are afar off, and to all that are nigh, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, shall know the joyful sound, and walk in the light of thy divine countenance!

Ye ministers of my God! seek for the daily proofs of your Apostle-ship, in the anointings, and ordination of the Lord's Pentecost visits! And ye, no less, of the Lord's people, who have hitherto lived, unconscious of the resurrection of Jesus, from any saving testimony of it in your hearts; be on the look out for those ascension-gifts of a risen and exalted Savior, whose gracious act it is, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. Oh! for the out-pouring of the Spirit upon all the Lord's redeemed ones, that there may be daily added to the Church, such as should be saved.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

Peter and John heal a Cripple at the Gate of the Temple. Peter takes Occasion therefrom to preach to the People.

REFLECTIONS

What a sweet thought is it to my soul, that to all the crippled faculties of my fallen nature; the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth can make me whole. Yea, his name, through faith in his name, will give a perfect soundness to all his redeemed. Lord! grant that in all my approaches to thy house of prayer, I may go always in thy name, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only. And oh! with what holy joy and rapture, shall I tread thy courts, when God the[31] Almighty God of our fathers! the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; thou hast indeed glorified thy Son Jesus! Oh! Lord, send down thine ascension-gifts, and bless my soul, in all the sweet manifestations of thy love. In thee, and by thee, and from thee, let all my joy be found. As a child in the Covenant, which God made with our fathers, being Christ's, and consequently Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise; let all my springs arise, and let that assurance to the great father of the faithful be mine also: In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

Peter, and John are put into prison. They are examined before the Council, threatened, and dismissed. The Lord gives a gracious Token of his Presence, in answering to their Prayers.

REFLECTIONS

Let us ponder well those precious things contained in this Chapter, which are so freely given to us of God! And let us particularly keep in remembrance, that all that is here recorded of

the prosperity of the Church, arose from the blessed Person and Office-work of God the Holy Ghost! We behold him here, under many of those most gracious characters in which the Lord Jesus promised him before his departure. As the Lord the Spirit is the Founder, so is He the Governor, Preserver, Teacher, Comforter, Sanctifier of the Church in all ages. In every individual instance of blessing both ministers and people, his is to manifest the gracious act, and in glorifying Jesus, to take of the Lord Jesus, and to make known to his disciples. And amidst all the diversities of gifts, and all differences of administrations, and all diversities of operations, all these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will!

Oh! blessed and eternal Spirit, do thou now, as thou didst then, manifest thy love to the Church of Jesus! Come, Lord, into the midst of thy Zion, though the builders have set at nought the chief corner stone! Raise up a faithful ministry, who, receiving their ordination from thee, may as faithfully dispense thy word to the people. Let the sweet ascension-gifts of our risen and exalted Savior, again come down to enlighten our Churches, and let that precious Scripture be again fulfilled in our day and generation, where it is said, that He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Pastors and Teachers, and all for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Lord, in mercy hear and do it; defer not, O my God! till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

We have here the awful Account of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Ghost. Peter's Detection of them. The Apostles again imprisoned. The Angel of the Lord brings them out. They are brought before the Council, and after being beaten, are dismissed.

REFLECTIONS

What an awful delusion, must that delusion of the mind be, which like Ananias and Sapphira, is trifling with God? What an horrible state to be feeding on ashes, when a deceived heart hath turned the sinner aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?

Blessed Lord! let my soul be relieve, and comforted, when turning from the view of the Ananias's and Sapphira's of the present generation, I behold the zeal and honesty, the faithfulness and diligence of thy servants the Apostles in their day, holding forth the word of this life. Endued with the Spirit from on high, let me admire the burning fervor of Peter's mind, in punishing by divine authority, the daring lie of such awful characters, committed against God the Holy Ghost. And cause me, thou dear Lord, to see how the Lord honors them, whose delight it is to honor the Lord. Oh! for such a portion of the same spirit, as actuated the mind of Peter, to be poured out on all the faithful ministers of the sanctuary, that they may teach and preach Jesus Christ, and be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine.

And Lord, to all the persecutions and malice of their enemies, may an holy indifferency manifest, that they are borne up and supported by thee; that though troubled on every side, yet not distressed; or if perplexed, yet never in despair; that they may always bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus; that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in their body. And do thou Lord to all the prison frames, and bondage exercises of thy Church and people, give them to see the Angel of the Covenant always at hand to bring them out. Yea, let every eye of thy redeemed family be directed by GOD the Spirit, to be looking to Him, who is exalted as a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to his Israel, and remission of sins. Precious Jesus! send down all thine ascension-gifts, and bless thine whole Church with the manifestation of thyself, until Christ be formed in every heart the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Church of Christ requiring it, Deacons are chosen. Stephen being elected, and speaking by the Spirit, is opposed by many.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! ponder well even in this golden age of the Church, how tarnished with abuse the Lord's mercies were, when murmurings arose from partial ministrations of the good things of God's providences. Behold from it, my soul, and learn what a mass of corruption, the unrenewed part of our fallen nature is, and what a handle Satan makes of it to interrupt the peace of the Church! But learn also, how the Lord the Spirit takes occasion therefrom, to raise improvements for his people. The appointment of inferior officers in the Church of Christ, took its rise from hence. And in how many instances, have they since that time, proved a blessing. But what a sweet relief ought such views of the imperfection of the best of Churches bring to the mind, in the recollection, that amidst all the errors of men, the Lord's truth is the same; and, however brethren, through the infirmity of a fallen nature, may neglect one another; Jesus never overlooks, or neglects his people. Precious Lord Jesus! let me never lose sight of this.

Happy and prosperous is that Church of Christ, where men of good report, and full of the Holy Ghost, minister in her government, and are helpful to the Lord's family. And blessed must be those ordinances, where faithful pastors, like the Apostles, give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. Not serving tables, and mingling with the carnal, and learning their works; neither as being lords over God's heritage; but being ensamples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity.

Oh! for the faith of Stephen, to be valiant for the truth, amidst all the libertines of the present day. Jesus will own and bless all such. Their witness is in heaven, and their record on high. And, though a brightness like that of Stephen, may not, because it is needed not, shine upon their countenances, to the view of their foes; yet, the Lord will cause their eyes to be so directed to Him in faith, that their souls will be enlightened, and their faces shall not be ashamed.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

The History of Stephen is continued. He preacheth before the Council; is interrupted in the Midst of his Discourse by his Enemies; dragged forth from before the Council, and stoned.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I bless God the Spirit, for this most precious sermon of his servant Stephen. Surely God the Holy Ghost would not have caused it to have been so fully recorded, (since we have already the whole subject contained in it, at large in the scriptures before written,) had not this Almighty Teacher in the Church intended from it some sweet instructions, and which are here very particularly set forth. It is our mercy therefore to attend to them, and bless the Lord for his grace in giving them. And what a light is thrown upon the history of Moses, by Stephen's sermon, in that part of it (which without this information we should not have known,) of his early apprehension, that the Lord would use him, as an instrument, for the delivery of his brethren? And what a blessed proof we draw from Stephen's sermon, in addition to the other relations we have in Scripture, that it was the Lord Jesus, which spake to Moses from the bush. Reader! these are sweet things. May you and I learn to prize them very highly; and bless GOD the Holy Ghost, in having given them to us, by his servant Stephen.

Precious Lord Jesus! be thou eternally loved, and praised, for the grace manifested to thy dying martyr, in such a season of peculiar trial. Oh! let thine whole Church, from age to age, be refreshed in the sweet assurance, such a memorable instance affords, of thy continual presence with thy people. May my soul, and the souls of all thy redeemed, learn from it, how we are to commit our departing spirits into thine Almighty hand, in the hour of death, as unto a

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Church under Persecution; which affords Occasion to Philip to preach Christ in Samaria. Peter and John visit Samaria. The awful History of Simon Magus. Philip preacheth to an Ethiopian, and baptizeth him.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! behold in this chapter a true representation of the church of Jesus in all ages. In one view persecuted, and while the friends of the bridegroom are cast down, the enemy triumphing with an high hand. In another, like Samaria, where the word of God is faithfully preached, and graciously received, there is great joy in that place. See, opposed to the faithfulness of Peter and John, the sorcery and hypocrisy of Simon Magus; and mark in all churches similar effects, from the contrast of grace and corruption; Christ and Belial.

Blessed Jesus! let the sweet view here afforded, of thy watchful eye over this Ethiopian, who came from a vast distance led by thy grace to seek the Lord, in sending a special messenger after him, be uppermost in the thoughts of thy people. Jesus hath said, and this sweet scripture confirms it, all that the Father hath given him shall come to him. And rather than one of Christ's little ones shall perish for lack of knowledge, the Lord will meet them in the desert; and when ordinances fail, the Lord will work without them. Oh! for grace, that all the ministers of the Lord's sending, may, like Philip, preach Christ to the people. And oh! that all, to whom the Lord shall reveal himself, as to this Ethiopian may, like him, go on their way rejoicing!

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The wonderful History of Saul's Conversion. The Effect it had upon the Jews. Peter healeth Eneas, and raiseth Tabitha from the dead.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, my soul, over the several miracles recorded in this chapter, and behold the wonders connected with the event of Christ tabernacling in the flesh! All, and every circumstance, which hath occurred, or hereafter to be accomplished, in the present life, of the time-state of the Church; all spring out of that one mystery, GOD manifest in the flesh! Precious Lord Jesus! what a world of mysteries is thy Church in? What a world of mysteries is the one view of thy love to thy Church? While I read the conversion of Paul, the healing of Eneas, the bringing back to life Tabitha; and ponder the cause of these, and all the numberless miracles recorded in the word of thy grace: while I contemplate the continuation of the same, daily going on through the earth; and all arising from the love of my Lord to his Church; oh! who shall speak of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

And is this the manner of Jesus, in testifying his love? Doth Jesus indeed delight to raise a persecuting Saul from the brink of hell, to employ him in the service of heaven? Will the Lord indeed take pleasure, from having his name proclaimed from those very lips which have been uttering continued blasphemy? Shall he, who consented to the murder of Stephen, and persecuted unto death, men and women, of the Lord's people, be the very One Jesus hath chosen to be his honored instrument in the conversion of thousands? Lord! how mysterious thy ways; and how full of grace thy judgments? But, my soul! amidst all these wonders with which thou art surrounded do not lose sight of what the Holy Ghost taught Saul after his conversion to tell the Church; that it was for this cause he obtained mercy, that in him the Lord Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting!

Reader! let us bless the Lord for the sweet records in this chapter; and for the grace manifested to the Church in the rest which she is here said to have enjoyed after the sharp persecutions. Oh! that those latter ages may find revivals from the Lord among the people; and that walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, they may be multiplied.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

Cornelius, taught by an Angel, sendeth for Peter. The Apostle is at the same time, taught by a Vision to obey the Call. He preacheth before Cornelius and his Household, and God the Holy Ghost blesseth his Ministry.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! in the perusal of this blessed Chapter, let us pass by every lesser consideration, to attend to the one great and glorious truth, taught in it, and by it, how God the Spirit watches over, and is carrying on all the vast designs of his Almighty ministry! How blessedly hath the Lord here taught, that the Jewish and Gentile Church is but one: both branches equally dear to all the Persons of the Godhead, and equally calling forth the joint love, grace, and mercy, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, And Reader! let not you and I forget, how infinitely important in the sight of Jehovah, is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his mediator-character; that all the devotion of this honest Centurion towards God, and his conscientious dealings with men, would not have procured him salvation. Oh! the preciousness of Jesus Christ.

Let all humble waiters upon the Lord, take courage from the grace manifested in this sweet history. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And Jesus will call his redeemed from all places of the earth, where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. When the Lord writeth up his people, even Caesarea will have her children, like Cornelius, to be numbered.

Blessed Spirit of all truth! in all ages thou hast manifested thy saving power. Do thou be pleased, O Lord, from the water of regeneration, until grace is consummated in glory, to carry on thy work with power in the heart of thy redeemed, until thou hast brought the nations of Christ's heritage to thy sceptre; and made every knee of the Lord's people to bend to Christ's name, and every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father! Amen.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The tidings of Cornelius's Conversion are communicated to the Church Jerusalem. Peter is at first reprov'd for going to Cornelius; but: afterwards the Apostles glorify God for the Mercy. Some Account of Barnabas.

REFLECTIONS

I would ponder well the several weighty things contained in this Chapter, and chiefly with an eye to behold the gracious tendencies of God the Spirit, watching over his Church and people. It is really wonderful when we trace how the Lord carried on the ministry of his sacred word, amidst all the oppositions, not only against the wickedness of the enemy, but the mistaken weakness of friends. Who could have thought, that after Christ's own direction to his Apostles, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; those very Apostles should have been so prejudiced in Jewish notions, as to feel displeasure, when that Gospel was preached by Peter, and owned of God. But, Reader! what is human nature, in its highest attainments!

My soul! ponder that worthy name by which thou art called; and see amidst the undistinguished mass of the Christian world, falsely so, called, what distinguishing part is in it, known by thee, and by which thou canst prove thy real title. For as he is not a Jew, that is one outwardly: so neither can he be a Christian, that is not one inwardly. Regeneration it is, which gives the just claim. And this is in the heart. The name first began at Antioch, Antioch is now no more. And where will be the last place where this holy name will be truly known? It is a solemn question. But what a tremendous scripture is that of Christ's, and which must be assuredly fulfilled: Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

Herod persecutes the Church. James is' killed by him, and Peter put into Prison. An Angel of the Lord opens the Prison Doors, and delivers him. Herod's awful Death.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let not you and I overlook the wonderful success of prayer, in the case of *Peter*, as related in this Chapter. Oh! what cannot prayer accomplish, when awakened by the SPIRIT of the LORD? And let us not fail to remark, how very near sometimes the LORD permits the enemy to approach, and the apprehensions of his people to be exercised, before the LORD vouchsafeth his answer to prayer. The night was advanced, and the morning hastening on, which was to end the life of *Peter*, before that the prayers for the Apostle's deliverance were answered. So is it frequently with the Church. But there *is a time to favor Zion*. And that time, shall not fully run out, before the LORD'S hour is come. Oh! the wonders of the LORD'S timing; and the LORD'S giving deliverance. And, oh! the exercises of the LORD'S people, thereby to their good. In every one the LORD speaks; *I the LORD teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go!*

What a lesson is here read, to the great and the mighty of the earth, of such as are enemies to GOD, and his CHRIST. *Oh! how suddenly do they consume, perish, and come to a fearful end!* Behold in *Herod*, the sad representation. It is the shout of a god, said the mistaken multitude. And before the shout was hardly ended, he shrieked, though unheard by them, the first shriek of his in hell. What a striking, but just account, the word of GOD gives, of such awful characters, *Like Sheep*, (said the Psalmist,) *they are laid in the grave: death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning: and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. He shall go to the generation of his fathers: they shall never see light.* And where is that? Nay, where is it not? *Peter* saith; *to the spirits which are in prison.* And if they never see light, where can that be but hell? *A land of darkness, as Job saith; as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any*

order; and where the light is as darkness. Oh! for grace to know distinguishing grace, and to say with the same Psalmist: But GOD will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

The HOLY GHOST specially ordains Barnabas, and Saul to his Service. They are sent forth. Elymas the Sorcerer, is struck blind. Saul, {who also is called Paul,} preacheth in the Synagogue. The Jews blaspheme. The Gentiles believe.

REFLECTIONS

ALMIGHTY GOD the SPIRIT, blessed be thy holy name, for the open and signal display which thou wert pleased to make of thyself, and thy sovereignty, in the ordination of *Barnabas* and *Saul* to the ministry of thy word. Do thou, gracious GOD, in mercy preside over all the assemblies of thy people, and especially in the setting apart to the sacred office the ministers of thy Church and people. Hast thou not said, with an eye to this unspeakable mercy, *I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* In mercy, LORD, be it according to thy word, in an eminent manner, in the present day and generation!

LORD, grant that the fearful judgment of *Elymas*, may deter the sworn foes of our GOD, and of his CHRIST, from daring to oppose thy faithful sent servants. And for the word of salvation which our GOD hath sent, very sure we are that it will *never return unto thee void*; but as thou hast promised, give thy people grace to wait the accomplishment of it, for it must fulfill thy pleasure, and *prosper in the thing whereunto the LORD shall send it!*

Oh! precious LORD JESUS! cause thy people to rejoice in thy full and finished salvation. *By thee, all that believe, are justified from all things.* Here then, LORD, give thy people grace to rest. Let there be nothing wavering, nothing unsettled, in our faith; while every thing in the covenant of grace is *ordered, and sure in all things.* Oh! for faith, in lively exercise, to believe *the record GOD hath given of his*

dear SON. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Let all thy faithful therefore of the present hour, as were the disciples of old, be strong in the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS, and, like them, *be filled with joy, and with the HOLY GHOST.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

Paul, and Barnabas, *preaching in the Synagogue, are opposed by the unbelieving Jews. Paul healeth a Cripple. The Multitude are astonished, and are for offering to the Apostles divine Honors. Certain Jews from Antioch persuade the People, and Paul is stoned. He recovers, and, with Barnabas, departs from Antioch.*

REFLECTIONS

GRACIOUS LORD! we behold, in what is here said in this Chapter, the true representation of thy Church, in all ages. The faithful sent servants must endure persecution. The pure Gospel of JESUS, will never be relished by the corrupt minds of the unawakened; neither will it be cordially received by those, who desire to add law to Gospel. But, what grace LORD must it be in thee, to overrule the malice of the enemy, when opposing thy truths, in making the flight of thy servants from persecution to minister to thy glory, in dispersing thy word every where. Oh! may such views sweetly teach my soul, to cry out with the Psalmist, *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath wilt thou restrain!* I see, LORD, by this wonderful work of thine, that so much of the wrath of man as thou wilt convert into good, shall be employed to praise thee; all the further malice intended, shall be driven, like water running to waste, into another channel.

Will it please my honored LORD, to teach my soul to profit, from the changeable opinion of men, as here set forth; first in honoring his servants too much, and afterwards in treating them so cruelly; to leave all confidence in the creature, and live wholly upon my GOD the Infinite Creator. Precious JESUS! doth not every day's experience

with a loud voice proclaim the solemn truth: *Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?* Oh! the blessedness of knowing thee, living to thee, walking with thee, and rejoicing in thee, as the LORD my righteousness. Here let my soul be daily confirmed, and then it matters not, what tribulation I pass through, to enter into thy kingdom! And grant, LORD, to all thy seat servants, the continual manifestations of thy favor, to bear them up, and bear them on, and bear them through, all opposition. Shortly the LORD will come, to take all his redeemed home, both ministers and people, to himself, for ever: and then the whole of persecution will end, in an everlasting day of the full knowledge, and enjoyment of may GOD for ever!

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

Disputes arise in the Church, on the Subject of Circumcision. The Apostles and Elders are consulted on it. Their Determination is sent to the Churches. Paul and Barnabas differ, and separate.

REFLECTIONS

How can I begin, or end, the perusal of this blessed Chapter, without having my whole soul led to the LORD JESUS, in contemplating the infinite preciousness of his Almighty Person, and the finite preciousness of his Almighty work. Truly, LORD, thou hast shewn thy Church and people, that *in CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature*, No obedience to the law, nor all the imperfect and unmeriting services of thy servants under the Gospel, can recommend to GOD. All justification is alone in thee. And oh! how very blessed to the souls of thy redeemed ones, is that precious Scripture, *CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. Be it my portion, O LORD, under the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, to enter into an heartfelt enjoyment of these things, that I may be included in that glorious assurance of my GOD, by his servant the Prophet, *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*.

Praises to GOD the HOLY GHOST for thus causing the frailties of his faithful servants to be recorded, for the edification and encouragement of more frail and exercised servants of our GOD, in the service and ministry of his word. Oh! that the LORD the SPIRIT may render *the* review of it at all times profitable to his Church. Earthen vessels at the best, even the Apostles of CHRIST were, and how less than nothing, but as the sufficiency is in CHRIST, must be all that labor in the Word and doctrine. Oh! then vouchsafe thy sovereign grace, O LORD the SPIRIT, to all thy sent servants. Make them one in CHRIST, and then will they with one mouth and one heart glorify GOD, and be at peace among themselves.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

We are here first brought acquainted with Timothy. Paul hath a Vision to call him to Philippi. The LORD opens the Heart of Lydia. Paul and Silas are imprisoned. The Jailor is converted, Paul and Silas depart from Philippi.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST many gracious improvements to be made of this Chapter, I would desire to remark the LORD'S merciful manifestations, in the instances here recorded of sovereign grace, in opening the heart of *Lydia* by the sweet constraining cords of love; and in alarming into conviction the heart of the *Jailor*; by the trembling convulsions of horror, and anguish of soul. Oh! how various, how wonderful, and how full of mercy in all, are the multiform ways of our wonder-working GOD! *He will beautify the meek with salvation.* He will pull down the strong-holds of sin in his people; and make the stubborn knee of the soul to bend to his power.

Reader! have you observed, carefully observed, what is said in this Chapter of GOD the SPIRIT? How truly awful to read of his forbidding the word to be preached in *Asia*! How strikingly solemn, that when the servants of the LORD assayed to go into *Bithynia*, the SPIRIT suffered them not. Reader! have you noticed these things? And can you notice such things without pausing to remark, yea, and

to remark with astonishment, wonder, love, and praise also, that the LORD hath not long, long since forbidden it in our guilty land? Oh! the forbearance of our GOD to the present CHRIST-despising generation! LORD! let it never be said of our British *Judah*, *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it!* But, oh! in mercy grant, that *the goodness and long suffering of our GOD may lead to repentance.*

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Paul and Silas prosecute their Circuit of preaching the Word through Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. We have an awful Account of the latter.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to observe, how highly *Paul* was taught, so as to adapt his discourse to the different hearers among whom he exercised his ministry. To the Jews he preached CHRIST crucified, in all his fulness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency. To the *Bereans*, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, still JESUS CHRIST became the one text, sum, and substance of the Apostle's sermons, in declaring to every hearer, CHRIST *the power of GOD, and the wisdom of, for salvation to every one that believeth.* To Philosophers, falsely so called, (for, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,) who erected an altar to an Unknown GOD, *Paul* preached JESUS, and the Resurrection. He, and He alone, as the New Testament Altar, the High Priest, and the Sacrifice. In short, so highly taught was *Paul*, and so divinely commissioned by GOD the SPIRIT, that *he became all things to all men, that by all means he might save some.* And, what a sweet testimony the LORD gave to the word of his grace, when, even in *Athens*, he called out his own, and manifested the SAVOR of his name in every place!

Reader! let you and I learn, rightly to value our mercies. Oh! the blessedness of having the glorious Gospel of the blessed GOD made known, and proclaimed in his Churches. LORD! grant thy people grace to know the truth, and the truth to make them free. *Blessed is*

the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance!

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

We have the great Apostle Paul here represented as working with his Hands for his daily Bread. He preacheth at Corinth. He is opposed by the Jews. He is encouraged by a Vision. He departs to Ephesus. Some Account of Apollos, Aquita, and Priscilla.

REFLECTIONS

It must have been a blessed time in the Church, when Ministers, ordained of GOD the HOLY GHOST, found their minds disposed in the intervals of public service, to labor in private for their daily bread, that they might not make the Gospel of GOD chargeable to any. And we find, that so far was this employment in honest industry, for their own maintenance, from damping the ardor of their zeal for GOD, that while *Paul* wrought in tent-making for his daily bread; his soul burned with an holy flame, to preach CHRIST to the people. Oh! that all the faithful ministers of the sanctuary now, were under the same blessed influence as *Paul* was *then*, when *he was pressed*, as it is said, *in SPIRIT, and testified to the Jews that JESUS is the CHRIST.*

Reader! let you and I bless GOD our SAVIOR, that in such a city as *Corinth*, the LORD had a Church: yea, much people. Let us love the LORD JESUS, for granting so sweet and timely a vision, to tell *Paul* this, as is here recorded. And, let us ponder well the record, as it concerns the Church of GOD, in all ages. Depend upon it, the same is now, and so will be, is the very end of time. JESUS hath much people in every city where he sends his Gospel, his word, his servants. In this our city, our sinful land, which like *Corinth* is full of uncleanness, luxury, pride, and every evil. His people are in the midst of many people, as the remnant of *Jacob*. They are like sparks, among the stubble as pure seed, among the tares. Yea, how many of them, all of them indeed, originally and by their Adam-nature living during the days of their unregeneracy, in the same sin, and under the influence of the same corruptions. But Jesus will search and seek

them out. They are his, and he must gather them. The FATHER gave them to him in charge, and they must all pass again under the hand of him that telleth them. They are the purchase also of his blood, and too dearly bought to lose one of them; too dearly loved to be indifferent about them. And, GOD the SPIRIT hath marked them to the day of redemption. Precious LORD Jesus! cause all thy faithful ministers to keep these things in remembrance, and like Paul when oppositions from men or devils arise, to call to mind this sweet vision of their LORD, as though they still heard JESUS say: Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I have much people in this city!

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

Paul passeth through Ephesus. The HOLY GHOST blesseth his Ministry. A Tumult is excited in consequence of Paul's preaching. The Town-clerk appeaseth the People.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, in the history of those disciples *Paul* met at *Ephesus*, how easy it is to have a name to live, and yet be virtually dead before GOD. Oh! how sweet the baptisms of the SPIRIT. LORD, let my soul seek thy daily baptisms, thy sweet anointings, without which all outward ordinances, how good soever in themselves, will profit nothing!

Oh! for a portion of the same SPIRIT as *Paul* had, when speaking boldly for the space of three months in the Synagogue, and contending for *the faith once delivered to the saints*. Oh! how cold and languid are our warmest arguments, compared to the burning zeal of this Apostle. Ye ministers of my GOD! beg of Him who touched the Prophet's mouth, to touch yours, that the words of GOD's grace may not freeze as they drop, but from being warm yourselves, your souls may kindle others, and from *the abundance of the heart the mouth may speak*.

Blessed LORD JESUS! we would praise thee, that even in the darkest days, as here, so now, thy miracles of grace upon the heart

are plainly distinguished from all counterfeits, like those vagabond Jews. Thy work, Almighty LORD, in conversion, manifests the people of thy love from all idol worshippers. Great is the cry of the world in their various schemes of creature perfection. But, oh! thou dear. LORD! do thou hold up thy faithful servants, as thou didst *Paul*, by giving testimony to the word of thy grace, and granting signs and wonders in the conversion of the heart to GOD, to follow a faithfully preached Gospel.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

Paul goeth to Macedonia. He preacheth at Troas, and celebrates the LORD'S Supper. A Youth falls front a Window while Paul was long preaching, and is taken up as dead. Paul restores him to Life. He gives a Charge to the Elders at Miletus, and enters into a Ship.

REFLECTIONS

READER! *let* you and I behold with delight, what is here said, of the Apostle and his companions, celebrating the LORD'S supper on the LORD'S day. Let it encourage our hearts to delight in that sweet service, that we may be often found, in breaking of bread, and of prayer. And do thou, LORD Jesus, always preside over those assemblies of thy people. Oh! the blessedness, when by faith we receive the gracious emblems at thine own hand! Then will it always be a feast upon a sacrifice. CHRIST our New Testament Altar, our High Priest, and Passover sacrificed for us. A sweet commemorating, communicating, refreshing, strengthening Ordinance. Yea, we shall say *the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of CHRIST?*

Who that reads of the *Eutychus* in this Chapter, and beholds the *Eutychus* in the many instances of the present day, but must be ready to cry out; *what meanest thou, O sleeper: arise, call upon thy GOD that thou perish not?* What, if such sleepers in the house of GOD were to open their eyes no more, until awakening in eternity? -Is the

sanctuary of the LORD, and the place where his honor dwelleth, a fit place to sleep in? Can it be possible, for men to snuff at Gob's ordinances, and say: *Oh what a weariness is it! When will the Sabbath be gone?*

Let my soul be relieved, from such a contemplation as the weary and the sleepy in the house of GOD, to look once more at *Paul*, and the Elders of *Miletus* at this most refreshing meeting, described in this Chapter. Ye servants of the LORD, who are sent by Him to minister in his Name; and ye faithful among the congregation, who are ministered unto: let this interesting service between *Paul* and his beloved people, which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath so graciously recorded the account of for his Church's edification, be your pattern, and the object of your imitation. Such indeed, should be every assembly of the faithful. lie that preached', should preach, as though it was his last. And they who hear, as though they should hear no more. Every separation, and the breaking up of assemblies, as it the final farewell. LORD JESUS! do thou be present at all, that in the close on earth, instantly thy redeemed may meet thee in heaven.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

Paul is advised by the Brethren not to go up to Jerusalem. He persists. On his Arrival there, he visits James. Soon after he is seized by the Jews. He is rescued by the Chief Captain.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a sweet prospect is here shewn, to the ministers and congregations of the faithful, in the representations of *Paul* and his companions, going about in their visitation of the different Churches? The imagination cannot conceive any thing equally lovely! And, though private Christians do not, because the LORD hath not called them to it, in their sweet societies and meetings, exercise any ministerial function with each other; yet are they both taught, and exhorted, by such examples, to have all their assemblings together, opened, and closed in prayer. And, when the LORD, who is in the midst of them, according to his own most sure

promise, pours out upon them a SPIRIT of prayer, so that they commend each other to the LORD, the very place where they are assembled is sanctified, whether on the shore, or in the house: blessings are implored for those going away, and for those that remain behind; and the sweet union of CHRIST'S love forms them one in Him, that whether absent froth each other, or present, they are accepted in JESUS!

How unpromising soever the removal of our friends may appear, though like Paul, bonds, or imprisonment await the believer; this reflection is always full of comfort: the LORD'S people must be the LORD'S care. That Scripture should never be forgotten: Yea, he loveth the people; all his saints are in thy hands. Oh! then, how sweetly one of the Apostles reasoneth upon it: Casting, saith he, all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Let Paul be at Ephesus, or Jerusalem; let the LORD'S people be at home, or abroad; the consciousness of JESUS being with them, secures all. How wonderfully were all the circumstances of evil, made to minister to greater good, in his instance. The Jews would have killed him. The Roman power would have scourged him. But, the LORD puts a hook in the nose, and a bridle in the lips of both; and GOD shall be glorified by his servant's preaching a sermon to them, and which they shall hear. Reader! observe these things, and then remember that sweet promise: All things work together for good, to them that love GOD, to them who, are called, according to his purpose.

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

Paul addresses the Assembly, and relates the Particulars of his Conversion. He is interrupted by the Clamour of the Jews. He is again rescued by the Chief Captain, and conveyed into the Castle.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! behold the great Apostle, rescued from Jew, and Gentile, and with a mind awakened, animated, and strengthened by the LORD, boldly addressing both, and declaring the glory of GOD, in the wonderful work of his conversion! And do not fail to remark,

with what candour, and openness, he confesseth his former state of unregeneracy; when persecuting unto the death, the precious followers of the Loco JESUS! He seems to be at once regardless, what shame, and confusion of face he takes to himself; so that he may but thereby give the greater glory to his LORD. Is it so with thee, my soul? While CHRIST'S name is so precious: art thou laying lower in the dust before GOD, in token of thine unworthiness? Is *Paul's* language thine, when he saith: *And the grace of our LORD was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS!* Oh then, tell it abroad as he did, and in every direction, proclaim the blessed truth: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief!*

Reader do not fail to remark, the stedfastness of *Paul*, amidst all the rage and malice of his enemies, He was indeed free born, when by his new birth in regeneration, the LORD had made him free. This was a freedom, unpurchasable with money. And, as it made *Paul* a true citizen of no mean city; so it secured him all the everlasting and eternal privileges of a kingdom, which cannot be moved, whose Builder, and Maker, is GOD.

CHAPTER 23

SUMMARY

Paul pleadeth his Cause before the Council. A Dissension takes place in consequence of it among his Accusers. He is sent to Felix.

REFLECTIONS

I would summon my own heart, while I call upon the Reader's also, in the review of *Paul's* appeal before the council, to solemnly enquire whether we have *lived in all good conscience before GOD unto this day?* It is an important question, and not hastily and presumptuously to be answered. We are such partial judges of evil thoughts, when that judgment respects ourselves, that self-love too often gives a bias to the *opinion*. But, when we come to be weighed in the balance of unerring truth, not according to our view of things, but according to GOD'S righteous judgment, the question then

becomes solemn indeed, how is the LORD sanctified in the soul? Reader! doth it not strike you, (I bless the LORD it doth me,) that it is well for poor fallen sinful creatures, we have a better righteousness than our own to trust in, and to plead before GOD, under all the misgivings of conscience, and under all the accusations of sin and Satan!

Let not the Reader overlook (I pray the LORD I may not) the LORD'S watchful care over his servant, amidst the host of foes with which he was surrounded. Beautiful is that scripture, and here it was fully proved, *The LORD knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. Paul* had no knowledge, but the LORD had, how he should escape, when both *Jew* and *Gentile* seized upon his person. It would be very blessed for me, if I always had this in remembrance. There are numberless anxieties I crowd into life for want of recollecting, that these things are my LORD'S concern, and not mine. JESUS hath said by his servant, casting *all* your care upon him, for he careth for you. I know this in theory as well as words can make it. And frequently under this authority I *do* cast *all* my care upon the LORD, and bring the whole to his throne of grace. But soon after, yea, sometimes in a few moments after, I discover that I must have fetched them all away again, and taken them up, for they are all upon me. Oh! thou dear LORD! is it thus I learn my unworthiness and faithlessness to know more thy grace and all-sufficiency?

CHAPTER 24

SUMMARY

Paul accused by Tertullus, answereth in his Defence. Felix defers Judgment. Paul preacheth before Felix and his Wife. The Governor is superseded in Office, and leaves Paul in Bonds.

REFLECTIONS

READER! dismiss not this chapter without taking one short view more of this mock court of pretended justice, before whom the Apostle *Paul* was brought to answer for his life. Behold, on the one side, *Tertullus* hired for this purpose, that by his eloquence he might lead the minds of his hearers from what was right; and *Ananias* the

high priest, to give weight by his presence to the accusations against *Paul*, and the whole body of the Jews with open mouth forming a clamorous cry to criminate the Apostle! On the other hand, behold the poor defenseless prisoner, while hearing their violent abuse, standing silent, and not presuming to open his mouth, until commanded by the governor. And, behold this time-serving prince presiding at such a court, whose object was to get money, and not administer justice! And where are the different parties now? What is become of the oratory of *Tertullus*? What are his present views of the sect of the *Nazarenes*, or of *Paul*, the ringleader? And what hath *Felix*, and all the characters of his complexion found of judgment, when from the trembling at the representation only, they have now entered into the full manifestation of it in reality, in the eternal world?

Blessed LORD JESUS! how sweet to the souls of all thy redeemed ones, is the recollection that thou art judge of the quick and dead! And amidst all the unjust decisions, and painful perversions, thy people are not unfrequently brought under, in the present time-state of the Church, the thought of thy righteous judgment brings relief to every case. He that is the believer's judge, is in the same moment his advocate and brother. He will vindicate the cause of his people, and finally and fully restore perfect order among all the works of GOD.

CHAPTER 25

SUMMARY

Paul is accused to Festus, the Governor. After some Time he is brought forth to trial. He appeals to Caesar. Festus and Agrippa confer on the Subject.

REFLECTIONS

READER! learn from *Paul's* history, in the unceasing pursuits of those men for his blood, the bitterness of heart in a state of nature, against the doctrine of grace; and be convinced, that in every individual of the fallen sons of *Adam*, the case is the same. *The carnal mind is enmity against GOD*. Oh! the blessedness, when brought out of this Adam-nature, by sovereign mercy; and brought

into an heartfelt acquaintance, with the LORD JESUS CHRIST. None but they who know the truth, from a personal experience of its Almighty power, as *Paul* did, having part in the first resurrection, can, like him, enjoy it. But, where a saving work of GOD the HOLY GHOST, hath taken place in the soul, by regeneration; that person will have the same confidence as the Apostle had, and with the same holy joy, be always speaking, as he did, of One JESUS, who was dead, whom the heart affirms to be alive.

Blessed LORD JESUS! be thou everlastingly loved and adored, for thy grace, and wisdom, imparted to thy servant *Paul*, when thus ready to be swallowed up by his enemies. Surely, LORD, it was thy strength; made manifest in creature weakness. It was JESUS who taught him, in such a moment, to make an appeal to *Caesar*: though *Caesar* no more than *Festus* was a friend to *Paul*, or his LORD. Here, LORD, thy promise was fulfilled in giving him *a word and wisdom, which all the adversaries* of thy poor prisoner, *could neither gainsay nor resist!* And thus, in a moment, their whole policy fell to the ground! And, thus the LORD is continually doing now, amidst the exercises of his people, by which they are *more than conquerors, through Him that loveth them.*

CHAPTER 26

SUMMARY

Paul is permitted to speak for Himself. He makes his Defence: declares his Conversion, and the Manner of it. He is interrupted by Festus. He again reassumes his Discourse, and speaks to Agrippa. The whole Court breakup, astonished at what they had heard, and separate.

Acts 26:30-32

And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: (31) And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (32) Then said

Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

The great end the LORD the SPIRIT had appointed by this meeting, being now accomplished, (I pray the Reader not to lose sight of this,) the business is over. The several hearers have now heard for their life, or death. *Paul's* sermon will at the last day be again brought forward, as the ministration of mercy or condemnation. The one class of mercy for the blessed opportunity, Hebrews 10:39. The other of condemnation, Psalm 1:7.

And now the assembly is broken up, the congregation separate, and the prisoner is sent back to his prison. He might have been set at liberty, said *Agrippa*, if he had not appealed unto *Caesar*. No, *Agrippa!* that must not be, for the LORD had shewed his servant, that he must bear witness also at *Rome*, Acts 23:11. How little and contemptible would this whole assembly have appeared, even in their own eyes, amidst all their pomp and splendor, could they but have seen the parts they were then made to act for the divine glory. They were to hear for their own condemnation, if not made *the savor of life unto life*; and they were to prepare for the sending the LORD's messenger and witness to *Rome*. *Howbeit*, (said the LORD of a similar character of old,) *he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so*, Isaiah 10:5-7. It is truly blessed to a child of GOD, to trace the LORD's hand in all the LORD's appointments. *My counsel shall stand*, saith the LORD, *and I will do all my pleasure*, Isaiah 46:10.

REFLECTIONS

IT will be a blessed improvement of this chapter, under the HOLY GHOST'S teachings, if by contemplating the different characters at this assembly; our souls are led to see how dignified was the poor prisoner in his chains, compared to the nobles in their mistaken splendor. Could any eye, have been opened to discern objects spiritually, while looking upon the meeting, as the Prophet's servant was in the Mount, he would have beheld the prisoner in the robes of JESUS'S righteousness, and Festus and his royal host wearing the chains of sin, and prisoners to *Satan*. Oh! what mistaken views do we make of all the objects of time and sense, while the vail of nature's darkness is upon our hearts!

Reader! let you and I once more, (we never shall too often,) bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for the thrice record of *Paul's* conversion in his blessed word. Add a blessing to it, O LORD, and cause it to be a sweet savor in the souls of thy people, to numbers now on earth, as it hath been in times past, to numbers now in heaven. Yea, bless it to numbers yet unborn, even to endless generations! Amen.

CHAPTER 27

SUMMARY

We have here the Apostle entering on Ship-board, to be conducted to Rome. The Voyage is attended with danger. The LORD comforts Paul with a Visit in the Night. He foretells the Loss of the Ship, but of the saving of all the Crew. They are shipwrecked, but escape all to Land.

REFLECTIONS

How blessedly the Prophet *Nahum* spake, when he said, *the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm!* And how fully proved, was that way manifested, in all the circumstances of this voyage? Well might the Apostle say, *in perils often, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.* But, said he, as upon another occasion, *out of them all, the LORD delivered me.* Reader! it is well to be brought into exercises, that we may discern the LORD'S hand in bringing out. The loudest cries of the awakened soul, are, when all is dark and discouraging, and when neither sun nor stars appear for many days. A child of GOD will then indeed pray, and pray hard, and in earnest, while the hand of chastening is upon him, and the grace of the LORD is within him, leading him forth in acts of faith and trust, upon the LORD his righteousness. Who of the LORD'S people but would gladly pass through a storm, like this of *Paul's*, to have *Paul's* LORD with them, in the storm in such visions of the night? Oh! the unspeakable felicity, whether in storms or calms, in rough or smooth seasons, when a soul can say, there stood by me this night, the LORD and Angel of the Covenant, *whose I am, and whom I serve.* Reader! it is not simply an act of faith, but faith is then become the

substance, realized into possession; when you and I, can, on sure grounds, say, I am GOD's property by grace; sure I am, that I shall be equally enabled to say, then am I GOD's care by his covenant love and faithfulness, LORD! help all thy redeemed to cast all their care upon thee, and into thy hands; for JESUS will bring home the whole, and every one to land, and bring them in to his everlasting haven, *where they would be!*

CHAPTER 28

SUMMARY

The LORD disposeth the Hearts of a barbarous People, on whose Ground Paul and the Ship's Company were cast, to receive them kindly. Paul healeth the Sick in the Island. They at length depart, and go to Rome. Paul preacheth in Rome two Years.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for those precious Acts of his Apostles in his Church, for most blessed and delightful they are, as monuments of the LORD's grace in his servant's ministry. Think what multitudes now in glory, enjoyed the sweet savor of them, while on earth. Think how daily now the LORD is blessing them to his people. And, think what numbers yet unborn, will in succession rise up to the enjoyment of them, when you and I shall have been gathered to our fathers, and have seen corruption. Let us close our perusal of this sweet book of GOD, with thanks to the Almighty Author of it, for all the mercy shewn in it, and by it, to ourselves, and to all that are past. And let our prayers be added, that the LORD may continue to bless its use to endless generations. Amen.

ROMANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

We here enter upon the inspired writings of the Apostle *Paul*. They may well be called inspired; *for Paul* himself was taught by the HOLY GHOST, to tell the Church, that *all Scripture is given by inspiration of GOD*. So that in truth, GOD the SPIRIT is the Author, and his Servants are but the Pen-men of all the holy records. And hence we do right, when at any time we make quotations from the Word of GOD, instead of saying, (as is but too commonly done,) the Apostle, whose name the writing bears, saith thus, or thus: We consider GOD the HOLY GHOST himself the speaker, by his servant, and give the Lord the glory. For this would tend, under GOD, to keep alive in our remembrance, both the Person and authority of Him that speaks; and cause us to look beyond the words *which man's wisdom teacheth, to the words which the HOLY GHOST teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

The Epistle to the *Romans*, is placed first in point of order to all the writings of the Apostle *Paul*. But this priority is not on account of the *time* when written, for many of the Epistles which bear his name, were written before it. Perhaps it stands first in the list of *Paul's* Epistles, partly by reason of its bulk, being larger than all his other writings, and partly on being directed to the Church of the chief city in the *Roman* Empire.

The persons to whom it is addressed are said to be *Romans*. By which is meant, not the whole body of the people who lived at *Rome*; but the Church of GOD in that place. *Paul* indeed, declares as much, in the opening of the Epistle, when directing it: *to all that be in Rome, beloved of GOD, called to he saints*. It is highly needful, that this should be always kept in view. And, not only in relation to this Epistle of *Paul* to the *Romans*, which is now before us, but in all the writings of the servants of the Lord, in their Epistles. And, I take occasion from hence to remark to the Reader, the great importance

of the thing itself. For, to the general inattention on this subject, must be ascribed the sad perversion, which is not infrequently made, of particular passages in those holy writings, to wrong purposes. I mean, when the carnal and ungodly make application of certain words and promises found in them to themselves, and the world at large; which, if properly considered, would be found as belonging only to the Lord's people.

The place, and time of writing of this Epistle by *Paul*, may be easily learnt from the date, which is given in the close of it, and from several incidental passages we meet with here and there in the different parts of it. He dates it from *Corinth*. And in the last Chapter, he tells the Church at *Rome*, that *Gaius, his host, and Erastus, the chamberlain of the city*, (that is, the city of *Corinth*,) sent their salutations to the Church, Romans 16:23. And this is further confirmed, by what the Apostle saith elsewhere, 1 Corinthians 1:14; Acts 18: 8. Moreover, *Phoebe*, by whom *Paul* sent this Epistle, is said to be a servant of the Church at *Cenchrea*, a small seaport of the *Corinthians*, about eight miles from the city, Romans 16:1-2. And, from these particulars, it is no difficult matter to discover the *time* when the Apostle sent it to the Church; perhaps about the year of our LORD GOD 57, when *Paul* was on the eve of departure from *Corinth*, see Acts 20:2-3.

But the most important point to be attended to, in these general observations, by way of introduction to the Epistle, is the enquiry, what was the great and leading object GOD the HOLY GHOST might be supposed to have in view, in sending so blessed a portion of his holy word to the Church. And this, be it spoken to the Lord's glory, and the Church's happiness, is as plain and evident as if written with a sun-beam. The one chief doctrine taught in it to the Church, is the method of the sinner's acceptance before GOD, *of justification alone, through faith, by the LORD JESUS CHRIST*. This glorious truth runs through the whole Epistle, like one continued golden chain, linked together in all its bearings, and may be seen, more or less, in every Chapter. And the doctrine is set forth in such plain and clear terms, as if GOD the SPIRIT had determined, for the Church's happiness, that no possible mistake should arise, in the minds of any of his people, when taught of Him, on a point of such infinite consequence. Hence he shews, that this method of GOD's own providing of justification, in and by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, is totally distinguished *from*, and

wholly unconnected *with* the law, either in whole, or in part: and, that an obedience to the precepts of the law, hath not the smallest share in contributing to the merciful design of Jehovah, in this plan of salvation. All is the result of free sovereign grace. Christ is here set forth as the One ordinance of heaven. Salvation is shewn to be in no other. Christ is the sole cause. And, even the sweet and precious influences of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which manifest themselves in the hearts and lives of the redeemed, are shewn to be the blessed *effects*, and not in part the *cause*, of justification. The leading tenor and language of this blessed Epistle, runs, through the whole of it, to this effect; *being justified freely by the grace of GOD, through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS*, Romans 3:24.

The Reader will enter upon the perusal of this Epistle, and have a better apprehension of the whole contents of it, if I previously give him a brief analysis of the several Chapters.

The Apostle begins from the platform of the subject, at his first Chapter, with describing the miserable state of every man by nature, in consequence of the fall; and, in the instance of the city of *Rome*, at that time advanced to the greatest height of human science, but sunk to the lowest degree of profligacy, he fully proves, that *the world, by wisdom, knew not GOD*. From the Gentile, he next goes on to the Jew, and in his *second* and *third* Chapters, states a faithful account of that highly-favored nation. But here, as in the former instance, he makes it abundantly plain and evident, that all are alike included under sin: and that *by the deeds of the law can no flesh be justified before GOD*, Romans 3:19-20. Foreseeing, however, that some objections might be made to arise among those who prided themselves in their being descended from *Abraham*, as if the case of that great Patriarch became an exception to this statement of universal corruption; the Apostle, in *his fourth* Chapter, takes up the full force of the objection on this ground, and proves, in *Abraham's* instance, the truth of the doctrine which he had before asserted. He shews most fully and decidedly, that *Abraham* himself was actually justified by faith in Christ, even when he was in a state of uncircumcision. And that in fact *the sign of circumcision* was appointed him, as *a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised*, Romans 4:10-11.

Having thus most clearly and blessedly proved the truth of the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ, by such palpable

evidences, the Apostle's mind seems to have been led out in the vast comprehension of the glorious subject, as he had been led to write it, in those *four Chapters*: and therefore in *the fifth*, he runs back to the very beginning of time, and, in stating the fall of *Adam*, and the Church in him, the Apostle is led to shew, that, as misery and ruin came by this *first Adam*, so blessedness and salvation came by the *second Adam*, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He proves here, with equal clearness and force of truth, that it is the goodness and grace of GOD, to bring the Church out of that Adam-corruption, by a means in which they have no part in the performance, as they were involved in an original ruin, to which, by actual transgression, they did not contribute. *As by the offence of one, (saith the Apostle,) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life,* Romans 5:18.

The *sixth, seventh, and eighth Chapters*, are directed to set forth the blessedness of the dispensation, that *being justified by faith, and having peace with GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST*, the persons of believers are freed from all condemnation; and, from their union with Christ, they partake in his triumphs over sin, death, hell, and the grave. And the Apostle very fully shews, that so far are these privileges from tending to relax the motives, to a corresponding life of sanctity and holiness, such principles become the only source to give life to it, and ensure it. The Apostle speaks with an holy indignation and abhorrence of the bare suspicion, that they, who by union with Christ, are dead to sin, could live any longer therein. He denies it, as a thing impossible, Romans 6:1-2. And very sure it is, that where justification by faith *in Christ*, springs out of a grace union with Christ, (and where this is not the case there can be no justification,) the most ample security is made for every thing that is blessed, in life and conversation. *For, (saith the Apostle,) as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, they are the Sons of GOD,* Romans 8:14. *And if any man have not the SPIRIT of Christ, he is none of his,* Romans 8:14.

In the *ninth, tenth, and eleventh Chapters*, the Apostle most blessedly dwells upon the grace and mercy of Jehovah, in his threefold character of persons, in this high dispensation of his sovereignty and holiness. And here he manifests the Almightyness of the teaching he was under, when he wrote this Epistle. He speaks

with such humbleness of soul, while bowing down under a sense of Jehovah's wisdom and power in, his appointment of things, as carries with it the highest testimony that GOD the HOLY GHOST guided the Apostle's pen.

The *twelfth*, *thirteenth*, and *fourteenth* Chapters, together with a part of the *fifteenth*, are directed to shew the Church what blessed effects will follow from those gracious principles formed in the heart, where the Lord's people are living in a state of justification, by faith in Christ, before GOD. For, while Christ is lived upon by faith, the SPIRIT of Christ dwells in the heart, and induceth every thing that is truly blessed in life and practice. Christ being made the *sole cause* of salvation, the SPIRIT of Christ, in the believer, manifest the *effects*, as the sole work of GOD the SPIRIT. And these things are not spoken so much as *precepts*, but as *promises*; not so much in a way of *bidding*, as *enabling*: similar to what the Lord JESUS said to his disciples; *Abide in me, and I in you. Continue ye in my love*: that is, ye shall abide in me; ye shall continue in my love; and I will abide in you, John 15:4-9. See Commentary there.

And thus the Apostle having accomplished the great design which GOD the HOLY GHOST had in view, when dictating this Epistle to the Church, *Paul* concludes the whole in the remainder of the *fifteenth* and the *sixteenth* Chapters, with his blessing and his prayers, accompanied with the affectionate remembrances of the brethren with him to the people, and desiring an interest in their prayers for him, in his person and ministry. And he closeth all, with giving *glory to GOD through JESUS CHRIST*.

Reader! I have only to call upon you, before we enter on the Epistle, to join me in spirit before the Throne, that the teachings of the same Almighty Lord, which guided the Apostle's pen, may guide our hearts, that in the reading of it, we may be made wise unto salvation, *through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS*. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Paul opens the Epistle with declaring his Apostleship. He salutes the Church, with the Profession of his brotherly Love: declares his

willingness to visit them; and draws a faithful, but melancholy Picture of the Ungodly.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I both pause at the entrance on this blessed Epistle, and while we adore GOD the HOLY GHOST for so precious a gift to his Church, let us beg of Him to give us an understanding and believing heart, in the right apprehension of all its sacred contents. And here, in the very opening, let us look up and behold the LORD JESUS CHRIST in our nature, in all the glories of his person, and offices, and character. He was, he is declared to be, the Son of GOD, with power. His divine nature fully proved by his quickening SPIRIT, and his human nature by his death and resurrection, and both confirming his suitability to be *the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of Him which filleth all in all!*

And, oh! what preciousness is hereby discovered of the Gospel of Christ! How blessedly adapted for the delivery of our poor nature from the ruins of the fall! How graciously contrived for the everlasting happiness of the Church! Reader! behold the holy joy of *Paul*, in his readiness to preach it to all that were in *Rome*, yea, all the world, among *the beloved of GOD, and called to be saints. I am not ashamed* (said Paul,) *of the Gospel of Christ!* Ashamed? Who is, who can be ashamed at that which is the highest glory of our nature? The Son of GOD in our nature proclaiming mercy, pardon, and peace, in the blood of his cross. But, Reader! see to it, that we shrink not from the same standard, and the same cause; when we can say, and appeal as he did, *GOD Is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son!* Lord! grant that thy people, in the awful view of what thy servant hath here shewn of a fallen state, may be led to contemplate the blessed deliverance wrought out for the Church by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, And, oh! for grace to enter into an heart-felt enjoyment of these unspeakable mercies, that while the righteousness of GOD therein is revealed from faith to faith, all truly justified believers may live by faith!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle having shewn in the foregoing Chapter, the sad State of all Men by Nature, he shews with equal Proofs arising from human Depravity, the total Inability of the Law to bring Sinners to GOD: and from hence, as in the former Instance, manifests the Necessity and Importance of the Gospel, of Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us, in the view of Israel, and the privileges of Israel, and the sad abuse of them by Israel; feel suitably affected with the sense of our mercies. Is it possible to behold that nation, to mark *the* Lord's watchful eye over them as a nation; and now to call to mind their dispersion and misery, as a nation; and have no concern for ourselves, as a people ?

Let us moreover solemnly deliberate, as fully shewn in their history, how incompetent both law and ordinances are, to bring the heart to GOD. Yea, let us in them learn, how sure it is, that where privileges do not lead to good, men pervert them into evil. Outward means, unaccompanied with an inward grace, are among the most fatal deceptions of the present day. And, beyond all doubt, whatever becomes not *the savor of life unto life*; will have *the savor of death unto death!*

Precious LORD JESUS! how sweet is it, when our souls can seek unto thee for relief and comfort, under all our discouragements! Thou art indeed the life, and light; and the sole righteousness of thy people, Oh! grant, that from being stripped of every thing the pride of unhumbléd nature might be prompted to take up with after the *Gentile*, and the presumption of any supposed righteousness in the law after the *Jew*; thy redeemed may come under the teaching of thy blessed SPIRIT; and wholly seeking in JESUS, and from JESUS, glory, honor, and immortality, may have eternal life; and with full assurance of faith, *believe the record that GOD hath given of his Son.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here further prosecuting the Subject respecting the Jews. He proves the full Condemnation of all the World before GOD by the Deeds of the Law, In the close, he sweetly preacheth CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold the awful state by nature, both of Jew and Gentile! See, what a portrait to humble our souls to the dust, the LORD the SPIRIT hath twice drawn, in his sacred pages; once by *David*, and here by *Paul*, of our utterly lost, and ruined estate, by nature and by practice; as we stand in ourselves before GOD. And this we are told, was the result of that enquiry, when the LORD looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that would seek after GOD. *All were gone out of the way. All together become unprofitable. None good, no, not one.* And how then could it be otherwise, than while beheld in our *Adam-nature*, and without being considered in CHRIST, *all the world must become guilty before GOD?*

And, can it need any argument of persuasion, to prompt the heart convinced of this, to look to JESUS; yea, to flee to Him, from the wrath to come? Am I, are you, convinced of these most unquestionable truths, and do we pause, or remain stupid, and senseless, in the view of these vast concerns? Hath GOD set forth his dear SON, as propitiation through faith in his blood; and do we hesitate in the acceptation of it? Is it declared from heaven, that by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in GOD's sight; and are we looking to that quarter, either in whole, or in part, for favor with the LORD? Oh! Sir! if at that awful tribunal, when GOD cometh to judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people, we are found without the righteousness of JESUS, and his propitiation, to be our security; what paleness, what horror, will mark the countenance of every son and daughter of *Adam*? Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my propitiation, my high Priest, my Altar, the LORD my righteousness *now*: and sure I am thou wilt be my everlasting glory *then*. When law, and justice, in the multitude of breaches I have committed against both, would give in their verdict

against me: *Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD! Oh! the preciousness of that voice now heard by the ear of faith, and then confirmed with the unalterable determination from the throne: deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle is prosecuting the same Subject through this Chapter. He brings forward the Patriarch Abraham's Faith, in Proof that there can be no Justification before GOD, by the Deeds of the Law.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST for the boundless condescension of his grace, in explaining to the Church the precious doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law. And blessed be his name for illustrating the truth yet more abundantly in the instance of the Patriarch *Abraham*. Now, LORD, through thy blessed teaching we see, wherein the call of GOD consisted, in taking the great father of the faithful from his country and his kindred, and his father's house, to come unto the land which a covenant GOD in CHRIST shewed him. And doth not the same GOD in covenant now command all the Church to forget her own people, and her father's house, that she may be brought into the King's palace? Oh! precious faith, in a precious, precious SAVIOR! LORD I give all thy redeemed grace, that when called upon by grace, like *Abraham*, to go out into a place hereafter to be received as an inheritance, they may, like him, by faith go out, in full confidence in thy grace and mercy.

But let thy people learn, O LORD, from this beautiful illustration of the precious doctrine in the instance of *Abraham*, that the justification of thy Church and people is by CHRIST'S person and righteousness, and not our faith. That which was, and is counted for righteousness, is not our faith in that righteousness, but the righteousness itself imputed to the persons of the faithful, from their union and oneness in CHRIST. By faith in the Person and Righteousness of CHRIST, We do indeed enjoy the blessedness of it,

but the work of faith, no more than other works in the creature, can give any title to it. And faith itself comes *from* and is *by* this righteousness. Oh! for grace from the LORD to have a right apprehension of the important distinction. And do thou, blessed LORD! grant to thy whole family the sweet enjoyment of their vast privileges. Neither the circumcision of the *Jew*, nor the uncircumcision of the Gentile, are any thing, where CHRIST and his righteousness are imputed; *Seeing it is One GOD which justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel, both Jew and Gentile, be justified, and shall glory.*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The blessed State of a justified Soul. The Subject traced back to the Fall of Adam yet more fully, to shew, that Justification can only be by CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! I would say, as I meditate on this sweet Chapter; what hath my GOD wrought for his Church and people? Here I behold the blessedness of a justified state! Peace with GOD; access to the throne, to the mercy seat, to the pardon office of JESUS CHRIST; and a sure foundation for a daily, hourly rejoicing, in hope of the glory of GOD. And, have I this peace? Am I indeed justified freely, fully, everlastingly, in the LORD my righteousness? Hath JESUS made my peace in the blood of his cross? Is it GOD that justifieth me? And shall I not demand with *Paul*, and say: *who is he that condemneth me?* Oh! the blessedness of a justified state before GOD. *There is now no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the, SPIRIT.*

Praises to my GOD and FATHER, for all his Covenant-love from everlasting! Praises to my GOD and SAVIOR, whose Suretyship righteous ness hath done more for me in the recovery of my poor nature, in the *Adam*-fall ruin; than all the original and actual transgressions of the Church have done, to cast the redeemed down.

And praises to my GOD the HOLY GHOST, in causing this blessed Scripture to be given to *the Church*; and writing the blessed effects of it in my heart, and the hearts of his people. Oh! for grace, to be in the daily, hourly enjoyment of it, and to live in the constant unceasing dependence upon it. *In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Doctrine of Justification by CHRIST, shewn to be a Doctrine of Godliness. And so far is it, in its Nature and Consequences, from leading to Licentiousness, that it is here proved to be the only Foundation for an holy Life in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us both learn from this most blessed Chapter, how to answer the character, of every description, who ventures, from the pride or corruption of his heart, to charge the doctrine of free grace with a tendency to an unholy life. Never, surely, were the motives to an upright and conscientious conversation ever found in the least powerful or persuasive in the soul, until brought home to the soul, in *the death of CHRIST*. And the child of GOD, who is dead with CHRIST, baptized into CHRIST, and buried with CHRIST, in his death; cannot but feel from the HOLY GHOST, an implanted conformity to the likeness of CHRIST, so as to bear part with CHRIST in his resurrection, and walk in newness of life. And, what dominion shall sin have over that soul in whom the HOLY GHOST dwells, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin? What shall tend to mortify the deeds of the body, but living in the SPIRIT, and walking in the SPIRIT? Blessed SPIRIT of holiness! give grace thus to live, and walk, that we may manifest to all gainsayers, thy people are dead to sin, and cannot live any longer therein!

But oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! while seeking daily, hourly, grace from the HOLY GHOST, to adorn the doctrine of GOD my SAVIOR, in all things: never, never, for a moment may my soul forget, that the whole, and every part of redemption-work, and redemption

glory, is thine. GOD be thanked that we were the servants of sin. And that the whole Church, both in heaven and earth, are brought out of this prison-state, is all of grace. And do thou, dearest LORD, cause me to, have my redemption by thee, always in remembrance! May my soul be more and more humbled to the dust before thee, that my GOD and SAVIOR may be more and more exalted. Through life, in death, and for evermore, be it my joy to acknowledge, that there can be no wage mine, but the *wages* of sin, which is death: and all the LORD bestows, even eternal life, with all its preliminaries can only be the free, the sovereign, the unmerited *gift* of GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

Under the Similitude of the Marriage State, the Apostle in the opening of this Chapter, represents the Power of the Law, over a Man that is wedded to the Law, as long as he liveth. But as in the Married State, the Death of one of the Parties destroys that Law; so CHRIST hath delivered his Church. The Apostle closeth the Chapter, in an affecting Representation of the workings of Sin in the Flesh.

REFLECTIONS

OH! the blessedness of the marriage state in CHRIST! If a woman is bound to her husband so long as he liveth, and the husband to his wife; JESUS my husband, my Maker, my Redeemer, ever liveth; and I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine. And, though I have played the harlot with many lovers, yet will I go and return to my first husband, for I am his in an everlasting covenant which cannot be broken.

Blessed and Eternal SPIRIT! I praise thee for the account which thou hast caused thy servant the Apostle to give of himself in this sweet Chapter. Here, through thy teaching, I behold *Paul* the spiritual condemning *Paul* the carnal, and groaning under a body of sin, which will not let him do the things the soul would do, because evil is present with him. And do I not behold in it, O LORD, my own features of character? Oh! for grace to enter into a right

apprehension of the blessed teaching here presented and brought home to my poor heart. Surely, LORD! grace was in lively exercise in *Pauls* heart, when, from the conscious depths of sin in a body wholly of sin, the soul cried to the depths of divine mercy. And surely, the Apostle was enjoying sweet soul-union with JESUS, when under all, he found deliverance from sin and death, with all the consequences of evil in his own fallen nature, in the full redemption by CHRIST. Here, LORD, may my soul find deliverance also, while carrying about with me the present body my flesh, where dwelleth no good thing. Oh! for the unceasing and lively actings of grace and faith, to cry out with *Paul* under all these exercises; *I thank GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

The Apostle, having in the foregoing Chapters, fully established the Doctrine of Justification by Faith: here enters upon describing the Blessedness of it. He shews the Privileges of the Faithful, from the first Stage of Freedom from Condemnation, to the final Entrance into Glory.

REFLECTIONS

READER! can you, can I, find strength of faith, under the assurance of being justified in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, to rest in him for everlasting life; then may we take part in the precious truth of the Apostle's words, for there is no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And, blessed be GOD for all the high privileges of a justified state before GOD. Led by the SPIRIT of GOD, we are the sons of GOD. And CHRIST being in us, though the body be dead because of sin, yet is the spirit life because of righteousness. No spirit of bondage any more to fear. No debtors to the law any more to dread. But, living in the SPIRIT, and walking in the SPIRIT, we through the SPIRIT do mortify the deeds of the body, and we shall live.

Grant, Almighty LORD and FATHER, grace to call thee *abba*, Father! LORD! by the SPIRIT of adoption we have received, give us to be conformed to the image of thy dear SON. And being called, and justified, and made heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST, we may at length be glorified in CHRIST for ever. And nothing, in life or death, in time, or in eternity, *shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The Apostle having now fully established the Doctrine of Justification by CHRIST, and shewn the blessed Effects of it in the Heart and Conscience; here enters upon the Doctrine of GOD's original and eternal Purpose in Election. He treats of the Case of Israel in Abraham's Seed; and towards the close of the Chapter, shews the same Doctrine, in the Call of the Gentiles.

REFLECTIONS

How sure, how certain, and how unalterably fixed, are the ways and purposes of JEHOVAH. From eternity the whole is *ordered in all things, and sure*; and through the whole time-state of the Church, GOD's purposes have been, and must be, fulfilled. As in the eternity of the LORD'S nature, so in his ordinations there can be nothing liable to change. His sovereignty is the rule of all his actions, and his will and pleasure the invariable standard of good.

Sweetly, in relation to his Church, all is planned in wisdom; and nothing can arise to alter his ways towards his people. Electing love gave birth to the Church in CHRIST. And in the instance of *Jacob and Esau* it hath been shewn, that not only before the children had done any act of good or evil, but, that the purpose of election might stand, it was said, that the elder should serve the younger; so that electing grace preserved what electing love had began. Reader! it is very blessed when the proud sails of human confidence give way to the sovereign decrees of GOD; and we hail GOD'S appointments as the result of GOD'S favor to his Church in CHRIST. *Oh! the depth of the*

riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here expressing his deep Concern that the Jews were turning from CHRIST to the Law, He speaks very blessedly towards the Close of the Chapter, that no Believer, whether Jew or Gentile, looking to CHRIST, shall fail of Grace and Salvation in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a beautiful example the great Apostle of the Gentiles holds forth to all that minister in the Gospel of CHRIST, in his earnest desire and prayer to GOD, for Israel's salvation! With what rapture he speaks of his LORD, and the fulness of redemption in him. *Paul* well knew in his own experience, and therefore most affectionately longed for the apprehension of it in others, that CHRIST is *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

It will be a very blessed use of this scripture, if from the statement the Apostle hath given the Church in this Chapter, the minds of the people are taught, under GOD, the vast difference between head-knowledge, and heart-enjoyment. Oh! for grace to rightly know, and as rightly to enjoy, the blessedness of the Apostle's words, that it is *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation!*

Blessed Author and Giver of all faith! Thou that art the glorious object of faith, and in whom faith centers all her hopes, joys, and expectations! Do thou, LORD, increase our faith in thee, and our dependance upon thee! And cause the several means of grace in thine house of prayer, to be blessed of our GOD! Oh! for faith, in the largest, fullest, and most extensive enjoyments of it, to be in the daily actings of my soul, that through GOD the HOLY GHOST I may be kept alive in the hearing of thy word, and by faith be enabled to keep up and maintain unceasing communion with my GOD and SAVIOR, in the enjoyment of it. Precious JESUS! do thou make me new and fresh

discoveries of thyself, in greater frequency, and to greater extent. Let thy Person, thy love, thy favor, which is better than life itself, be the food of my soul every day and all the day, that by living a life of faith upon thee here, I may be fully preparing in body, soul, and spirit, for the everlasting enjoyment of my GOD in glory hereafter.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

The Apostle here takes up the Subject again concerning Election. He states the Doctrine particularly, as relating to the Jew and to the Gentile.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and, beholding the rejection of *Israel* as a nation, after all their high privileges; consider what may be, what will be, the rejection of any, and of every mere nominal Church, which hath the *form*, but is destitute of the *power*, of godliness! To this our guilty sinful land, and to every CHRIST-despising generation like the present, how awful that Scripture sounds, in trembling accents: *If GOD spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee!*

Almighty Sovereign, LORD of Heaven and earth! give thy redeemed grace to receive all thy wise, and unerring appointments, with humble joy, and reverence. All must be right; because thou, LORD, hast done it. Let every one taught of GOD, enter into a full apprehension of that most precious truth : *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD Almighty, Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!*

And, amidst all the discouragements of the present day, though like the Prophet we find cause to mourn in secret, at the depressed state of *Zion*; yet let this always comfort: *even now at the present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.* Reader! forget not that it is grace, yea, all grace. May you and I have grace, to give our GOD all the glory!

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the Apostle shews some of the blessed Effects, which, through Grace, arise out of a Justified, and Sanctified State, before GOD. And he very sweetly proves thereby, the Work of Grace upon the Soul.

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! in the unceasing view of thee, and thy living sacrifice, through the mercies of Covenant-love, oh! may I be enabled to come daily, hourly, to the throne of grace, and present myself in thy holiness, for acceptance before GOD, as the reasonable service of thy redeemed. And do thou LORD, grant me grace, to be daily, hourly, weaning from a world, from which I am momentarily departing, that I may no longer be conformed to it, but transformed, by the renewing of my mind, in the unceasing renewings of the HOLY GHOST. Yes! thou dear LORD! through thee I shall prove my membership in CHRIST, and with his Church, in the exercise of all those sweet graces thy servant Apostle hath enumerated. And do thou, my honored LORD, SO help me on by thy gracious, unceasing manifestations, through the whole of my walk and conversation while here below, that I may daily feel my need of thee, and daily act every grace upon thee, and by thee. Surely, LORD! grace is kept alive by grace received from my LORD. And, if my LORD will give my poor soul out of his rich fulness, grace for grace, then will his grace be manifested in all my life and conversation. Living *upon* CHRIST, walking *with* CHRIST, and receiving *from* CHRIST, then will all the fruits and effects of his grace be holiness, and CHRIST my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

Here are various Directions concerning Christian Graces, And the Chapter concludes with an affecting call of the Apostle from the shortness of Life, to be always clothed with CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

SURELY the good order of society, and the general peace of states and kingdoms, are promoted, by wise laws, and regulations; and happy the nation, who hath the LORD for their GOD.

But, my soul! as thou art looking for a city which hath foundation, whose Builder and Maker is GOD; be thou on the watch tower, for the LORD'S coming. And, aware that to thee the night of this wilderness-state is far spent, and the day of the immortal world is at hand, which like the tide of a vast ocean is hastening to cover over the whole earth; oh! for grace to be weaned from all things here below, and to be ready at a moment's warning to mount up and meet the LORD in the air. Blessed LORD JESUS! be it my happiness, to be found waiting! And may GOD the SPIRIT put on CHRIST, and his righteousness on my soul, that when my LORD shall come, *I may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

To avoid unnecessary Contentions in the Church, from the Custom Jews and Gentiles, the Apostle directs this Chapter to the mutual Accommodation of each, in Things of small Moment.

REFLECTIONS

READER! In all the circumstances of life we may well bear with the weak in faith, and receive none to doubtful disputations, while earnest in the grand points of the cross to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. In meats, and drinks, and inventions of

men, and carnal ordinances, there is nothing worth contending for. But while all outward things, though they make a great shew of will-worship, satisfy the unawakened; let it be my pursuit, the things of inward peace. For the LORD'S kingdom *is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST*. Blessed LORD JESUS! grant that my life may be a life of faith on thee; and then will my death, be a death of security in thee; for living, or dying, I shall be thine. And to all the lesser circumstances of life, may my walk through the world, in the unavoidable intercourses of it, be conducted with love to thy people from love to thee. Never to wound one of CHRIST'S little ones here below, much less to destroy his comfort, though nothing can destroy his everlasting happiness for whom CHRIST died. And do thou, dearest LORD, grant me increasing faith in thee, since all, and every act, without an eye to thee, and thy righteousness, is sin.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The Apostle exhorts the strong in Faith, to bear the Infirmities of the weak. He recommends the Example of JESUS, and concludes with recommending the Church to the GOD of Peace.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I seek for grace everlastingly to have in view the Person of JESUS. Nothing will tend to endear us more to our weaker brethren, and prompt us to be gentle and affectionate towards them, as when, under GOD the SPIRIT'S glorifying CHRIST to our view, we behold his gentleness and meekness to his redeemed, in the days of our LORD'S flesh, what reproaches he endured, and what unequalled grace and humility he manifested under all. Lamb of GOD! let a portion of thy meek SPIRIT be upon me, and upon all thy Church and people!

Almighty Author of thy Holy Scriptures, let the sweet savor of thy word be always uppermost in my heart. Let me never lose sight of thy love, thou gracious GOD the SPIRIT, in that thou hast caused whatsoever things were written aforetime, to be written for our

learning. LORD! may I esteem thy word more than my necessary food! And do thou, O GOD of hope, fill my soul with all joy and peace in believing, that I may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY GHOST.

And do thou, glorious GOD and FATHER! who art the GOD of peace; and in proof of it didst bring again from the dead our LORD JESUS, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, be with all; thy people and thy Churches alway, to confirm them to the end. Yea, Almighty GOD! do thou establish them in thy truth, and make the blessed word of thy servants mutually refreshing, both to ministers and people. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

This Chapter, which closeth the Epistle, is chiefly Greetings and Salutations to certain Persons of the Church, known to the Apostle. Paul closeth the whole with ascribing Praise and Glory to GOD.

REFLECTIONS

MAY the faithful Ministers of CHRIST here learn from *Paul*, how near, and dear, to the heart, must ever lie the Church of CHRIST, when the SPIRIT of CHRIST dwells in the heart. Not content with addressing the whole mystical body of CHRIST, the Apostle here particularly mentions one by one, in name, as members of CHRIST's body, his flesh, and his bones. Oh! how infinitely more to be valued is this record of CHRIST's people in the book of GOD, than the being enrolled among all the great ones of the earth.

Reader! do not overlook what *Paul* hath said, in honorable testimony of those, who by awakening, and regenerating grace, were in CHRIST before him. How sweet is early grace! How blessed to know the LORD from our youth! Little children! if peradventure the LORD should, put this *Poor Man's Commentary* in the way of any such, who like *Josiah*, or *Timothy*, have been brought acquainted with the LORD GOD of your fathers from your youth; do not fail to mark and bless GOD for the distinguishing grace! And you no less of upper years, who even like *Paul*, can observe those that were in the

knowledge of CHRIST before you; yea, if even at the eleventh hour! Oh! bless GOD for his distinguishing mercy. He that came in at the eleventh hour, was made equal with him which had borne the burden and heat of the day! And why so, but because it is all of free grace. He that is called early, is not called for his deservings. And he that is called late, is called then for GOD's grace, and not his merit. All is *to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

And now, for the moment, we take leave of the Apostle. Farewell *Paul!* We have cause to thank thee for thy ministry. But we bless *Paul's* LORD infinitely more, who appointed it. Oh! for grace, mightily to value and love the servant; but to pass by the servant, and love and adore the Master. Precious JESUS! he is indeed thy minister. Oh! make those sweet writings blessed to the souls of thy people. And may they minister in thine Almighty hand, to all the Churches, to bring glory to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, now, and for ever.

Amen.

1st CORINTHIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE city of *Corinth*, which formed a part of *Greece*, in the province of *Achaia*, was a place of great opulence. And from its situation on an isthmus, or neck of land to the sea, opened a large source for trade and commerce; and, as is but too common, where opportunities for the indulgences of corrupt nature are found, *Corinth* was remarkable for abounding with luxuries, pride, and uncleanness. To this place, however, GOD the HOLY GHOST in his providence sent *Paul* to preach the Gospel; and the Apostle continued his personal labors in it for about two years. And, as the LORD who sent *Paul* to *Corinth*, had a people there to receive him, so a church was formed during his abode there, while the Apostle went in and out among them.

After his departure, as appears from certain parts here and there in his Epistle, some irregularities crept in among the people; which *Paul* as a watchful minister of CHRIST set about to reform. But beside this, GOD the HOLY GHOST had other views, when guiding the mind and pen of the Apostle, in dictating this Epistle. The Church of GOD, in every age, hath found cause to bless the HOLY SPIRIT for so precious and invaluable a portion of his sacred word. The interesting account the Apostle hath given of the institution of the Lord's Supper, of Spiritual gifts, and of the Resurrection, (not for the present to mention other subjects treated of by *Paul* in this Epistle,) renders it most blessed indeed!

The *time* in which the apostle wrote it, and sent it to the Church, is not so clearly known, as to determine with exact precision. Some have supposed that it was in the first year of the reign of the emperor *Nero*, which corresponded to the year of our LORD GOD 55. Some place it later. But the chief concern we have, is to know that it was divinely written, under the immediate inspiration of GOD the HOLY GHOST. And this every day's testimony in the hearts of GOD's

people, nourished and refreshed by its gracious contents, abundantly confirm.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with any further preface, but invite him for himself to come and see. Very fully persuaded I am, that, if the Writer of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, and the Reader of it, are both led by the LORD'S hand, while going over this precious book of GOD in the perusal of it, and the same ALMIGHTY LORD which guided *Paul's* pen to write, shall graciously guide our hearts to read the sacred contents; like the man the Apostle speaks of in one of the Chapters of this epistle, *the secrets of our hearts will be made manifest*, as we attend to the ministry of this word, *and falling down on our face, we shall worship GOD, and report that GOD is in it of a truth*. The LORD (if it be his holy will,) vouchsafe this mercy for the LORD JESUS CHRIST'S sake. Amen.

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle openeth his Epistle after his usual Manner, with Salutations. He holds up CHRIST, and very blessedly speaks of his Cross.

Reflections

READER! let you and I, as we enter upon the perusal of this inspired Book of GOD the HOLY GHOST, first pause, and bless the Almighty Author of it for giving so sweet and precious a portion of his holy word to the Church. Oh! for grace, to be always watching the footsteps of GOD the SPIRIT, who hath been from the first formation of the Church, to the present hour, watching over it, watering it every moment, and keeping it, night and day. And, oh! for grace, while we bless GOD for giving to his Church some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; to keep always in view, that these are but instruments; it is the LORD himself is the Almighty Minister, presiding over his Church: *for all these worketh that One and the self-same SPIRIT dividing to every man severally as*

he will! LORD! from thee, may my soul look for blessing, on thy servant's labors!

And Reader, let us also not lose sight of the LORD's distinguishing mercy, in this, and all the sacred, and inspired writings, sent to the Church. It is to CHRIST's Church, they are sent; not to the world. It is to them that are *sanctified*, as the opening of this Chapter shews, not to the unsanctified: to the *called to be saints*, not to them whose names are not written in the book of life. Oh! for grace here also, to watch the LORD's gracious regard to his Church.

And Reader! let you and I, as we go over the several beautiful, and soul-refreshing portions of this sweet Chapter, remark, the preciousness of JESUS in all, his Person, offices, relations, and characters, to his people; the blessed teachings of GOD the SPIRIT, in glorifying CHRIST JESUS to their view; and the faithfulness of GOD the FATHER, in calling his people to the fellowship of his SON, JESUS CHRIST. And, Oh! for sweet communion, and fellowship, with all the Persons of the GODHEAD, in, and through CHRIST, that amidst all the diversity of forms, and contentions of the several Churches, like *Corinth*; our souls may be found resting wholly on CHRIST. And while the fleshly wisdom, and pride of men of the world count CHRIST and his cross foolishness; we may know the LORD JESUS to be to us, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation *to every one that believeth*. Thou hast indeed, O LORD, in the instance of all thy redeemed, chosen the weak and the foolish, yea, the base things, to confound the mighty; but the LORD's strength, is thereby made manifest, in creature weakness. And we bless thee, our GOD, that as we have nothing, and are nothing in ourselves, yea, worse than nothing, by reason of ignorance, sin, and unholiness: CHRIST is made of GOD to us, all we need, for grace here, and glory hereafter. CHRIST is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: and all our glorying is in the LORD!

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle enters upon the Relation of his Ministry, which he had exercised among the Corinthians. He reminds them, that he

passed by all human Eloquence in his Discourses before them, and had preached only CHRIST. He spews them how GOD the SPIRIT had confirmed his preaching, in their Hearts.

Reflections

READER! behold the great Apostle in his fervent zeal to the cross of CHRIST! Think, in what view that cross appeared to his mind! He knew it's value. He hath felt, and experienced, the blessedness of it, to his own soul; and as such, he could not remain silent, in holding it forth to others. And his own weakness, and febleness, in preaching CHRIST, and him crucified, he considered as nothing, while he kept in remembrance that divine strength was rendered the more conspicuous in human nothingness. Nay, the Apostle rejoiced in the consciousness, that the more feeble his ministry was in itself, the more evident would appear CHRIST's glory: and their faith be found, not to stand *in the wisdom of man, but in the power of GOD.*

Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for the sweet instruction communicated to the Church, in this precious Chapter. Yes! thou Almighty Teacher! we do find cause to bless thee, for the very clear, and decisive line thou hast drawn, between natural knowledge and divine; between the wisdom which is from beneath, and that which is from above. None, indeed, of the princes of this world, knew the LORD of glory: neither will they ever, by mere human intellect, discover the hidden wisdom of GOD. But, while these things are hidden from the wise and prudent; oh! the graciousness of our GOD, to reveal them to babes! LORD! may thy people know their sonship, and adoption- character, by thy divine instruction; and may we have all grace, while thou art condescending to be our Teacher, *to know the things which are freely given to us of GOD, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

Chapter 3

Summary

The Apostle is prosecuting the Subject of his Ministry in this Chapter. Under several sweet Similitude's, he describes the Manner he had used among them, for Instruction.

Reflections

DEAREST LORD JESUS! while I hear thy servant, as in this Chapter, reproving the Church, for their weakness in faith, and their little disposition to any thing more than as babes in CHRIST; how can I overlook my LORD's tenderness to his flock, who hath fed them in all ages, and is feeding them now, as a Shepherd! Dearest JESUS! thou knowest how to bear with the weaknesses and infirmities of thy people! Thou carriest the lambs in thy bosom, and gently leadeth those that are with young.

Do thou, gracious LORD, watch over the husbandry of thy Church! Do thou order all the apartments of the spiritual building. LORD! grant, that I may never bring the wood, and hay, and stubble of any thing of my own, to lay upon the foundation JESUS CHRIST; And let the gold, and the silver, and the precious stones, laid upon, CHRIST, be the doctrines of CHRIST, that in the hour of trial, they may never be burnt up, but be found to be CHRIST'S, which, will stand every trial.

And blessed LORD the SPIRIT! suffer me never to lose sight of that soul-reviving truth, that the bodies of CHRIST'S members are his Temple. LORD, take up thine abode in my poor nature, and reign in me, and rule in me, as the Almighty LORD of every affection. And let that vast inheritance, to which, by my new birth, I am begotten; be my everlasting consolation, against every exercise, and sorrow of life. While I can say with the Church, *I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me*; sure I am, that both in life and death, things present and things to come, every matter and every event, must minister to the LORD'S glory and my salvation. If CHRIST be mine, all is mine. And blessed shall I be in my basket and in my store, in my lying down and in my rising up, in life, in death, in time, and, to all eternity. Precious thought! *Allure ours, for we are CHRIST'S, and CHRIST'S is GOD'S.* Amen.

Chapter 4

Summary

A further Account respecting Ministers. The humbling View Paul gives of himself, and his few faithful companions.

Reflections

Reader! do observe with what lowliness of heart, *Paul* desired the Church to regard him, and his companions in the ministry: mere servants and stewards, not as lords over GOD'S heritage. *Paul's* great object was, to be found faithful. He considered, that all he was, and all he had, his gifts, graces, knowledge, time, talents, were wholly for the benefit of CHRIST'S Church. And, as he told the LORD'S followers upon another occasion, when writing to them, so in all the departments of his ministry, he felt a willingness to have imparted unto them, not the Gospel of GOD only, but also his very soul, because they were dear to him. Oh! the blessedness of sect a frame of mind, when found among the servants of the LORD'S sanctuary.

But, Reader! do not overlook the sure consequence of faithfulness in the ministry. *Paul* experienced it then: and the same, more or *less*, is the same now. Simply to preach CHRIST, in all his glory, fulness, and all-sufficiency, never did, nor ever will fail, to call forth the anger of all self-righteous Pharisees, and excite the indignation of the mere nominal professor, even more than the profane. It was so in the days of the Apostle, it is so now, and will continue through the whole time-state of the Church. But, oh! how sweet to eye CHRIST amidst all exercises, and to refer all events into his sovereign hand, as *Paul* did; *he that judgeth me, (said he,) is the LORD!*

Almighty Master! give to all thy faithful servants grace, that when reviled, they may bless; when persecuted, may suffer it; when defamed, they may entreat. May they be content to suffer shame, so JESUS be but honored; and delight to go forth unto their LORD, *without the camp, bearing his reproach!*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle here enters upon the Subject of Reproof. He very sweetly introduceth the Example of CHRIST, and speaks of Him as the Passover. The Chapter concludes with Exhortations.

Reflections

SEE, my soul! what corruptions the human heart is exposed to, and how the peace and prosperity of Church-communion, is liable to be interrupted by the improper indulgence of fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Oh! for grace to keep the heart with all diligence! LORD, do thou keep thy Church, thy people, with thy watchful care, for without thee we are nothing!

Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for this short but sweet portion in this Chapter, which calls upon us to behold CHRIST, *our Passover, sacrificed for us*; and to know our LORD in this most precious, and blessed office-character. Yes! thou dearest JESUS! methinks I would eye thee with unceasing delight, as *the LAMB of GOD slain from the foundation of the world*. Thou wert, indeed, and art still, and ever will be, *a lamb of the first year without blemish, and without spot*. Thou wert taken out, as the Jewish lamb was; from among the flock, the One, the holy individual One chosen by GOD from among the people; *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*. LORD! give me grace to keep the feast on this, thy one, thine all-sufficient sacrifice, to thy praise and my unceasing comfort, during the whole of my time-state here below, until thou shalt bring me home to the marriage supper of the LAMB in heaven. Let there be no leaven found in my heart or house. Oh! for the LORD so to prepare me for this and every other holy ordinance, that I may make CHRIST my whole and sole Passover. Let me so paschatize and keep the feast upon my LORD's sacrifice, that both in doctrine, and in life, and conversation, CHRIST may be all, and in all. JESUS will preside at his own table, who both makes the feast, and is the feast, my New Testament altar, sacrifice, and sacrificer. And I shall sit down at his table with great delight here below; and ere long, at his table above, with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, the heirs with the whole Church of the same promise!

Chapter 6

Summary

The Apostle opens this Chapter, with giving Directions to the Church, how to manage their Disputes without the Law. He closeth the Chapter with a short, but very blessed Account, that the Bodies of CHRIST's People are Members of CHRIST's Body.

Reflections

READER! let you and I learn, from this interesting Chapter, how utterly unsuitable, and unbecoming it is, in a child of GOD, called out of the Adam-fall of nature, and redeemed from the law of works, to be entangled in courts of earthly judicature, when we are professedly looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD. Oh! what a reproach it is, as the Apostle saith, to see brother going to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers!

Let us pause again, and again, over that precious Scripture, of sinners washed, sanctified, and justified, when brought out of nature's darkness, and the shadow of death. And, oh! what delightful view are we called to contemplate, in being told, and with such an assurance of undoubted testimony, that our bodies are the temples of the HOLY GHOST. *Solomon* was struck with astonishment, in contemplating the infinite condescension of JEHOVAH to regard the house; which he had made. *Behold, (said he,) the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee!* But here we are called upon to behold GOD, the HOLY GHOST making the bodies of his people his temple. LORD! give me grace to honor those members of CHRIST's mystical body, which are made the indwelling residence of the HOLY GHOST; and never by any act of sin and infirmity; desecrate what the LORD calls his temple. Precious LORD JESUS! let me never lose sight of this blessed truth: that I am thine, and bought with a price. Oh! that every thought, and word, and action, could give glory to thy Holy Name!

Chapter 7

Summary

The Apostle is chiefly treating in this Chapter, on the Subject of Marriage. He dwells largely on the several Circumstances connected with it, and makes very many blessed Observations, by way of Improve. went.

Reflections

READER! You and I shall read this Chapter of the Apostle's to no small improvement, if from what is here said in relation to the civil societies in common life, we make a spiritual reflection on that near, and dear union, which subsists between CHRIST and his Church. There can be no connection so near, none so dear, none so important, interesting, and durable; for it is for ever. All other unions die with the body. But CHRIST and his Church are one, to all eternity.

It may be very blessed to have an eye to this, in our forming connections in the marriage state; and to invite the LORD JESUS and his disciples to the wedding. And, with respect to the humble, or exalted state, in which the members of CHRIST'S body are placed, experience loudly confirms the truth every day; poverty, or riches, go but a little way, to frustrate, or promote, the real comforts of life. Where JESUS is, and where He forms the union, blessedness must follow, in the sanctified use of all dispensations.

Reader! do not overlook, or forget, the decision of the LORD by the Apostle in this Chapter, concerning ordinances. Circumcision or uncircumcision, with every other ordinance whatever, are in themselves nothing. Many of CHRIST'S redeemed ones now in glory, like the man JESUS took with him to Paradise from the cross; never enjoyed a single ordinance upon earth. And many, it is to be feared, who have had all the privileges of ordinances, know nothing of the GOD of ordinances to their souls joy. Reader! may it be your happiness, and mine, to form our conclusions upon the Apostle's standard, as regulated by the SPIRIT of GOD. *In CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD, Amen.*

Chapter 8

Summary

The Apostle in this Chapter, is treating on the Subject of Meats offered unto Idols. He very blessedly states the Privileges of the LORD'S People, in their Christian Liberty; but shews, with what Caution a Child of GOD ought to walk, so as not to wound a weak Brother.

Reflecions

Who that beholdeth CHRIST offering his precious soul an offering for sin, and by faith considers the vast and infinite importance of that offering, as it concerns his own soul, would ever after sit down in the idol's temple. And yet my brother, wherein doth the sin differ, when indifferency and coldness to CHRIST'S Person and interest in the Church distinguisheth the conduct of any of his professing followers? Surely the offence of the cross is not ceased. And a man must be singular indeed, in the present day of the Church, if like *Paul*, he glories in that cross, and offences do not come. Blessedly the Apostle hath marked it in this chapter. *But if any man love GOD, the same is known of him.* It is blessed to be known, blessed to be noticed, blessed to be reproached for his Name's sake. *Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name's sake, said, let the LORD be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.*

Reader! let us seek grace to be faithful to GOD and to souls. And while the Lost) is making manifest his faithfulness in covenant-love, in the person, royalties, perfections, and finished salvation'of his dear SON; see that we offend not one of his little ones which trust *in* him, nor for a moment wound those for whom CHRIST died.

Chapter 9

Summary

The Apostle pleads the Dignity of his Office, and therefrom sheweth his Liberty. Ministers have a just Claim, and from the LORD'S Appointment, to be maintained in their Labors by the People. The Chapter is closed with comparing the Christian Life to a Race.

Reflections

GREAT Apostle of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! The Church of GOD will hail thee, in all generations, as the faithful servant of the LORD. Truly thou didst see the LORD JESUS, and didst become a witness to his resurrection. Truly the seal of thine Apostleship, the Churches in CHRIST, are in the LORD. And all the Churches of the saints, in all ages, and generations, find cause to bless the LORD for thy ministry. Yea! we of the present hour, are reaping daily mercies, through the grace of GOD the HOLY GHOST, for thy labors in the Church of *Corinth*.

Blessed JESUS! while running the race which is set before us, we would be everlastingly looking unto thee, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And, while the world is engaged in the empty and unsatisfying chase of life, may it be the portion of thy redeemed family, to be always following after thee, forgetting things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, and thus to press towards the mark of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. And do thou, LORD, so bless thy people with the sweet influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that we may mortify the deeds of the body and live. And JESUS himself will keep his redeemed from falling, and present them faultless in his own spotless righteousness before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

Chapter 10

Summary

The Apostle is here explaining some of the Events of the Church in the Wilderness, as Types of the New Testament Dispensation. He sweetly discourseth on the Subject of the Lord's Supper.

Reflections

WHO would have thought, on reading *Israel's* history in coming up out of Egypt, that all the great outlines of CHRIST'S Church is here shadowed forth? Yes! my soul, thy deliverance from the worse than Egyptian bondage of sin and death, of Satan's captivity and prison-house, was here represented. As all our father's in the Church were baptized unto *Moses*, as the LORD'S minister, in the cloud, and in the sea; ate and drank of the spiritual sustenance, by faith in CHRIST; and eyed CHRIST as the sum and substance of all: so thou, by the same faith in the same GOD and SAVIOR, art now passing through the same wilderness dispensations; and fetching strength for every new exercise by living on JESUS, and of his fulness receiving *grace for grace*. Oh! GOD the HOLY GHOST, bring me under thy continual baptisms! Let my spiritual life in CHRIST, be maintained, as the faithful *Israelites* were, by the same spiritual meat; and let My soul's thirst be continually satisfied in drinking of the same spiritual drink; for He that went before in the pillar of the cloud, and that followed them in the pillar of the fire, is the same LORD JESUS to me, as them; even the Rock whose work is perfect, just as true is He! Precious LORD JESUS! do I not know? hast thou not taught me? that all grace for thy whole family here, and all glory for thy redeemed above, is treasured up, and hath been treasured up, in thine Almighty Person, as the Covenant-head and Husband of thy Church from all eternity?

Sweet cup of blessing in my Lord's Supper! may it be my holy joy and delight often to take thee. For surely, it is an ordinance of JESUS' own appointing. And He who appointed it at the first, promised to be present at every celebration, and will continue to the last, to make it sanctified to every true partaker. Surely it is among the

love-tokens of JESUS. He will be always there where his people are assembled. We shall feed on Him by faith. And we shall know

heartfelt experience, while the King sitteth at his table, and this graces of our souls, which he himself hath given, and calleth forth into exercise, is like the spikenard, that the cup of blessing which we bless is indeed rich communion with the blood of CHRIST; and the bread we break is indeed precious communion of the body of CHRIST! Oh! for the sweet quickenings of GOD the SPIRIT leading to the feast, that my soul may be often taking the cup of salvation, and calling upon the name of the LORD. And do thou, dearest LORD, so lead, so guide, so daily, hourly, momentarily, bring my soul under thy blessed teachings, and influences; that in providences as well as seasons of grace, at my own table or at the LORD's, wherever I am, however employed, in the Church or in the market place, in dealings with men, or sweet communion with the LORD; *whatsoever do, in word, or deed, do all to the glory of GOD, in the name of JESUS CHRIST.*

Chapter 11

Summary

The Apostle is giving Instructions in the opening of this Chapter. He enters somewhat more largely in treating of the Lord's Supper and very sweetly discourseth upon it.

Reflections

LORD give thy people grace to follow thy faithful servants as they have followed thee! Truly, thou dearest LORD! thou art the head of every man, for by creation all is thine. But, oh! how sweet to my soul, that, while JESUS is the head of dominion to the whole creation of GOD, he is the head of union to his body the Church, *the fulness that filleth all in all.*

Almighty JESUS! blessed for ever be thy name for thy grace in committing to the Apostle, for the benefit of thy Church, the precious form of institution of thine holy Supper. Oh! for grace to eye thee at every renewed opportunity of attending thy table, as receiving sinners, and eating with them! Oh! for faith in lively actings upon thy Person, and blood-shedding, and righteousness, so as to hear thee saying to my poor soul, amidst the numbers of thine

round thy table, *Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, This Cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me.* Oh! LORD! who shall thy people ever remember, if we are capable of forgetting thee! LORD! make the sweet service to all thy redeemed, a commemorating, communicating, refreshing, soul-strengthening ordinance, to feast thy saints here below, till we come to sit down with thee at the Marriage Supper of the LAMB in heaven.

Chapter 12

Summary

This very blessed Chapter, from beginning to end, is directed to one and the same Subject; namely, to describe the Oneness and Union of CHRIST and his Church. The Apostle from thence shews that all the spiritual Gifts and Graces which CHRIST'S Members enjoy, flow from their glorious Head, through the blessed Ministry of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

Reflections

BLESSED GOD the SPIRIT! suffer my poor soul never to be ignorant of spiritual gifts! I know, indeed, O LORD, through thy divine quickenings, and gracious teachings, that like those *Corinthians*, I was once an ignorant, blind, and senseless Gentile; carried away unto the idols, and stumbling blocks of sin, and iniquity, which a fallen nature, under the dominion of *Satan*, had set up in my heart, Blessed be the LORD the SPIRIT, which brought me out of darkness, and hath enabled me to say, that JESUS is JEHOVAH, and my LORD! And I do desire to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, for all his spiritual gifts to me, to every child of GOD, yea, to the whole Church, Blessed be the LORD, for the numberless, nameless gifts, with which he blesseth the people! All are his. From the first moment, in which the LORD quickens the poor sinner, through all the vast diversities of gifts he bestows upon every saint, whether Prophet, Apostle, or Teacher; until he brings home the whole Church, rich, for glory in CHRIST; well do I know, and with holy joy confess, that it is the same GOD, *which worketh all in all.* Yes! thou

Almighty Minister of the Church! sure I am, that *all these worketh that One and the self-self SPIRIT, dividing to every man severally as lie will.*

And blessed be thy Name, sweet and precious JESUS! thou, and thy Church are one. Many are the members of thy mystical body; yet, whether in Heaven or earth, still but one. Our LORD JESUS, our glorious Head, hath but one body. Our faithful Husband, but our Wife. Oh! then, do thou own, and bless, and sanctify, and keep, and love, and delight in thy Spouse, the Church! Make her, LORD! what thou wouldest have her to be. And at length bring her home, as one espoused by thyself, and presented by thyself, and to thyself, a glorious Church: the body of CHRIST, and members in particular, to be holy, and without blemish, before thee for ever.

Chapter 13

Summary

This is a short, but interesting Chapter on Love. The Apostle speaks in the highest Commendation of it, and declares that it will abide for ever.

Reflections

Who can read this sweet Chapter, in the relation of Charity, and in the many lovely qualities, with which the Apostle hath so beautifully set it forth, without having the mind at once directed to JESUS, who is all that is here said, and abundantly more, even Charity in the full, compleat, and finished representation of it. Yes! thou dear LORD! every thing of love, lovely, and loving, shines in thee, in one rich constellation. What love, what charity, was that of thine, which prompted thine infinite mind, before all worlds, to set thine affections upon our nature; and at the call of GOD thy FATHER, to betroth thy Church to thyself for ever! And, what charity, what love, passing all knowledge, when after creation-work had taken place in the earth, and thy Church had treacherously departed from thee, to assume our nature, and die *the just for the unjust to bring us to GOD!* And, what an everlasting, unwearied, boundless affection, of love and charity; in cleansing, sanctifying, washing in thy blood,

cloathing in thy righteousness, making comely in thy comeliness, and bringing thy Church through all the time-state here below, until thou shalt bring her home to the eternal world above, to present her to thyself, a glorious Church, to her joy, and thy praise, for ever! Oh! for grace, to contemplate the GOD-Man, in whom alone, all love and charity centers; and from whom alone, all the manifestations of both, must be derived.

Blessed LORD! let it be my happiness to learn, from the contemplation of thyself, and from what is said in this sweet Chapter; that the most splendid talents, and most showy services, no pompous language or head-knowledge of all mysteries, neither the largest display of alms-giving, no, nor the martyrdom of the body, can recommend to GOD: nothing short of the love of GOD in the heart, can profit the soul. Oh for that washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed upon us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD!

Chapter 14

Summary

The Apostle is discoursing in this Chapter, on Spiritual Gifts, and Prophecy. He points out the great Advantage of ministering in the congregation in a Language suited to the Hearers. And the Apostle adds, some Instruction, for the better Order of Worship.

Reflections

PASSING by many very useful observations, which in relation to Church government, might be taken from this Chapter; I shall only request the Reader, to make one general improvement from the whole, with respect to what the Apostle here calls prophesying, or preaching. The absurdity he shews to arise from the preaching in an unknown tongue, is hardly more glaring, than that of preaching in a stile and language, unsuited to the capacities of the hearers, which is little less unknown also.

Nothing can be more evident, than that the whole design of the Gospel is to proclaim to fallen, sinful man, tidings of Salvation. When the Angels posted down from heaven to tell a lost world of the

coming of a SAVIOR; their preaching was short, but comprehensive, *Behold!* (said they) *we bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOR, which is CHRIST the LORD.*

But let us suppose, that those angels had brought those tidings in a language, to a lost world, that no one understood; of what importance would have been their message? When a preacher speaks in a stile of studied elegance, high flown periods, and florid words, which the hearer cannot understand; of what avail is the whole sum and substance of his sermon? And in like manner, when the discourse is directed to expatiate upon the great excellency of virtue, and the happiness which will arise from a discharge of all the high duties of life; and when a poor sinner, with a sinful, sorrowful, broken heart, hears of this blessedness, but is conscious that he had done nothing to merit it, but his whole life meriting the reverse, in punishment; of what possible use can such preachers prove to a wounded soul like his? If indeed, preachers had to do with hearers not sinful, and polluted, who felt no concern for sin, because they had none to answer for; then, I confess, Moral Essays, as they are called, and harangues on the Loveliness of Virtue, might do very well to amuse, and gratify the pride of human nature. But, my Brother! my Brother! If every man be a sinner before GOD, and every man, as the Scriptures solemnly declares, standeth in need of salvation; oh! how needful must it be, to preach CHRIST plainly, fully, completely. Every preacher, sensible of the plague of his own heart, (and he who is not sensible of the plague of his own heart, is not fit, to be a preacher to others,) will rather, as *Paul* saith, speak five words with his understanding, and to be understood of others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. LORD JESUS! stop the mouths of those who run unsent: who preach they know not what! But oh! send out Pastors after thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with knowledge, and understanding.

Chapter 15

Summary

This is a most blessed Chapter, on the Subject of the Resurrection of the LORD JESUS. From CHRIST'S Resurrection, the Apostle proves ours. And the blessed Effects of the Doctrine are shewn.

Reflections

On! thou that art the resurrection and the life! Hail! thou glorious Almighty LORD JESUS! Thou hast indeed declared thyself to be the SON of GOD, with power, according to the SPIRIT of holiness, by thy resurrection from the dead. And thou hast thereby shewn to the fullest demonstration, that in thy life thy people live, and by thy resurrection theirs also is secured, thyself becoming the first fruits of them that slept. Praises to thy great and glorious name! Sin is now pardoned. Justice is now satisfied. Law is now fulfilled. Satan conquered. Hell subdued, and heaven open to all believers!

Oh! ye faithful in CHRIST! rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. Death hath no longer a sting; the passage through the grave is but the valley of the *shadow* of death, for the *substance* is done away. CHRIST hath perfumed the grave with his holy body. It is no longer the territories of the devil, but the chamber of rest to the LORD'S people. From thence, clear views are now seen of the city of the living GOD. Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us unto this lively hope by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead! Blessed be GOD the SON, who is the resurrection and life of his people. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, who *by* the washing of regeneration, which he hath shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR, hath made us partakers of the divine nature, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life! Amen and Amen.

Chapter 16

Summary

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. Several very earnest Admonitions are given, which are followed up with Salutations to the Church.

Reflections

READER! let us not take leave of this beautiful, and blessed Epistle of the Apostle, without first praising the LORD the HOLY GHOST for so precious a portion of inspired truths, and thanking Him for the services and ministry of it by so faithful a servant.

And, while we both look up to the Great Author of his Holy Word, for his divine teachings to accompany our perusal of the whole contents of it, as often as we are favored with the opportunity, let us, as we pass on from chapter to chapter, be everlastingly on the look-out for Him whom *Paul* preached, and whom *Paul* determined to know nothing beside; even JESUS CHRIST, *and him crucified*; JESUS CHRIST, and him glorified; the sent of GOD, the Lamb of GOD, the word of GOD, the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to every one that believeth; yea, JEHOVAH'S One, and only One plan of mercy, in the joint love of the HOLY THREE IN ONE; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, to all eternity.

Farewell *Paul*! for the present! We bless thy LORD, and our LORD, for having counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. May the LORD render thy services yet blessed, as the LORD hath in the ages past, and in the present hour, so on to thousands yet unborn. Oh! may the LORD commission those sweet and sacred Epistles to the edification and establishment of the Church upon earth, as long as time shall remain, until the whole redeemed of the Lon are brought home to join the Church in heaven.

Amen.

2nd CORINTHIANS

General Observations

It should seem, from several expressions scattered over the different pages of this *Second* Epistle to the Church at *Corinth*, and particularly from what *Paul* saith, about *Titus* coming from them to him; that the Apostle's former Epistle had been very kindly received by the Church in general. And, it is more than probable, that *Paul* felt his mind, in consequence of it, the more encouraged to address the Church, as he here hath done in several of the chapters in words of the sweetest consolation.

As to the *time* when written, it hath been very generally supposed, that it was not later than a year after the former. The close of the Epistle dates it from *Philippi*. And *Titus* and *Lucas*, were the highly favored Post-men, to convey it to the Church.

The sum and substance of it, I do not think it necessary to describe, by a long detail of contents. Every Chapter carries with it the blessed particulars in its bosom, I would only observe, that the ministry of it, was not intended to be limited to the Church of *Corinth*, but to have regard to the whole body of CHRIST, in all ages. As *Peter* said of the Prophets, so we may say of the Apostles: *not unto themselves, but unto us did they minister the things which are now reported unto us by them, in the Gospel preached with the HOLY GHOST sent down from Heaven.*

I only detain the Reader, on his entrance on this blessed book of GOD, to desire him, to join my spirit, in prayer to Him, *from whom alone cometh every good, and every perfect gift, that it may be commissioned to our mutual benefit, and the divine praise, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.*

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle opens this Second Epistle, with his usual Apostolic Benediction. He blesseth GOD for the sweet Consolations the whole Church are possessed of, in and through CHRIST. He speaks of the Exercise of his Ministry among them, as in godly Sincerity; and reminds them, that GOD's Promises are all Yea, and Amen, in CHRIST JESUS.

Reflections

READER! let you and I seek for grace to do as *Paul* did; and, looking up with holy faith and love, to a Covenant GOD in CHRIST, bless the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and hail him, *as the FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort!* And oh! how sweet the thought to my soul, that as a FATHER of mercies, he can, and will beget mercies for me, suited to my wants, and to his glory. I shall have pardoning mercy, and renewing mercy, and refreshing mercy, yea, every mercy, to help in every time of need; for my GOD *can supply all my need according to his riches in glory in CHRIST JESUS.* And, he will not only be my Covenant-GOD, and FATHER in mercy; but the GOD of all comfort. Who then shall want comfort, who hath GOD for their portion? And who shall question divine love and faithfulness, when GOD hath given all mercy, and all comfort in his dear SON? Oh! for grace to be everlastingly reading, and enjoying the inscription of the cross: *He that spared not his own SON, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him, freely give us all things?*

Precious LORD JESUS! the Amen! the faithful, and true witness! Oh! how blessed, and delightful to my soul's joy, that the blessings in thee, and from thee, are not at a yea, and nay uncertainty; but all the promises in thee, are yea, and in thee Amen. LORD grant, that in thee, the testimony of *my* conscience may be in simplicity and godly sincerity; and that I may thus have my conversation in the world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of thy great day, when I shall see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever.

And oh! Almighty SPIRIT! do thou establish me, and anoint me, and seal me, to the day of redemption; that I may have *the earnest of the SPIRIT in my heart!*

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle prosecutes the Subject of his Epistle in this Chapter. Very blessedly he speaks the inmost Feelings of his Soul, and finds cause to bless GOD, for causing him always to triumph in CHRIST.

Reflections

READER! may the LORD give grace to fix our eyes, our hearts, our whole souls, upon the person of JESUS until like *Paul* we can, and do cry out, with the same full assurance of faith: *Now, thanks be unto GOD, which always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST.* Oh! the blessedness of having the sweet savor of his knowledge, always upon the mind! And do we not know, that from being secretly made one, in the members of his mystical body, the persons of all his redeemed are so secured, in all the blessed effects of his blood, and righteousness, that there is an everlasting cause to triumph in Him, amidst all the discouragements we meet with in ourselves.

And, oh! Almighty GOD and Father! when I consider, that it is unto thee, CHRIST is a sweet savor, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; oh! how refreshing to my soul is the blessed consideration, that all CHRIST is, and all our enjoyments in CHRIST are; thy love is in all. And GOD the SPIRIT, no less brings home my LORD, the LORD of life and glory to my affection, and gives me *to rejoice, in hope of the glory of GOD.* Again, again I say; nor shall the sweet words cease, until I come to see my GOD in glory: *Now thanks be unto GOD which always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST!*

Chapter 3

Summary

In this Chapter, which is but short, though sweet, the Apostle appeals to the Hearts of the Corinthians, as Proofs of his Ministry. He draws a beautiful Comparison, between the Ministration of the Law, and the Gospel; to shew the vast Superiority of the latter.

Reflections

READER! let you and I, learn to rightly value our privileges!. Blessed be GOD, we are not come to the Mount, that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest! Oh! what an awful dispensation, to shadow forth the terror, and dread, with which the broken law of GOD stood over the alarmed conscience of the trembling, guilty soul! Well might it be called, the ministration of death. For it denounced everlasting indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil. Reader! what a mercy is it, that the poor sinner is come not to Mount *Sinai*, but Mount *Zion*; not to the law to condemn, but to the Gospel to save; even to JESUS *the Mediator of the New Covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* LORD! Take away every remaining vail, of darkness and unbelief. Cause my soul, with open face, to behold as in a glass, the glory of the LORD! Cause my soul to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the SPIRIT of the LORD. And do thou, Almighty SPIRIT, grant me freedom of access, to the mercy-seat of my GOD, in CHRIST. For where thou, LORD, art, there is liberty. Oh! for liberty to pray, to plead, to wrestle with my GOD in prayer, in the blood, obedience, and death, of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Give me, LORD, that sweet spirit of adoption, that I may be no longer under a spirit of bondage, but cry, Abba FATHER! And, oh! do thou be an unceasing witness to *my* spirit, that I am a child of GOD!

Chapter 4

Summary

This is a most beautiful, and interesting Chapter. The Apostle sets forth, the solemn Views he had of the Ministry, and his Earnestness to be found faithful, in the discharge of it. He speaks of his great Exercises, in consequence thereof; and tells the Church, of the Supports he had in JESUS, to carry him through all.

Reflections

I would ponder well the contents of this sweet Chapter. What a mercy to a place, to a Church, to a people, is a faithful servant of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! What a mercy to that servant, that minister, that he hath this treasure, in an earthen vessel; that when creature-weakness is made manifest, and successful in Creator-strength; it may lead his heart, to give all the glory to the LORD.

Blessed JESUS! make me an humble follower of those faithful servants of old, who were enabled through grace, to bear about with them always the dying of the LORD JESUS; that the life also of JESUS might be made manifest in their body. Oh! for grace to be kept above the afflictions of a moment, in the sure and certain prospect of that eternal glory, which shall be revealed. LORD! grant, that a believing view of that everlasting Covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure, and a consciousness through grace, of a personal interest in all the blessings of it; may keep my soul from fainting, under any of the exercises of the present time-state of existence. *Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.* Oh! for a life of faith in full exercise, until *that which is perfect is come; and when that which is in part shall be done away.*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle is here prosecuting, much the same Subject, as in the preceding Chapter. He speaks with full assurance of Faith, of his

eternal Interests, He closeth the Discourse, with stating the Grounds of all Security in CHRIST.

Reflections

Who is blessed in the LORD, that can join the Apostle's confidence, on the same well-grounded assurance in CHRIST; that when the tabernacle of this earthly house shall fall, the mansion of glory in JESUS, stands open for his sure reception? Oh! the vast, the conceivable difference, which will take place, at the judgment-seat of CHRIST, between the redeemed of the LORD, and the unregenerate! Who shall form conception, between the shouts of holy joy, and the shrieks of the condemned? LORD JESUS! be thou my portion *now*; and sure I am, thou wilt be my everlasting confidence *then*, LORD! give me all the sweet properties of the new creature, and so cause the love of CHRIST to constrain me, that during the whole time-state of my continuance here below, I may thus judge, and thus act, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, who died for them, and rose again! Blessed LORD JESUS! I would be wholly thine! And, oh! the rapturous thought! I am made the righteousness of GOD in thee!

Chapter 6

Summary

In, the former Part of this Chapter, the Apostle is treating the Subject of the Ministry. In the latter, he cautions the Church against communications with infidels.

Reflections

WHAT everlasting praise hath the Church of GOD to offer, to the joint Authors of such unspeakable grace, and favor, as are given to the Church, in JESUS CHRIST! Blessed for ever be GOD the FATHER, who both gave his dear SON, as a Covenant for the people; and heard him, and succored him, in the day of salvation! And blessed for ever be GOD the SON, who hath given the accepted time, and the day of salvation to his Church, during the whole of her time-state, upon

earth. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, who not only maketh the LORD's people willing in the day of his power; but in the infinite condescension of his grace, maketh their bodies his temple! Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou give me to know, and live under, thy gracious abidings, from day to day. Suffer me not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For as CHRIST hath no concord with *Belial*, so let not my soul have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Oh! for grace to be separated, that I may daily, hourly, be enjoying the astonishing grace, in having the knowledge, and enjoyment of GOD as my FATHER, and live, among the One and daughters of the LORD Almighty!

Chapter 7

Summary

This Chapter contains many earnest Exhortations, arising out of the foregoing. Paul adds several affectionate Observations, as expressive of his Good-will to the Church.

Reflections

How very encouraging it is to the true believer in CHRIST, to behold where his security is, and in whom is his strength found! LORD! thou knowest, and thou hast in some measure taught me to know, that I can do nothing of myself, and all my sufficiency is of thee. I bless thee, my gracious GOD, that I have these sweet promises of thy indwelling abode, in my heart. Keep me therefore, by thy Almighty power; and by faith, give me daily, hourly, to see, and know, that thou art cleansing me, and I am cleansed: thou hast perfected holiness, yea, thou art thyself the holiness of thy people; and, by faith, I am made the blessed partaker of it, in the fear of GOD.

And, oh! thou risen and exalted SAVIOR! send down thine ascension gifts in holy profusion, upon Churches, ministers, and people. Sweet will it be to my soul, and to every child of GOD, to receive from thine own hand, the genuine grace, which worketh godly sorrow, in a true, and sincere repentance, not to be repented of. LORD keep open this spring in our souls. Divorce us from all self-

righteousness. Let every thing tend to hide pride from our eyes; and open the LORD JESUS to our view. And let a daily sense of our nothingness, and creatureship, and unworthiness, endear our LORD, more and more to our apprehension; that we may behold JESUS, and JESUS alone, as the whole of salvation. Not tears, not prayers, not repentance, no, nor faith, as an act of ours. These are *effects*, not the *cause*. Neither any thing wrought *by* us, or any thing wrought *in* us; but CHRIST himself; and his own Personal, incommunicable work, the whole of salvation! Oh! for grace, daily, hourly to know, and as often to sing; the words of him of old: *The LORD is my strengths and my song, and he is become my salvation!*

Chapter 8

Summary

The Historical Part of this Chapter, is in relation to the Provision Paul recommended, for the poor Saints in the Church. He speaks sweetly of CHRIST, and shews the Fulness, and Suitability of the LORD, to his People.

Reflections

WHAT a lovely view those Churches of *Macedon* exhibit, of the real love of CHRIST, in their hearts, in their liberal attention to the wants of CHRIST'S members. Not only in proportion to their power, but beyond their power, the Apostle testifieth, of their willingness to help them. But Reader! while paying all due respect to those faithful members of CHRIST'S body; look beyond all and every other consideration of charity, to contemplate that unequalled grace of JESUS, who throws back at an infinite distance, all comparison.

Blessed LORD! in the sweet view of the Israelites, gathering day by day of their perishing food; let my soul learn, how to gather every day, and all the day, of that bread, which endureth to everlasting life. Precious JESUS! he that gathers the least of thee, hath that which empires cannot purchase. LORD! give me largely of thy fulness; and even in the smallest portion, I shall have no lack.

Praises to thy great name, O LORD! for the sweet discovery thy servant hath here made, of thine inheritance in thy Church. While

thou art all the glory of thy people, they are thy glory in giving out of thy fulness. And while they are made everlastingly blessed, and happy in thee, thou art everlastingly glorified in their salvation. Now do I see a beauty in that Scripture, which GOD the HOLY GHOST makes blessed to my view. *Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD; and a royal diadem in the hand of thy GOD.* Amen,

Chapter 9

Summary

This Chapter is not unsimilar to the former. It treats principally of Alms-giving. But Paul sweetly closeth it, in blessing GOD, for the first, and best, and comprehensive Mercy of all Alms-giving, in GOD's unspeakable Gift, in, and by, CHRIST.

Reflections

IT will be a blessed improvement from this Chapter, Under the LORD's teaching, to learn, while *Paul* is speaking of alms-deeds, and liberality to the poor; how pure that source of real charity is, which runs *from* GOD, and leads *to* GOD. What an astonishment would it induce in the minds of some men, if they were told, that as no alms-giving whatever is real charity, unless it ariseth, as a stream doth from a fountain, from the love of GOD; the numberless public charities as they are called, which have not this origin for their birth, cease to be real charities; and will be found more the effect of pride, and ostentation, than either intended for divine glory, or human happiness. If all the actions of men on the score of charity, were ascertained by this standard, what a draw-back would be found, in the calculations of self-righteous Pharisees, of their real state before GOD? Reader! do attend to the Apostle's character of the love of the heart, in that which comes from GOD, and leads to GOD. GOD loveth a cheerful giver. Not simply self-delight, in the deed; for this is often the choicest fruit the self-righteous character gathers, from his charity, in the offering made to the shrine of his vanity: but a cheerful giver to the LORD, of his own bounty, as the LORD's Almoner. Cheerful in seeing the LORD's poor, fed from the LORD's

gifts; in which self hath no gratification of pride, but feels humility. Here it is, the cup of cold water becomes a precious gift. And the hundreds of the affluent, given without it, hath no value in the sight of GOD.

But, Reader! if things be so, think what a gift was, and is, that which flowed, and will for ever be flowing, from the free, pure, disinterested love of GOD, in the gift of his dear SON? Think, what a sovereign, unlooked-for, boundless, bottomless mercy, in the gift of GOD the SPIRIT! Oh! for grace to have a right apprehension, of this *unspeakable gift!*

Chapter 10

Summary

The Apostle enters upon this Chapter with one of the most endearing Expressions of Entreaty, to enforce what he wrote to them, in holding forth the Meekness, and Gentleness, of CHRIST. And he follows it up, with several very interesting Arguments.

Reflections

LAMB of GOD! be it my mercy to learn of thee, for thou art meek, and lowly in heart. Thou knowest, LORD! and blessed be thy Name, since thou wert pleased to call me by thy grace, that thou hast taught me, in some measure, also to know, that by nature, and by practice.

I am haughty and proud; and like ground thrown open, I am exposed to all the ravages of the wild beasts, and to the still worse ravages of my own poor, fallen, sinful, and corrupt affections. Precious JESUS! what a refreshing, sweet thought, to comfort me under these depressing circumstances; thou art the perfection of thy redeemed! Divinely fitted, and divinely disposed, to be the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, of thy people!

LORD! let me go forth to the holy war, in thy strength, and in thy power. Do thou put on me, all the holy armor. But while divinely clad, never, never, my glorious Head, may I for a moment forget, that all the victory is thine, and all the glory thine!

Send forth, LORD, thy servants, to the work of the ministry; and may they prove that they are thine, and sent by thee, in passing

through evil report, as well as good report. Oh! the blessedness, amidst the strife of tongues, to have the SPIRIT'S testimony, that they have not run unspent, nor labored in vain. GOD the HOLY GHOST speaking in them, and by them, to the hearts of his people.

Chapter 11

Summary

The Apostle in this Chapter, is defending himself, and his Ministry, against some that opposed him. He modestly speaks of his Trials, and Afflictions.

Reflections

READER! who can behold the warmth and zeal of the Apostle in his godly jealousy over the *Corinthian* Church, in their espousals to CHRIST, without feeling an anxiety and jealousy over our own hearts, in relation to our own? Shall not you and I be very earnest to know ourselves betrothed as chaste virgins to CHRIST? Hath JESUS indeed, notwithstanding all our poverty, loathsomeness by sin, and all the reproached state of the fall, married our persons, taken an interest in all our concerns, nourished us, cherished us, and with all *the* tenderness and love of the bridegroom, provides for all our wants, and for ever doing the part of the most affectionate husband; and shall we not feel our attachment to One who hath so loved us, as to give himself for us? Shall *Satan* beguile our hearts as he did *Eve*? Shall any temptation lead away from the beautiful simplicity that is in CHRIST?. Oh! thou glorious and all-sufficient SAVIOR! In thee is a fulness and an all-sufficiency of the most compleat salvation! In thee GOD is well pleased t. So LORD may be all thy people.

And if any come and preach another JESUS! if any speak of another SPIRIT, another Gospel, Oh! may the LORD silence all false teachers, all false Apostles. LORD, in compassion to the souls of men, stop the mouths of those, which run unspent of thee. And whatever specious garb they come under, though transformed as angels or light; yet, whatever tends not to honor CHRIST, let all thy faithful servants be kept from their delusion, and be enabled to resist their deceitful wiles. If any man love not our LORD JESUS CHRIST, let

him be *Anathema Maranatha!* Oh! for grace to be kept from all evil, and all the malice of the foe, as *Paul*, let down by the wall, and escaping their hands. And, oh! for grace in spirituals, to be kept by the power of GOD, through faith unto salvation.

Chapter 12

Summary

Paul is here speaking of Visions and Revelations, with which the LORD favored him. He speaks of his Infirmities.

Reflections

READER! let us pause and contemplate the highly favored state of the LORD'S faithful servant, thus admitted to visions and revelations of GOD. No doubt, the very recollection warmed his soul in all the after stages of life. *Paul* felt the blessedness of them, and, like *Peter*, well knew, to his soul's joy, that he had not followed cunningly devised fables, when was made known unto him the power and coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, but was an eyewitness of his majesty. Reader! though the manifestations the LORD JESUS now makes to his people are not so splendid, for they are not now so necessary for confirmation to the Church, yet are they equally sure for the private consolation of every child of GOD. When GOD the HOLY GHOST in regeneration, calls his redeemed from the *Adam*-darkness of nature to the light of life in CHRIST, not unfrequently, his manifestations are so sweet and gracious, that their remembrance becomes a comfort, through all the after parts of life. Yea, many a child of GOD in a dying hour, like *Jacob* in recollection of his *Bethel*, and *Moses* of his *Bush*, hath found the cold, clammy sweat of death unable to destroy the warm fervor of the precious remembrance! Oh! for grace for the soul to live in the enjoyment of CHRIST; and, sure I am, CHRIST himself will be the enjoyment of the soul in death!

Reader! do not overlook the personal interest which every child of GOD hath in the LORD JESUS'S sweet answer to *Paul*: *My grace is sufficient for thee!* Messengers of *Satan*, thorns in the flesh, infirmities and reproaches, these all belong to the present time-state

of the Church. There is a needs-be for them. The Church of GOD is passing through a wilderness, and cannot get to heaven without them. But JESUS knows them all, permits them all, overrules them all, sanctifies all. And JESUS hath, from all eternity, the very portion of grace to bear up all his members under all, as is exactly suited to all, and will assuredly give it out to each, and to all in the hour of need. Precious LORD JESUS! may I never lose sight of this! my GOD, my SAVIOR hath the very portion of grace I require for this and that occasion, and I have nothing to do but to ask it from him as oft as that occasion shall require. Amen! My GOD will then suit His strength to my weakness, and *bruise Satan under my feet shortly!*

Chapter 13

Summary

The Apostle in closing his second Epistle, refers the Corinthians to the Testimony of the threefold Witness, in Confirmation of the Truths he had written to them, and ends with his Apostolical Blessing.

Reflections

My soul! my Reader! let us both pause, and ponder well the sacred and sweet contents of this closing chapter of the Apostle. It opens with the assurances of two or three witnesses establishing every word. An, you and I, have the Three heavenly witnesses bearing record, that eternal life is in GOD'S SON. And the chapter ends with the blessings of those heavenly witnesses, in their grace, and love, and communion with the Church while upon earth; thus confirming the whole in personal proof. Reader! what say you to such decided records, *to the truth as it is in JESUS*. Oh! for grace, seeing we are encompassed with such witnesses, *to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith!*

Farewell *Paul!* farewell for the present, while we thank thee, as the LORD's servant and minister, for those labors of love, with which, not only the Church at *Corinth* were blessed, but the Church of GOD, in all ages since, have been benefited, under the teaching of the

Almighty Author of all scripture, GOD the HOLY GHOST. Oh! for ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, and the faithful in every true Church of JESUS to be taught from those holy scriptures, by the continual unction of the HOLY ONE, and to know all things? May it be the one language of the whole Church of GOD, in the common salutation of all saints: Brethren! the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all.

Amen.

GALATIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

GALATIA was a province of the lesser Asia. Here, the Lord had a people, whom he was pleased to call by sovereign grace; and principally, it should seem, under the personal ministry of the Apostle Paul. See, in confirmation, Acts 16:6. and 18:23. Galatians 1:8, 9. and chap. 4:13, &c. The church so formed, was made up, as might be expected, of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. Hence they brought with them into the church their several distinct prejudices, according, to their former attachments. And this explains, in a great measure, certain expressions, here and there, which we meet with in this Epistle, in the apostle's teaching. But the leading feature of the whole, and for which *Paul* here wrote to the *Galatians*, was, to set forth the way of justification before God; which the apostle decidedly shows, under God the Spirit's inspiration, to be solely in, and by, the Lord Jesus Christ, without the smallest mixture of the law.

The *time* in which *Paul* wrote this Epistle is variously dated by different writers, Some make it as early as Anno 55: others, as late as 59, in the fifth year of the reign of *Nero*. The *place* also, where the Apostle, wrote it, is no less uncertain. For though in the close of it, the signature, is said to be from *Rome*, yet this doth not mean, that *Paul* wrote it there. However, these points are not material. The great object in which we are concerned is, the assurance that the writing is by the Holy Ghost. And the Lord's seal to this appears, in every Chapter. Indeed, the whole Epistle brings with it, what *Paul* calls the threefold witness; 2 Corinthians 13:1. God the Holy Ghost the Author: the sacred inspired word itself: and the heart of the child of God, in whom the truth of it is written.

I think it unnecessary to detain the Reader from immediately entering on the perusal of a Scripture, so sweet, and interesting; and shall only beg the Lord to direct and guide my heart and pen, in all

that shall be offered upon it, in this *Poor Man's Commentary*; that both Writer and Reader may be refreshed to their soul's joy, and the Lord's glory, in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Paul introduceth his Epistle, with a short Account of himself, and his Apostleship. He speaks of God's Love, in his Conversion: and awfully describes the State of those, who preach any other Gospel, than what the Lord sent him to preach.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET testimony to my Lord in the account here given by his servant, of his call to the Apostleship! No man could commission to the office, *Paul* knew. And it was *Paul's* joy to consider, that he neither received it from man, nor was called to it by man, but by God his Savior! Jesus! who miraculously called to him from Heaven, made him an Apostle, and sent him to preach his Gospel. Oh! precious testimony, both to *Paul's* Apostleship, and to *Paul's* preaching; and to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Reader! listen to what *Paul* hath here again related, of his original state of nature, and unregeneracy. Oh! who to all appearance, more unpromising, more unlikely to be called by sovereign grace, when breathing out threatenings, and slaughter, against the disciples of the Lord! Listen to what he hath said of the Lord's call to him! See what God can accomplish, on the stoutest hearts of sinners! Behold him preaching the pure, unadulterated Gospel, of the Lord Jesus Christ! Ask *Paul*, from whence the wonderful change? A Persecutor, Blasphemer, Injurious! And now behold him, preaching the faith which once he denied. What cannot God accomplish? What will He not accomplish, to bring home his own to himself; and to rescue his whole Church from the hand of the enemy?

Reader! let you and I glorify God, in him, and for him, and for all the mercies and blessings the Church hath derived, and will derive from *Paul's* ministry, to the latest period of time. And, oh! for

grace to keep always in remembrance, as the conclusion of all *Paul's* discourses, which he himself made, as the end, and consequence of his conversion: *For this cause, (said he,) I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him, to life everlasting.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens this Chapter, about his Visit to Jerusalem. And then enters upon the grand Subject of his whole Epistle, of the Method of Justification, solely in, and by Christ.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pass over every lesser consideration, of men, and things relating to the Apostles, and servants of Christ, to have our whole thoughts fixed and centered upon the Person of the Almighty Master. Precious Jesus! be thou the One glorious Object of all my meditation!

And, while I contemplate Christ on the cross, as *Paul* hath here set him forth; let me ask myself, whether like *Paul* I can say, I am crucified with him! Do I indeed know that Christ, in all his sufferings and death, was the Surety, Representative, and Head of his people? Was I, to all intents and purposes, in Him, represented by Him, and by his sufferings and death, in the name, and for his people, redeemed by Him; and the old man of sin, in my nature, crucified with him? And not only in the cross, but in his burial, resurrection, ascension, entrance into Heaven, and sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high; in all these, do I know Jesus as my representative? Did Christ buy out my redemption, on the cross? Am I buried with him by baptism, into death? Am I risen with him, by regeneration, through God the Holy Ghost; and do I see myself by faith sitting with Him, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus? Is He gone as my forerunner, to appear in the presence of God for me; and the life I now live in the flesh, do I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me? Oh! for grace, in

lively exercise, to be always realizing my personal interest in Christ! And may it be my daily portion, under the gracious teachings of God the Holy Ghost, to know, that such is the infinite dignity of Christ's Person, and the infinite preciousness of his bloodshedding, and righteousness, that Jehovah is more honored, and glorified, by his obedience and death, than he is dishonored, by all the sins of his people, during the whole time-state of the Church on earth! Yes! thou dear Lord! I do see, through God the Spirit's teaching, that thou art everything that is blessed, to thy Church, and people; and like *Paul, I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle is still prosecuting the Subject of Justification solely in Christ. He sweetly speaks of the Mediator, and the Blessedness at being in Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! the weakness of the *Galatians*, to be looking unto Christ only in part; and for a moment to fancy, that having began in the Spirit, they could be made perfect in the flesh. And is there no Church of Christ in the present hour, tainted with the same leaven? Nay, my soul! may'st thou not but too often detect thyself, in turning to somewhat of thine own, instead of living wholly upon Jesus. Oh! my foolish heart! what can prompt to the idea, or give the least encouragement, to look off from Christ, to look unto self, in any attainments. Lord Jesus! do thou help me to feel, my utter need of thee every moment, that to the last hour, I may come to Jesus, as I came the first hour; wholly wretched in myself, and altogether insolvent.

And, oh! the sweet thought to my soul: Under all the condemnation of the law, and the curses due to the breaches of it; Jesus is the Mediator, and the Fulfiller of the law, and the complete righteousness of his people. Be thou, my honored Lord, the glorious Head, and Husband, of thy whole family. Thou art indeed the all in

all, to the whole seed of *Abraham*; for in thee shall all thy people, in all nations, be blessed.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle here represents the Church as in a State of Childhood, While under the Law: and as having attained Manhood, in Christ. Grace, and Nature, illustrated by an Allegory.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a blessed thing it is, when an heir of God in Christ is got out of the tutorage of a bondage state, and is brought into the liberty, wherewith the Lord makes his people free? And what an unspeakable blessing it is, that God, in testimony of his children's sonship-character, should send forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, *Abba*, Father!

And, Reader! as the privilege is immense, if it be your happiness to know it so, oh! see to it, that you live up to it. *Thou art no more a servant*. A child of God is an heir of God, through Christ. Live suitably to your heirship. It is all *in* Christ, all *from* Christ, all *by* Christ; and therefore, let God in Christ have all the glory. And remember, you are not living in the family as an hired servant: You are not the son of the bond-woman. Shortly the time will come, when the bond-woman, and her son, will be cast out. *For the servant abideth not in the house for ever. But the Son abideth ever*. And, if the Son hath made you free, *you shall be free indeed!* Oh! the blessedness of this freedom! Oh! the unspeakable mercy, of being born of God! Now, brethren, we, as *Isaac* was, may all such say, *are the children of promise*.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle makes some very sweet Conclusions in this Chapter, from the Doctrine he had established, in the former. Towards the Conclusion, he draws a striking Contrast, between the Works of the Flesh, and the Fruits of the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

SWEET are the properties of a justified state in Christ. Lord! I would say, give me grace to stand fast in it. There is nothing changeable in my Lord. His Person, his love, his righteousness, his blood-shedding, his complete salvation; these are all the same; without shadow of turning. And wherefore then, should I turn aside and seek comfort elsewhere? Shall I not live upon Jesus? Shall ordinances, circumcision, or uncircumcision, prayers or tears, experience or unbelief, toss my soul about, as if righteousness came by the law? Oh! thou dear Lord! with these or without these, in means or without means, may I everlastingly know thee, live upon thee, rejoice in thee, as the Lord my righteousness!

And, oh! thou blessed Lord the Holy Ghost! cause me to enter into an apprehension of the Person, work, grace, and glory, of Jesus. Sweetly hast thou taught the Church, in this blessed Chapter, that it is through thee, the Church are to wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. Lord! cause my soul daily, hourly, to wait for that everlasting establishment in Christ, which doubts no more. Lord! on this Rock fix my soul! In Christ's Person, may my whole confidence centre. With the Person of Jesus, do thou, O Lord, cause my soul to be so enamored, that I may behold in him a greater, and more perfect righteousness to make me perfect before God, than all the righteousness of the whole creation of God. Let this view of Jesus, give a firmness to my faith, which nothing can shake. And, while the Lord the Spirit enables me to mortify the flesh with its affections, and lusts; let all the fruits of the Spirit testify, whose I am, and to whom I belong, as sweet testimonies and effects, while Christ alone is the cause, of all my salvation, and all my desire.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Apostle concludes his Epistle. He exhorts the Church to Brotherly Affection, and bids them to rest in Hope, assuring, them, that in due Season, they will reap to the Spirit.

REFLECTIONS

Everlasting praises to God the Holy Ghost, for his mercy to the Church, in the gift of this sweet and precious Epistle! God be thanked for the ministry of his servant in it! And God be praised for every single instance of mercy vouchsafed the Church, by it.

We here behold, very clearly, the free, and full justification of Christ's Church, in Christ's Person; and by the sole righteousness of Jesus Christ. In Christ may all the Lord's people be found; and never seek salvation by the works of the law, but solely in the Person, and by the righteousness of Christ. And, oh! for a portion of the same Spirit, which actuated *Paul*, when he determined to glory only in the cross of Christ; convinced, that nothing, short of a new creature, can give confidence before God.

After having blessed the Lord the Spirit for this sweet Scripture, we would look with affection to *Paul*, as the highly favored servant of it. Surely, it is profitable to bless God, in, and for, the ministry of his servants; and, therefore, we love the Apostle, for his love to his Master, and zeal in his service. Farewell for the present, *Paul!* Who but must love thee, and desire to follow thee, as thou hast followed Christ? Shall we not by and by, meet thee before the throne, and bless our Covenant God together? Even so, Amen. Reader! the grace of our Lord Jesus be with the whole Israel of God! Amen.

EPHESIANS

General Observations

WE here enter upon a portion of the Inspired Writings, in which God the Holy GHOST, by his penman the Apostle, hath brought the Church into an acquaintance with the deep things of God. Every chapter, more or less, brings with it such sublime discoveries, as none but God the Holy Spirit could have indited, and none but his blessed teaching can give the ability to apprehend. Every child of God, under the LORD's instruction, cannot but be constrained, as he passeth through the several chapters, to remark these things, and to be convinced that the mind of the Apostle must have been carried out in a most eminent manner, in spiritual enjoyment, at the time God the Holy GHOST put the pen into his hand, and such a fullness of grace into his heart, when he caused him to write his Epistle to the church at *Ephesus*.

The Reader for the better apprehension of the distinguishing mercy manifested by the LORD's people among the *Ephesians*, should connect with this Epistle, the history in the formation of the Church at *Ephesus*, as related in the Acts of the Apostles. The establishment of the Gospel, among a people like the *Ephesians*, is among the world's wonder. Here was erected the magnificent building dedicated to the dunghill idol *Diana*. The city itself, like another *Athens*, appears to have been wholly given to idolatry. It was a place of much pomp, luxury, and pride in human learning, if we may judge by the destruction of the books of curious arts, which were destroyed when some were converted to the faith in Jesus. See Acts 19. throughout. But here also CHRIST had a people. And, hence, according to Covenant Promises, the Holy GHOST gathers out his redeemed, to shew forth JEHOVAH'S praise. JEREMIAH 32:37-38. EZEKIEL 34:12, &c. and 36:24, &c. Hence *Paul* was sent to *Ephesus* to raise a Church. And, hence, for the confirmation of the Church in the faith, he was afterwards directed to send this Epistle.

But we must not stop here. It was not for the Church at *Ephesus* only that this most precious portion of the divine word was sent, but for the church of God in all ages. Thou sands and tens of thousands, who never have seen, or will see *Ephesus*, have found cause to bless God the Holy GHOST for *Paul's* ministry and writings to that people. Yea, ages yet unborn, will find motives of praise for the same!

Concerning the date of this Epistle, writers are divided. Some place it so late as the year 59, corresponding to the 5th year of *Nero*.

I do not think it necessary in this place, to give an account, however briefly, of the great and essential doctrine of which this Epistle treats. These will meet us in their proper place. The chief features of God the Father's eternal love, it the choice of the Church in CHRIST, and to unspotted holiness in him, the full, free, and complete redemption by CHRIST, in the time-state of the Church, and the regenerating grace of God the Holy GHOST, with his several offices and characters; these are opened to us in all their glory, as we pass through the several chapters, and which supersede the necessity of enlarging upon them here.

It may serve, indeed, a good purpose, under God's grace, to endear this Epistle to us still more, and to induce us to receive it with the greater reverence and godly fear, if it be just remarked, that the Church of *Ephesus* is now no more. The LORD hath fulfilled what he threatened, and long, long since, removed her candlestick out of its place, Revelation 2:5. And it becomes a loud admonition to our British *Ephesus*, in the present awful hour! If God spared not a city so once blessed, take heed lest he spare not thee! The Church of God must stand, and will stand, till time shall be no more. But the Candlestick is a moveable part of the furniture in the house. The LORD may remove this to other nations, as he did by *Ephesus*, while his Church is the same upon earth, till time shall be no more.

Reader! pause at the threshold of this most blessed scripture, and let us both beg the Almighty Giver of it, to unfold to our spiritual apprehension, the gracious contents of it; that CHRIST, who is the great *object* of all contained in it, and the *subject* of all treated of in it, may appear to us in all his, fullness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency; that *in* him, and *of* him, and *through* him, we may find cause continually, through every part of it, to bless JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Person, for all our blessings in Jesus Christ. Amen!

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens the Epistle with his usual Salutation. He then at once enters upon the great Subject he had in View, and traces all the Mercies of the Church, to God's eternal Purpose in CHRIST, before the Foundation of the World.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! look up for grace, as *Paul* did, to bless God, even the Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, for the wonders of divine love, as set forth in this precious Chapter from whence flow all the mercies to the Church, in time; and to all eternity. Behold! my soul, what method the LORD was pleased to make use of, among all the stores of his Omnipotency, to make known his love to the Church! In the Person of his clear Son, he caused the whole to center. And the LORD was pleased, to render the whole ten thousand times more blessed, in making all to flow in, and from, and through, a nature like our own, in the Person of the God-Man CHRIST JESUS. Pause, my soul! admire, and adore each glorious Person, in their Office-character, *in* this vast concern. Bless God the Father, for his love, *in choosing, predestinating, adopting, and accepting*, the whole body the Church, in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world! Bless God the Son, for that love of his, in *marrying* the Church from everlasting; and for *redeeming* her from the ruins of the fall, during her time-state upon earth. And bless God the Holy Ghost, for having *abounded toward the Church in all wisdom and prudence, in making known the mystery of his will*, and in all his *regenerating* grace and mercy. Yea, blessed for ever be JEHOVAH, in his threefold character of Person, for CHRIST, and all blessings in CHRIST, temporal, spiritual, end eternal blessings, for ever!

LORD! enable thy Church, to be looking forward to that glorious day of God, when the fullness of times being come, all things shall be gathered in CHRIST. What a gathering of thy people will this be, in glories unspeakable? What a dispensation of terror to thy foes? Precious, precious JESUS! how sweet is it to my soul, the assurance, of being now gathered unto thee in grace, as the earnest, and pledge of being then gathered unto thee in glory. LORD! fill my poor soul with

thy fullness; and manifest daily to my joy, and thy praise, that thou art indeed my Head, and *the fullness, which filleth all in all!*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Church is reminded of her original State of Nature, in being quickened in CHRIST. The Apostle extols the Triumphs of Grace. The Chapter closeth, with showing CHRIST to be the Foundation of his Church.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you, and I, hear what God the Spirit hath here said, to the Church at *Ephesus*; can we both, from the same divine assurance, say: the LORD hath quickened us, who were by nature, *dead in trespasses and sins*? Can we look back, and remember, how *the prince of the power of the air*, once wrought in our mind, as he doth now, *in the children of disobedience*? Had we our conversation in times past with such, and when we were dead in sins, were we quickened together with CHRIST? Oh! what a melting sense ought we to have, of divine mercies, in calling to mind, what we once were; and what, through grace, we now are? Oh! the blessedness of ascribing all to grace, and giving to God all the glory. And, must it not be God's workmanship, and not our's? Hath not God ordained all our works in us, and made both the preparation, and the performance of them, his own? And shall we seek acceptance in them, when they are not our's; or expect to be saved by them, when we are wholly saved in the LORD?

Precious LORD JESUS! It is thou, and thou alone, which hast brought us nigh by thy blood, when we were afar off, and enemies to God, by wicked works! Oh! LORD, keep us ever nigh, by thy power; that through Thee, we may always have access, by One Spirit unto the Father!

LORD! bless thy whole building the Church, in heaven, and earth; all founded on CHRIST, and all one in CHRIST. Dwell in thy mystical

body thy temple, and make it by grace, a suited habitation for thy self: Father, Son, and Spirit, both here, and hereafter! Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle in this chapter, makes a particular address to the Church at Ephesus, as a Gentile church. He shows the gracious design of GOD from the Beginning, to the Gentiles, as one with the Jews in CHRIST. He closeth in Prayer.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT cause of thankfulness hath the Church of God to offer, that the gracious purpose of JEHOVAH, hid in his breast from the beginning of the world, unknown to Angels, and principalities, and powers; should be so fully and openly revealed to the LORD'S people; yea, while the world knoweth it not, because it knew him not in whom it is hid; is made known to the saints and household of God! Oh! the blessedness of being made acquainted with the love, the everlasting love of God the Father, in his counsel, purpose, and will, in his grace to the Church! And, oh! the blessedness, that all the revelations of his love should be made known to us in the Person, and flow to us from the mediation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, through the Spirit! Surely, every mercy becomes a tenfold mercy, coming to the Church, as the whole doth in, and through CHRIST. LORD! give all thy redeemed grace to bend the knee, as *Paul* did before the God and Father of the whole family, that we *may be able to comprehend with all saints, all the vast dimensions of the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God!*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Apostle considereth the Oneness and Unity of the Church in CHRIST. He sweetly sheweth how, as one Body, the Church is supplied with every suited Grace to each Member. He closeth in an Exhortation to Love and Concord.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over the very blessed things contained In this Chapter, in setting forth the oneness and unity in CHRIST, and his Church. And then say, what powerful persuasions are continually arising from thence, that there should be one heart, and one affection, in everything which can contribute to the spiritual union, among the people. If one God and Father, one LORD JESUS CHRIST, one Holy Ghost, one Church, one faith, one baptism of the Spirit; how can it be otherwise, while under the sweet and gracious influences of those principles, but that oneness of affection, like a golden chain, must link the whole together; and the whole Church of God, be as *brethren, dwelling together in unity!*

Blessed be the glorious Head of his Church, who hath sent down his ascension-gifts upon his Church, and thereby manifested the fullest assurance, that redemption-work is finished. God the Father hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand: and sent down, according to his own most sure promise, the Holy Ghost, And God the Holy Ghost hath graciously given his gifts, to every man, severally as he will! LORD! let the whole manifestations, whether to Apostles, or Prophets, or Evangelists or Pastors, or Preachers, be accompanied with thy blessing! Let the work of the ministry, and the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of CHRIST, be carried on in the earth, until the whole Church be brought home to JESUS our perfection! And do thou, blessed Spirit, for to thee the blessed work belongs, do thou put off the *old man*, in all the LORD's redeemed ones, and put on the *new man, which after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness; for then shall we speak every man truth with his neighbor.* Then shall we not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption;

but walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved us; and forgive one another, as God for CHRIST'S sake, hath forgiven us.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle is still prosecuting the same Subject, as in the former upon the Church to follow God, under the Character of dear Children. He closeth his subject, in a most beautiful Representation of CHRIST, as the Head, and Husband, of His Body the Church.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST numberless blessed things, for raising reflection of a sweet, and spiritual nature, contained in this Chapter; I would beg of God the Holy Ghost, for grace, to fix my mind upon God the Father's love, in that, the Church is called by him *dear children!* Oh! for grace to consider the blessedness of such a name, and the proof, that all his redeemed are, indeed, dear children in his Almighty view. For He hath chosen them in his dear Son, given them to his dear Son, and given his dear Son for them, and chosen them to himself, as his adopted children in CHRIST. Oh! who that is enabled by grace, to enter into an apprehension of the unspeakable, mercy contained in such a relationship, but must cry out, with the Apostle: *Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God!*

In like manner would I beg of God the Holy Ghost, to fix my mind upon God the Son's love, who hath so loved his Church, as to give himself, an offering, and a sacrifice, to God, for a sweet smelling savor. Oh! thou dear *Emanuel!* let the rich savor of thy blood, which hath perfumed heaven for ever, sweetly cleanse my soul, from the savor of all uncleanness!

And no less would I beg of God the Holy Ghost, to fix my mind upon his own glorious Person, and Godhead; and that, in the fruit of the Spirit, *in* all goodness, and righteousness, and truth, I may be a follower of God, as one of his dear children, and walk in love, as CHRIST also hath loved me, and given himself for me! Oh! for grace,

to be walking in the light, as children of the light, and as the members of CHRIST'S body, his flesh, and his bones. Shortly, JESUS will bring home his Church; and all the great purposes of his mystery, will be accomplished. His people shall then *see him as he is, and know even as they are known!*

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

In this Chapter the Epistle is closed: and a blessed Close is made: Paul bids the Church to entrench themselves, in the holy Armory of God. And he seals up all, with an Apostolic Benediction.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let us pause over the close of this Epistle, and, as we look back, and review the wonderful contents of it, may both the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, bow down before the throne of a Covenant, God in CHRIST, for so rich a portion of divine revelation of JEHOVAH'S love to the Church! Oh! God the Spirit grant to us, if it be thy blessed will, *a spirit of wisdom and revelation*, in the apprehension of those divine truths, and that they may be *the engrafted word* for the salvation of the soul.

Blessed LORD JESUS! we praise thy holy name, for thine unceasing mercies over thy Church, that amidst all the ravages of time, and all the revolutions of men and things; thy Church remaineth, and ever must remain, as long as the moon endureth, from one generation to another. And, although *Ephesus* is no more; the Church which was in *Ephesus*, and all the faithful in CHRIST JESUS, are the same, founded in Thee, the glorious Head of thy body; *the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*

Faithful *Paul!* our love to thee is great, in that the LORD counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. Thou wert indeed, as thou hast here said, an Ambassador, though in bonds. Blessed for the Church was it, that the LORD sent thee as his Ambassador. And what art thou now, since like an Ambassador returned to his Master's royal Court, thou hast given in thy report to the King, and hast entered into the joy of thy LORD! Almighty Head of thy Church and

people! bless all thy redeemed here below, who like *Paul*, love thy appearing in the regenerating of sinners, and comforting of saints, and who are looking forward for thy appearing, when thou shalt come to be glorified in thy saints, and admired in all them that believe! In that great day of God! thou wilt give to every one of thine, the crown of righteousness, which fadeth not away. Then will the whole Church shout for joy, and everlasting praises will be heard, from all the ransomed of Zion, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through endless ages. Amen.

PHILIPPIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

PHILIPPI was the chief city of *Macedon*. It took its name from *Philip*, the father of *Alexander the Great*, so called by a misnomer. For characters of his description must be *little indeed*, according to the testimony of scripture: *for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God!* It was near this city (as Profane Writers tell us) was fought the battle between *Antony* and *Brutus*. Names, which but for their connection with the history of the Church of CHRIST, like those of more ancient date, the *Sennacheribs*, and *Nebuchadnezzars* of old, would have been but little known, but *their memorial have perished with them*. And however mortifying to the pride of human nature it may be, to the ungodly of every age, whether ancient or modern, certain it is, that the whole memoirs of such characters, with their rise and fall, in all the revolutions of kingdoms and empires, are intended no further than as they minister to the Church of CHRIST. Although *they think not so, neither do they intend it*; yet to this one purpose the whole of their labors tend; and which, when accomplished, like the scaffolding to a building no longer useful, will be taken down and destroyed.

It was in this city the LORD erected a Church to his dear SON. And *Paul* was the highly honored instrument to the establishment of it. By a vision of the night the LORD directed him to go to *Macedon*. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, in the persons of *Lydia* and the *Jailor*, formed the Church, in these humble beginnings. See Acts 16. Afterwards, we find the Apostle made a second visit to the Church at *Philippi*, on his way to *Jerusalem*. Acts 20:6.

The Epistle is but short, though sweet. *Paul* wrote it while he was a Prisoner at *Rome*. It hath been observed, and well observed, that those scriptures have more than an ordinary savor of JESUS in them, which have been penned while the Writers of them were in

tribulation. *David* was in the wilderness when he wrote those golden psalms 63, and 142. *John* was in *Patmos* when he sent to the Church the book of the Revelations. And *Paul* in prison at the time he wrote this Epistle to the *Philippians*, and his second Epistle to *Timothy*. If men shut the LORD'S faithful ones *in*, they cannot keep JESUS *out*. Sweet, and sure, is that promise, *I will be with thee in trouble!* Psalm 91:15.

The date of *Paul's* Epistle to the *Philippians* is differently marked by Ecclesiastical Writers. It could not be earlier, and perhaps not much later, than in the year of our LORD GOD 60: about the *fifth* year of the reign of *Nero*.

I have only here again, as in all former instances, when entering upon the perusal of those inspired writings, to call the Reader to join my spirit in prayer, at the mercy-seat, of GOD in CHRIST, for divine light, to guide both Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary* through the several pages, that that gracious promise may be ours. *All thy Children shall be taught of the LORD, and great shall be the peace of thy children.* Isaiah 54:13.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, opens his, Epistle to the Church with his usual Salutation. He praiseth the LORD, for his Mercies towards them. In Allusion to his Prison State, he tells them of his Readiness to suffer in the Cause of CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST for his servant's gracious instruction in this chapter. How truly delightful is it to trace the ministry of *Paul* from such slender beginnings, in raising a Church to the LORD at *Philippi*, and then furnishing the Church, both at *Philippi*, and throughout the world, with this divine portion of the LORD'S holy word, and his pleasure in the government of it. Surely, O LORD, the whole Church, in every age, both then and now, and during all the time-state of its continuance upon earth, must find cause to bless thee for such tokens of thy love over it.

Reader! let us both seek grace from the LORD, to improve what the HOLY GHOST hath here taught by *Paul*, of the confidence every child of GOD derives in regeneration, for the sure consummation of grace in glory. All that are new born in CHRIST, as well as *Paul*, may be confident *of this very thing, that He which hath began the good work, will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST. For whom the LORD called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

My soul! listen to what *Paul* saith. See that your whole conversation is corresponding to the whole character of a child of GOD. Prove thy right and freedom to the city, which hath foundation, whose builder, and Maker, is GOD), by the marks of citizenship. Let thy conversation be in heaven, from whence thou art looking for thy SAVIOR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And oh! for the constraining love of JESUS, to rejoice as saints of old did, when suffering shame and reproach for JESUS.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

We have here one of the most precious Views of JESUS. Paul exhorts the Church by CHRIST'S Example. He shows the Blessedness of a Life of Faith and Humility.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to remark, both the nature of the arguments, and the affectionate claims of them, by which the Apostle aims to allure the Church to a oneness of mind and heart, to CHRIST and his people. What could he say more persuasively in those high claims than when recommending them by the consolations of CHRIST, the fellowship of the HOLY GHOST; and the bowels, and mercies, of GOD the FATHER? But, while I earnestly desire the Reader to remark this, as he goes, I beg him yet more particularly to attend to what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath recorded, in this most blessed Chapter, concerning the Person, GODHEAD, manhood, grace, and glory, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and the FATHER'S glory in Him. Reader! was there ever a more precious form

of words, brought together within the compass of a few verses, than what is here done, to exalt, and extol, to the Church's view, the personal dignity, and the personal humbleness, of CHRIST, in the accomplishment of the great purposes of revelation? Who that reads it, and reads it with an enlightened eye, but must feel his whole soul going forth in desires after CHRIST, to be able to comprehend with all saints, what is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge!* Oh! for grace, that the same mind may be in us, which was in CHRIST JESUS!

Reader! let us seek strength from the LORD, for every act of faith upon the LORD, that while both the LORD'S word and our daily experience teach us, that it *is GOD which worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;* that *will* may be discovered by us, in leading us wholly to CHRIST; and that *doing*, may be made known to us, to be the LORD'S *work* in us: *for we are his workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* LORD! I would beg for myself, and for all thy redeemed ones, to be so found, in the daily exercise of thy *willing*, and *doing*, in me, with an holy fear, and trembling, as those who had always before their eyes the infinite importance of their own salvation; while confident of safety, in the Covenant-promises of GOD my FATHER, and the complete, and finished redemption, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. LORD! grant, that I may have my whole conversation here below, while continuing in the present time-state of the Church, as the *blameless, and harmless sons of GOD, without rebuke; holding forth the word of life, and in the midst of a crooked, and perverse nation, shining as lights in the world!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, the Apostle warns the Church against false Teachers. He as strongly points out, and that in his own Example, what are the infallible Marks of Grace in the Heart; namely, to win CHRIST, and be found in Him. He closeth the Chapter with the

solemn Account of the End of the Carnal, and the blessed Termination of the Life of the Godly.

REFLECTIONS

READER! is it your happiness, as I trust it is mine, to do as the Apostle commands, to rejoice in the LORD. And are we both the true circumcision, which worship GOD in the spirit, rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh! Oh! what dung, and dross, is all creature-righteousness. LORD JESUS! let it never be mine. May I be enabled, like Paul, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD. Oh! to win CHRIST; and to be found in him!

Do thou, Almighty GOD the SPIRIT, be unceasingly holding up to my view, the preciousness of JESUS; and warming my heart with his love. And cause me, like the Prophet, to be always on the watchtower, for my LORD'S return: that whether at midnight, or cockcrowing, or in the morning; I may be waiting his chariot wheels, that when he cometh, I may instantly arise to receive him. Oh! LORD! I shall see thy face in glory. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

In this Chapter, Paul closeth his Epistle. It consists chiefly of Exhortations. The Apostle's great Joy at the Prosperity of the Church.

REFLECTIONS

READER! before we close our attention to this precious Book of GOD, let us bend the knee together, and unitedly look up to the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all our mercies in CHRIST. What an invaluable treasure, the HOLY SPIRIT hath here given to the Church, in this blessed portion of his holy word! Oh! what precious views of CHRIST! Oh! what encouragement, and comfort, in him, to all his people. LORD the SPIRIT, do thou, in rich, free, and sovereign

mercy, make the whole savor of CHRIST; which is in it, an engrafted word which is able to save the soul.

Faithful *Paul!* thou hast faithfully recorded, under the LORD's enditing, this sweet Scripture. The LORD counted thee faithful, putting thee into the ministry. And the Church finds cause to bless a faithful GOD for thy faithfulness, in thy preaching, and writing. Thou hast found the blessedness long since, of the two great points, which in the days of thy pilgrimage thou didst pant after: to win CHRIST, and to be found in Him: And all the faithful in CHRIST JESUS seek the same for their portion. Blessed Master of *Paul!* give each of thine grace, so to win thee, and so to be found in thee here by faith, that, ere long, all thy Church together, may live on thee in glory forevermore. Amen.

COLOSSIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Some have thought, that Colosse was a city near to the island of Rhodes; where was placed a large statue called Colossus, and from whence this city took its name. But, it should rather seem, that Colosse was in Phrygia, the lesser Asia, near to the city of Laodicea. And this is certainly more probable, since Paul desires in this Epistle, that it should be read to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16).

It appears, from one or two passages in this Epistle, that Paul had never been at Colosse in person, for he saith, that he had not seen their face in the flesh (chapter 2:1), and had only heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, and love to the saints (chapter. 1:4). But we have reason to bless God the Holy Ghost, for directing the mind of the Apostle, to commit to writing, and cause to be handed to us, so precious a portion of the word of God.

Concerning the date of this Epistle, it is generally supposed posed to have been written about the year 60; nearly at the time as the Epistle to the Philippians; and to have been written at Rome, when Paul was a prisoner there.

The leading object of it, as most plainly appears, was, and is, to exalt the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Paul was highly taught concerning his LORD. And he well knew, that the most effectual way, under GOD the SPIRIT'S teaching, to establish the Church in the faith once delivered unto the saints, must be, in holding up to their view, the Person and glories of JESUS. And, it must be confessed, that he hath done it in this Epistle, most blessedly. Reader! let you and I, as we enter upon the perusal of it, and as we pass through the several chapters of it, beg of GOD the SPIRIT, who directed the Apostle's pen, to lead and direct our hearts; that, as he saith in one of the chapters, we may find CHRIST in all; and our hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of GOD, and of the FATHER, and

of CHRIST: in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle, after his usual Salutation, opens his Epistle, with giving Praises to GOD, for the Account he had heard of the Church, concerning their Faith in CHRIST. He prays for Grace for them, that they might know CHRIST, in the Glories of his Person. And he describes the LORD most blessedly, in his Person, Offices, and Character.

REFLECTIONS

Everlasting praise to GOD the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the gracious discoveries made to the Church in this blessed chapter of divine love, and for all the manifestations of Covenant grace and mercy, in the Person, work, and offices of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as the Head and Husband of his Church from one eternity to another. Oh! what a glorious view is here given of CHRIST in this Chapter! LORD! be it my study, night and day, under divine teaching, to learn and *know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent!*

And, oh! thou blessed *Emmanuel*, GOD and Man in One Person! Oh! may I unceasingly meditate on the glories of thy nature and essence, One with the FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST, GOD *over all, blessed for ever. Amen.* May I behold thee in thy Mediator glory, the image of the invisible GOD, the first born of every creature! And, oh! what glories do I here behold and contemplate in thy person, before that a single act of redemption-work was Wrought out by my LORD for his Church, in the time-state of her fallen nature; when as I here read, by thee all things are created that are in heaven and earth; all things were created not only by thee, but for thee, and thou art before all things, and by thee all things consist! Oh! the glories of my LORD, in creation, providence, grace, and glory! And when I call to mind thy wonders of love to the Church in time, thine incarnation, baptisms, temptations, sorrows, miracles, life, death, resurrection, ascension, return to glory, and the wonders of thine unchanging

priesthood! When I behold thee now still carrying on the same design, wearing our nature, appearing in our stead, taking up the Persons and causes of all thy people, feeling *with* them, and feeling *for* them, and wilt never cease, until thou hast brought thy blood-bought sons and daughters, with all thy royal family round thy throne, to be with thee for ever? Oh! for grace, until this great day of my GOD shall come, to love thee, and to live to thee, and to hail thy wonderous name! LORD! be thou my portion day by day, that by faith in this blessed hope, I may now live, and at length, in the full assurance of glory, die, and be one with thee for ever!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Paul is speaking very blessedly of CHRIST. He warns the Church against Philosophy and vain Deceit.

REFLECTIONS

What a lovely view doth this Chapter open with of *Paul's* love for the Church, in his soul exercises for their spiritual welfare. And, what a contradiction of sinners did CHRIST endure against himself for his Church and people, lest his exercised ones should grow faint, and be weary in their minds. Oh! thou unequalled pattern of every thing that is fair, and good, and lovely!

Oh! LORD the HOLY GHOST! let thy Church praise thee for the gracious remedy thou hast taught in this chapter against philosophy and vain deceit, the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world. It is, indeed, a sure relief, when a poor sinner is enabled, through all the time-state of the Church, to receive CHRIST as he first received him, when called out of darkness to light, and both to receive CHRIST, and to come to CHRIST, and to live upon CHRIST, from first to last, the same needy, helpless, self-condemned, self-loathing sinner still. LORD! be it my portion thus to receive CHRIST, and thus to walk in CHRIST, and to be rooted and built up in him, to the LORD's glory, and my joy.

LORD! keep thy Church from being beguiled with enticing words. Keep all thy redeemed from being vainly puffed up with a

fleshly mind. Ye Ministers of my GOD, hold up the glorious Head, from which all the body having nourishment ministered, and knit together, may increase with the increase of GOD. Ye fathers, to the children make known his name!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with very glorious and precious Views of the Church's Safety in CHRIST. And it is closed with suitable Exhortations arising therefrom.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou risen, and exalted LORD JESUS! send down thine ascension-gifts, and raise all my spiritual affections after thee, that I may no longer grovel here below, but seek thee, who art above! Didst thou not promise this, thou dear LORD, before thy departure; that when thou wert lifted up, thou wouldest draw all thy people unto thee? Oh! then, *draw me, that I may run after thee, for thou art the LORD my GOD!* Precious, yea, exceedingly precious, is that assurance to my soul, that the life of all thy Church is hid with CHRIST in GOD. And sure I am, that when JESUS shall appear, then will all thy redeemed appear with thee in glory.

And, oh! thou Almighty LORD the SPIRIT! do thou, by thy sweet influences, enable me to mortify all my earthly part. Grant, gracious GOD, that the flesh may be subdued by the spirit; and that by thy strength, I may mortify the deeds of the body and live. And, as the elect of GOD, may I find grace, to put on bowels of mercy, to the whole household of faith, while doing good to all men; yea, may the peace of GOD rule in my heart, always having in remembrance, how CHRIST hath forgiven me; may my compassions go forth, to all around, Oh! what are all the little quarrels of this dying world, to those who are conscious, of that deadly breach being made up, in the blood of CHRIST, which sin, and Satan, had made, between GOD and his people. May all the relations of life, in Wives, and Husbands, and Children, and Parents, and Servants, and Masters, be everlastingly looking to JESUS; that, while beholding him, all their

minds may be influenced into love and tenderness: and all their conduct regulated by his example. Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my GOD, my guide, and my portion for ever!

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

The Apostle prosecutes the same Subject of Exhortation, in the opening of this Chapter. He enjoins a Continuance in Prayer, with Watchfulness, and Thanksgiving. He concludes the Epistle with Salutations.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSING, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne; and unto the Lamb, forever and ever! What praise sufficient, or what glory equal, can the Church upon earth, and the redeemed in heaven, render, to the One glorious JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the unequalled love manifested to the Church, in JESUS CHRIST,! And what everlasting thanks-giving, doth the reading of those holy Scriptures call forth, in the daily use of them, from beholding, with what a world of grace, the precious records have been preserved, and handed down, from age to age, to the joy of the Church, and the glory of the Almighty Head of it. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou, in thine Almighty ministry, bless thine holy word to all thy sent servants, and the people among whom thou shalt send them, to minister, that both him that labors in the word and doctrine, and those among whom the ministry is exercised, may be blessed together.

We bless our GOD for the service of his Apostle, in this instance of his labors of love, in this Epistle to the Church; by which, *he being dead yet speaketh.* And our GOD will continue to bless its use to the Church to the latest posterity. May the LORD accompany the present perusal of it to the divine honor, and our furtherance in grace, through JESUS CHRIST,

Amen.

1st

THESSALONIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THESSALONICA, the chief city of *Macedonia*, is said to have derived its name from *Philip*, king of *Macedon*, in consequence of a victory which he obtained in *Thessalia*. From such corrupt and sinful causes, do sometimes, and not infrequently, spring, the memorable records of men. It is indeed in correspondence with our fallen nature. Sin hath introduced all the baleful effects, which that nature, unregenerated by grace, is subject to in the multiform fruits of it, from the womb to the grave. And names of places, and monuments, to perpetuate what is called the splendid victories of heroes, both ancient and modern, perpetuate more generally their sin, and shame.

The city of *Thessalonica*, at the time when the Apostle wrote this blessed Epistle, was a large, flourishing, and much peopled place. Now, for many centuries past, it hath been overrun with the impostures of the false prophet; and is in the possession of the Turks. Here once, the LORD had a portion of his Church. But, as he himself said of other places, so here, he hath removed the Candlestick, Revelation 2:5. We have great cause to bless God for our mercies, in this review of the divine judgments. While we contemplate our high privileges as a nation, in this particular: we may hear, and ought to feel, the strong expostulating words of the Apostle: *Are we better than they?* And, with the immediate answer: *No, in no wise! All are under sin.* Romans 3:9.

The date of this Epistle is generally marked as early as the year 52; and as such, must have been the *first*, in point of time, of all *Paul's* writings.

The distinguishing feature which marks every Chapter, like all the Apostle's Epistles, and preachings, is CHRIST. And, oh! how sweetly, and blessedly, hath he held him forth to the Church, through the whole of it. Reader! what a mercy was it to you, to me, to the whole Church of the LORD, that the HOLY GHOST called *Paul* by a vision to visit *Macedonia*? *Acts 16:9* to the end, and *Acts 17*. And, what a mercy was it, for all the Church of GOD, that the HOLY GHOST prompted the Apostle to write this Epistle, and endited the blessed contents of it? And what a mercy, to preserve the precious records safe to this present hour, and cause them to be handed down to us? And, (shall I add,) what a mercy of mercies, in all these things, if the LORD hath given us the enlightened understanding, in the apprehension of them; so that, as *Paul* said to this very church, in the opening of this Epistle, our election of GOD is known, because *the Gospel is come unto us, not in word only, but also in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance!* Chap. 1:4, 5. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! direct, and guide the heart and pen, in this feeble work, of the *Poor Man's Commentary*, and cause it to minister *to the glory of GOD, in the face of JESUS CHRIST*.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle with his usual Salutations. He tells the Thessalonians, how earnest his Prayers were for the Church. And he teacheth them to observe the Marks of their Election, by the blessed Effects of it.

REFLECTIONS

READER! is it our privilege, like this Church, to give thanks to GOD always for the divine grace, and mercy, and love, bestowed upon us? Can it be said to you, and to me, as the Apostle did to the *Thessalonians*, in the remembrance of our work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the sight of GOD our FATHER? Can we with full assurance of faith, and in the enjoyment of the same testimonies as *Paul* here marked down, take up the well-grounded confidence of our election of GOD? Oh! then,

let us see to it, that our faith in JESUS is a working faith, working by love. That our hope is that hope founded in CHRIST, and his blood, and righteousness, which maketh not ashamed. That our patience is that which the Apostle elsewhere describes, and which worketh experience. And in the exercise of which, we wait for the return of the SON OF GOD from heaven, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come. This will be an honorable testimony to the SPIRIT'S work in our heart, and will most plainly show, in the midst of the awful day in which we live, what manner of entering in the word of grace hath had in our souls; and how, through the regenerating power of the SPIRIT, the LORD hath turned our hearts from idols to serve the living and true GOD. Blessed be the electing love of GOD the FATHER, the redemption by CHRIST, and the quickening of GOD the HOLY GHOST!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

In this chapter the Apostle dwells chiefly upon his Labors among them as a Minister of CHRIST. He strongly expresseth his Affection for the People.

REFLECTIONS

LET as many ministers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST as read this precious chapter, beg for grace, to be enabled to follow the Apostle's example in their ministry, and humbly pray for the same success. Oh! what an arduous undertaking, what a solemn trust, what distinguished honor, and what vast responsibility. Who that considered it as he ought, but would rather shrink from the high calling, than run unsent! But let every faithful servant of JESUS not despond. JESUS is the all-sufficiency both of his ministers and people. And be that looks wholly to JESUS, and draws all his resources from Jesus, whether minister or people, will never fail of finding an all-sufficiency for his own soul, and for his labor among others. Where GOD the SPIRIT ordains, he will give the suited supply. And those words of the LORD are sufficient to carry the servant through the whole of his labor. *Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world!*

And no less, ye people of GOD! do you hold up the hands of the LORD'S servant, who goeth in and out before you by the LORD'S appointment, by prayer and supplication, for a blessing on his labors. It is a sweet encouragement to the faithful laborer in the LORD'S vineyard, when he knows that his people go before with their prayers to the LORD for his blessing, and follow him for supplications for pardon to all his imperfections. And where the LORD hath blessed a Church with a faithful servant, who taketh the oversight of the Church of CHRIST, *not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*: what may not be hoped for from the divine blessing on such a congregation, both of minister and people! LORD, the SPIRIT! send *Pastors after Mine own heart, which shall feed thy people with knowledge and understanding!*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This is a short but interesting Chapter. Every Verse is expressive of the Apostle's Love for the Church. Amidst his Sufferings, he finds Comforts in their Soul-prosperity.

REFLECTIONS

Who can behold the affection, manifested by the Apostle to the Church, as set forth in this Chapter, without being struck with the conviction, that there is, there must be, in every faithful minister of CHRIST ordained, and sent forth, as *Paul* was, by the HOLY GHOST, somewhat of the same love and affection. How is it possible for that man to be earnest in the service of souls, whose own soul is not melted by grace, into an ardent desire, for their everlasting welfare? Coldness, deadness, and an indifferency, argue, yea, prove, an unsuitableness for the ministry. And, whatever gifts and talents of the head a man may possess, in the mere letter-knowledge of the truths of GOD; he will never enter into the ministry with an earnestness to win souls, except a sense of his own salvation, makes him feel for others. Blessed *Paul* counts it *his* life, while the Church lived. The salvation of the people, was his hope, and crown of rejoicing. And hence, he could, and did say: *as you have*

acknowledged, so we trust you shall acknowledge even to the end, that we are your rejoicing, as ye also are ours, in the day of the LORD JESUS. Reader! it will be your happiness, and mine, to discover our hearts brought into the same oneness of spirit, in CHRIST. His is the glory, and ours is the happiness. And, while both minister and people, are established by his grace, in him; we shall then be accepted, unblameable in holiness in him, before GOD, even our FATHER, at the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST with all his saints.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here exhorting the Church, to the blessed Fruits, and Effects, of Regeneration. He sweetly comforts the LORD'S People, on the Subject of the Body sleeping in JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a blessed consideration is it, to the renewed soul in CHRIST, that He who is made of GOD to us wisdom, and righteousness; is no less our sanctification, and redemption? And, it is among the most blessed of all thoughts, and which GOD the HOLY GHOST is forever impressing on the minds of his people, that our oneness and union with the LORD JESUS, brings up after it, an interest, in all that belongs to him as CHRIST. Our union with his Person, gives a security to our life in him, our graces from him, and our everlasting happiness *with* him; for assuredly, where He is, there must his members be. Precious JESUS may I never lose sight of those gracious assurances of thine. *Because I live ye shall live also.*

Blessed LORD the SPIRIT! thanks to thee, for sending thy servant to teach the Church, how to regulate our sorrows, when under bereaving providences. Never let my soul mourn any more when any die in the LORD. Tears may fall. Yea, JESUS will not be displeased when they fall. It is the funeral of nature. And JESUS, who wept himself at *Lazarus's* tomb, will not be angry if any weep at mine. But grace triumphs. It is not death, but sleep, yea, a sweet refreshing sleep, when JESUS calls home his members. But while we hear the voice which *John* heard, we may write it as the inscription

on the graves of the saints. *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD!* And, as sure as they sleep in JESUS; so sure GOD will bring them with Jesus in that day when he comes. And ye members of CHRIST, who are yet unborn, whom JESUS shall appoint to be alive at his coming; ye also shall partake in the triumphs of his coming. Though ye go not down to the grave, yet will the LORD change your vile bodies, under which ye groan, and fashion them like unto his glorious body; according to the power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. LORD! give grace to thy Church, that amidst all the dying circumstances of thy people her below, we may be able *to comfort, and to exhort one another with these words!*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle closeth his Epistle in this Chapter. He describes the striking Difference of the LORD's coming, as he will appear to his church, and to the Ungodly. He again exhorts the Church to be comforted: and closeth the Epistle with his Apostolic Blessing.

REFLECTIONS

READER! here is a Chapter highly calculated, under GOD, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: While the ungodly are scoffing at the threatened judgment of the LORD's coming, behold with what awful and alarming account it is said that day will be known. As a thief in the night, so sudden, so unexpected. And, while the graceless will be thus surprised, both with the greatness and unlooked for horrors of that day; the prospect, like the Cloud in the camp of Israel, while dark with the blackness of despair to the enemies of our GOD and his CHRIST, will be bright and shining to all the LORD's people, who are the children of the light, and of the day. Oh! the blessedness of that assurance, GOD *hath not appointed us unto wrath, but unto salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD!*

Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for commanding his Scriptures to be read unto all the holy brethren. A plain proof of the sin and folly of that class of men, who would shut up the word of GOD from the common people. GOD be blessed for his mercy to this land, in

that we have the Scriptures open to us, *which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* And blessed be the LORD for the ministry of his faithful servant *Paul*; in this very sweet Epistle, and for all the inspired writings which GOD the SPIRIT taught him to send to the Churches! Ere long, the Church will meet with him, and all the faithful servants of the LORD, in every age of the Church, which have ministered in the name of the LORD. In the mean time, may GOD the SPIRIT cause his unction to enlighten all his people in the reading of them. And while the grace of GOD is directing the Church upon earth, may both the Church in earth and heaven be continually ascribing glory to the united source of all mercy, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and forevermore. Amen

2nd THESSALONIANS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IT is more than probable, that this *second* Epistle to the Church of the *Thessalonians* was written not a longer space after the first, than *two years*. The chief scope of it seems to have been by way of fortifying their minds against the assaults of persecution, which ran very high at that time. It should seem also, that the Church of GOD in *Thessalonica* had conceived the day of judgment to be at hand. And, if one may conjecture from what the Apostle hath said in various parts of this Epistle, many of the people were tempted therefrom to neglect the honest attention to their calling, and the care of their families. But while *Paul* sets himself in this Epistle to correct these things, he doth not lose sight of making JESUS the grand feature of this, as well as his other writings and preachings.

I do not think it necessary to make any further detention by way of Preface, to the immediately entering upon the Epistle itself, only first to beg the Reader to bend the knee in prayer with me before the Almighty Author of it, the HOLY GHOST, to bless it to the Church in every age, till time shall be no more.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle with his usual Benediction, He desires to bless GOD for the Prosperity of the Church at Thessalonica. He comforts the People under all their Trials, with the assured Prospect of CHRIST'S coming.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it were well, if truly regenerated souls would frequently, and with a suitable solemnity of holy joy, contemplate the great day of CHRIST'S coming, which the Apostle here proposeth to the Church, as the sure support to all the exercises and trials of life. For what damps the highest prosperity of sinners, becomes the richest encouragement to comfort, under all the pressure of evil, to the saints. And, if the people of GOD would learn, under grace, to connect with their prospect of CHRIST'S coming, their union and interest in that glory in which he comes, what a joy unspeakable and full of glory would this bring with it to their souls. And, as the human nature of CHRIST united to his divine, gives a right and interest in all that is divine, and the glory of the GODHEAD is communicated to the human nature, and dwells in it; so our union with CHRIST gives a right and interest in all that belongs to CHRIST, as CHRIST, for communication in all that is communicable, and we derive out of his fullness, grace here, and glory hereafter. This was the very end for which the Church was predestinated, that we might be conformed to his image. May the LORD, give to all his redeemed ones, grace, so to contemplate CHRIST, and so to wait for his coming, that his precious name may be glorified in his people, and they in him, *according to the grace of GOD, and our LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle forewarns the Church in this Chapter, of a falling away of Professors. He very awfully describes the coming of Antichrist, before CHRIST'S appearing. And takes occasion therefrom to bless GOD, for the Church having been chosen to Sanctification from the Beginning.

REFLECTIONS

Who that reads the solemn account of the great day of CHRIST'S appearing, but must stand with astonishment, in beholding the awful end of the ungodly, and the everlasting happiness of GOD'S people!

Reader! think what an awful account is here given, of *the man of sin*, and the *son of perdition*! Oh! what deplorable consequences would follow, if ever again the *mystery of iniquity*, and that *Wicked*, should be revealed in this our land. And yet is there not, in the present hour, him, whose coming is after *Satan*, in what the Apostle calls, *the deceivableness of unrighteousness*!

Blessed be GOD for his Church! It is still as the remnant of *Jacob*, in the midst of many people, a dew from the LORD. And GOD hath from the beginning chosen it. And GOD to the present hour doth choose it, and so He will to the latest posterity, *to salvation, through sanctification of the SPIRIT, and belief of the truth*. May the LORD be the strength of his people, to help them to stand fast in his name. And may our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and GOD, even our FATHER, comfort and stablish all his redeemed to the end. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. He takes an affectionate Leave of the Church, begs an Interest in the Prayers of the People, and prays the LORD to bless them.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be the LORD JEHOVAH in his threefold character of Persons, for all the mercies, grace, and love, manifested to the Church of GOD, in JESUS CHRIST. And blessed be the LORD the SPIRIT, for this precious portion of his holy word, from the ministry of his servant the Apostle. Add to it, LORD, the blessing of making it life, and spirit, to the souls of all thy redeemed: and do thou, blessed GOD, for it is thine own sweet office-work alone to accomplish it, *direct our hearts into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for CHRIST*.

And, oh! thou Almighty Minister, under whose government the entire welfare, and prosperity of the Church depends; do thou watch over all the congregations of the faithful, that idleness, and disorderly conduct, may find no shelter; neither the poor of thy people be neglected, in the daily ministration. LORD, the work is

thine, and thine alone the glory. Make thy ministers faithful: and let the Church be blessed. Farewell Paul! the Church of the *Thessalonians* have praised GOD for thy labors of love: and all the Churches, to whom thy writings have been sent by the HOLY GHOST, have blessed, and do bless GOD, for calling thee to the ministry. But oh! thou glorious Head, and praise of all thy saints, be thou eternally loved, and adored, for all the *Pauls*, and the Pastors, of thy Church! All is thine, Almighty JESUS! And for all we praise thee! Amen.

1st TIMOTHY

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

WE here enter upon the further labors of the Apostle *Paul*. The foregoing Epistles were all directed to the Churches. This, and the second Epistle, together with the two following, to *Titus* and *Philemon*, are to persons. But the subject manner of the whole is the same. All *Paul's* preachings, writings, and ministry, treat of nothing but CHRIST. CHRIST is *Paul's* text, sermon, and application.

Timothy, to whom *Paul* here writes, was of jewish descent by the mother's side, but his father was a *Greek*. It was *Timothy's* mercy, that he had been early taught the Scriptures. And the LORD, in his providence, brought him under the Gospel while a youth, in the Acts of the Apostles we meet with the first account of him at *Lystra*. After which we read frequently of him as *Paul's* companion.

The subject of this Epistle need not further be noticed in this place. We shall discover the Apostle's design, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, as we prosecute the several chapters. It is said to have been written by the Apostle at *Laodicea*, and, probably, about the year 55, though some place it later. However, it carries with it marks of divine inspiration. I only detain the Reader in begging of him to enter upon the perusal with me in prayer, that the same Almighty LORD, which hath graciously given us this sweet Scripture, will as graciously give us the understanding heart to apprehend his merciful instructions in it, that it may be *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*, that as the children of GOD, we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle with the usual Salutation. He reminds Timothy of the Truth. He speaks very blessedly of the LORD'S Grace, and the exceeding Abundance of it in his Conversion.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the more we traverse the inspired writings of this great Apostle, the more we find cause to bless GOD for his ministry. What affection he here manifests, to the Church of CHRIST! What love to Timothy, as a minister in the Church! What earnestness he expresseth, that he should be found faithful! And what delight he takes, to go over again and again, the wonderful story of his conversion! No expressions can he find, sufficiently humbling, to set forth his own worthlessness: neither any sufficiently exalted, to praise the riches of GOD'S grace. Surely the HOLY GHOST intended, from the frequency of this record to be brought before the Church, to show poor sinners, that no state is too polluted, no life or sin too abandoned, to be out of the reach of CHRIST'S blood. Yes! Paul! thou art indeed a pattern of the exceeding riches of grace; yea, and abundant grace, to all that hereafter believe on the LORD JESUS to everlasting life. Oh! blessed JESUS! enable me in thy strength to hold faith, and a good conscience, in thee; and daily to cry out with Paul: Now to the, King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise GOD be honor and glory, forever, and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle is prosecuting the Subject of his Advice to Timothy; in this Chapter. He exhorts, that Prayers be made, that Women be adorned with plain Apparel. He closeth with a sweet Promise.

REFLECTIONS

IN the opening of this Chapter, we derive authority for the use of prayer, not only for the Church, but for the world: while the precept, which enjoins prayers for all men, plainly directs, to what the subject of those prayers should lead. And, while the Church becomes a blessing, as a dew from the LORD, in the midst of many people, to keep the whole community from consuming drought; the Church derives protection, in temporal quietness, from the prosperity of the nation where it dwells.

Blessed Mediator of thy people! Every renewed view of thee, is refreshing to the soul! LORD! let it be testified in due time, to all thy blood-bought children, the infinitely precious ransom, which thou hast given of thyself, to redeem them from all iniquity. And oh! let the sweet assurance of salvation, in the child-bearing, when our great Emmanuel was born of a woman, open an everlasting source of consolation, to all his faithful seed. And if it please our GOD, let all the faithful daughters of thy chosen generation, while partaking in the Eve-fruit of transgression, in passing through the hour of sorrow, partake also in this sweet promise in thee; and cause them by thy HOLY SPIRIT, to continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle here enters upon the Subject of the Ministry. He shows how the Office should be sacredly observed: with their Connections. The Chapter closeth most blessedly, concerning the great mystery of Godliness.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! do thou in mercy to the Church, ordain Pastors after thine own heart: and make all such, as thou hast called to the ministry, however known, or distinguished among men, more anxious to win souls, than to gain kingdoms.

Precious JESUS! let the mystery of thine incarnation be the constant, unceasing subject of my meditation! Oh! the love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge! Didst thou, dear LORD, who when rich beyond all the calculation of riches, condescend for our sakes to be made poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich! And, oh! the sweet testimony of GOD the SPIRIT, in justifying all the works of CHRIST, both to the Person of CHRIST, and in the heart of his people, in his finished salvation. Angels, behold; Gentiles, believe; yea, my poor blind and stony heart is made willing in the day of GOD's power. And GOD the FATHER hath given assurance unto all men of the mystery of godliness, in having raised CHRIST from the dead, and received him up into glory. Blessed, blessed forever, be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

GOD the HOLY GHOST is here introduced as speaking expressly of the Latter-day Heresies. Paul cautions Timothy to be on the look-out with the Church against the Times of such Peril.

REFLECTIONS

O LORD the SPIRIT! let thy Church have grace to praise thee, for the love manifested towards it, and thy watchful care over it, through all generations. Yea, blessed LORD, we have to thank thee for the gracious warnings, which thou hast expressly spoken of concerning the awful heresies which will beset the church from the world. Truly, LORD, there are already many Antichrists, by which we know it is the last time. O do thou help thy truly regenerated ones to resist all and every one of them, whether seducing spirits, or doctrines of devils, and be stedfast in the faith: and when at any time the Enemy cometh in like a flood, do thou, Almighty SPIRIT; lift up a standard against him!

Be gracious also to the Ministers, and Stewards, of thy mysteries. Cause them to put the brethren in remembrance of all the great and glorious truths of our most holy faith; that they may prove themselves good ministers of JESUS CHRIST, nourished up in, the

words of faith, and of good doctrine; refusing profane and old wives' fables, and exercising themselves unto godliness.

And, dearest LORD JESUS! we praise thee for thy upholding, and preserving providence, over all men; and specially for thy saving health unto thy people. Here we learn, O LORD, how it is for thy sake the world standeth; and while thou art carrying on thy salvation, the ungodly remain. And until thou hast brought home thy redeemed to glory, the seed time and harvest, the tares and the wheat, shall not cease. Oh! let thy children learn to whom the whole difference is owing. And while they enjoy thy distinguishing race, often may they hear the voice: *Destroy it not: for a blessing is in it!*

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here instructing Timothy; as a Minister of CHRIST, how to conduct himself in the Church of GOD: and especially towards Elders, aged Women, and younger Persons.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold how venerable, in the sight of GOD the SPIRIT, are the hoary saints considered, when we see such a charge given concerning them. Blessedly GOD hath said, *even to your old age, I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you!* And, therefore, the LORD, who watches over them himself, will have no rebuke given them from others. Our fathers in the Church, and our mothers in Israel, are counted worthy of double honor, when the hoary head is found in the righteousness of CHRIST.

And blessed are those Ministers and Stewards of GOD's mysteries which labor in the word and doctrine, who do nothing by partiality, but view all the members of CHRIST'S mystical body, equally entitled to their good offices, and to their affection, without preferring one before another. LORD make all thy servants faithful, and let thy people praise thee, that GOD in all things may be glorified in, and through JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

The Apostle is prosecuting, in this Chapter, his Exhortation to Timothy concerning Church government. And having noticed several wise Regulations on this Subject with others, closeth his Epistle with praying for Grace to be with him.

REFLECTIONS

READER! think what a lovely family that is of the all lovely, and all loving JESUS, which considers all the members as mutually engaged, and everlastingly supposed to be actuated by one spirit, for the general and complete happiness of the whole. Oh! if masters would thus consider servants, and servants masters, there could be no schism of the body, but all would study each other's happiness, and have the same care one for another. And, surely, if anything under grace can tend to the promotion of this great end, the consciousness of a dying, sinful, sorrowful world, from which we are hourly departing, and from which as we brought nothing in, we can carry nothing out, would be enough to induce these blessed effects.

But, oh! precious JESUS! It is thou LORD who must both go before, and guide in this, and every path, which thy redeemed have to follow. Blessed and glorious Potentate! Oh! what a good confession didst thou witness before many witnesses! LORD! grant to all thy servants to keep the commandment of the same confession, without spot, and unrebukable, until thy appearing. JESUS will shortly come. He, and He alone, will show, as the only visible JEHOVAH, who is the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and LORD of lords! Till then may every knee bow, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.

2nd TIMOTHY

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IT hath been the generally received opinion in the Church in all ages, that this *second* Epistle to *Timothy* was the last the Apostle ever wrote. And, from that memorable expression, in the last Chapter of it, where he speaks of the time of his departure being at hand; Chap. 4:6. it certainly becomes highly probable. It is supposed to have been written after an interval of full nine years, from the former: and bears date, Anno 64.

We are more interested to ascertain the characters of inspiration in it than to be particularly anxious in ascertaining the date. And this divine mark is in every Chapter and verse, more or less. Very plain and positive proofs we have, that He who guided *Paul's* tongue to preach CHRIST, here guided his pen to record him. I do not think it necessary, in these general observations, to go over the outlines of the Epistle, being in itself so short. But I cannot enter upon it, without first begging the LORD the SPIRIT, to open and explain all the blessed contents of it to our hearts, that our, faith in Him, may not be founded *in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD.*

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

Paul Opens his Epistle in his usual Manner professeth his great Love to Timothy: admonisheth him on the great Offices of the Ministry; and treats of many blessed Truths of the Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a lovely representation Paul hath given in this Chapter, of the Covenant love, and faithfulness, of GOD the FATHER, in the promise of life which is in CHRIST JESUS! And how sure is it made, in having saved his people before calling them, and then calling them with an holy calling; not of their holiness, or of their works, but his own purpose, and grace. Oh! the faithfulness, and love, of a faithful Covenant GOD and FATHER, in CHRIST JESUS!

And no less blessedly doth Paul speak, of his adorable LORD and SAVIOR. He it is, saith Paul, which hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, through his Gospel. Who then, with such views, can doubt salvation, while knowing whom he hath believed? Who can fear, but in the end, to be everlastingly happy in CHRIST; while living to CHRIST, and having communion with CHRIST; being persuaded, that He is able to keep that which the soul hath committed unto him against that day!

And, with equal joy we behold, how Paul triumphs, in the love, and favor of GOD the HOLY GHOST; (and so may all truly regenerated believers in CHRIST,) conscious of that good thing, committed to them by his Almighty Power! Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, for these unspeakable mercies! LORD! let my poor soul, never be ashamed of the LORD'S testimony; nor of the golden chain, of being CHRIST'S prisoner!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle is exhorting Timothy in this Chapter, to Firmness, Constancy, and Perseverance. He useth several very beautiful Figures, in the Recommendation of those Graces.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS how sweetly hath thy servant taught the Church, and every humble member of it like myself, to seek

strength only in thee, and the grace in my LORD; and not from anything in our own attainments. Oh! for grace in a daily, hourly communication from CHRIST to be strong in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS, that I

may abide in thee, as thou hast said, convinced that without thee, I can do nothing. And may GOD the SPIRIT continually teach me my need, then lead to thee for a supply; then open a communication between my full LORD and my empty soul; and then keep it everlastingly open, to my joy, and my LORD's glory.

Glory to a faithful Covenant GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS! may my soul never for a moment lose sight of thy faithfulness, amidst all my unbelievings. Oh! the preciousness of that scripture. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself:* LORD I see nothing but evil, unbelief, and emptiness in all I do or say. I am content that it should be so. I am nothing, yea worse than nothing: that my poverty may make me hunger more for the riches of thy grace. Oh! to be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meat for the master's use, and prepared by grace forever good work.

LORD the SPIRIT! do thou seal my soul, unto the day of eternal redemption. This will ferm a blessed *nevertheless* to all my unworthiness. *The foundation* of GOD *standeth sure*. And in proclaiming this foundation, and this assurance, let all thy sent servants show themselves approved unto GOD; and workmen which need not to be ashamed; and let all thy people *follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the LORD, out of a pure heart.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Apostle in this Chapter, foretells of perilous Times. He speaks of certain Enemies of the Truth: and closeth with a warm Recommendation of the Holy Scriptures, as making wise unto Salvation.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while the Apostle is thus speaking to the Church, of the perilous times that should come, may we not say with John: *Little Children, it is the last time. And as we have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that, it is the last time.* But, Reader! who can hear what the beloved Apostle hath added to this solemn scripture, without the most painful concern? *They went out from us, but they were not of us!* It is distressing enough to be told by the SPIRIT in prophecy, that the Church shall be assaulted by heresies, in the latter day dispensation; and that we are of those latter ages in which those heresies appear, but to be told, that even in the Churches, where the truth as it is in JESUS is professed, men shall arise *speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them;* these are trembling dispensations indeed. But, Reader! do not overlook the security of the faithful. That unction from the HOLY ONE, which all truly regenerated children of GOD in CHRIST possess, teacheth all things, and will keep the LORD'S people; and the wicked one shall touch them not. This is our promise. And blessed promise it is, in this present evil day.

And shall not you and I bless GOD the SPIRIT both for the information, and the means of security? Do we not behold in this chapter, sufficient marks of character, for discerning the signs of the times, to judge faithful servants of the LORD, from time-pleasers? Where we behold men lovers of their own selves, proud, boasters, and the like; and a leanness of soul among the people, who are content with the form of godliness, but deny, and are ignorant of the power thereof: and when we contrast such a state, with that which Paul describes of himself, (and which more or less must distinguish all like Paul), whose doctrine and manner of life cannot but beget hatred, evil speaking and persecution; from all Pharisees, and mere nominal Professors of religion; are not the different characters as clearly defined, as if drawn by a sun-beam? Blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for his gracious foretelling of those perilous times; and for his divine teaching of his people to try the spirits, and to discern them. Reader! let us be waiting at wisdom's gate, in these awful days of heresy. And let us behold and see, how evil men, and

seducers, among Pharisees, and mere Professors, wax worse and worse; more wretched, more lean of soul, deceiving men like themselves, not GOD's people, and being themselves deceived. And let those holy scriptures of our GOD, which are profitable for all things to the man of GOD, be daily in our hand, while GOD the SPIRIT is instructing our heart; that we may be found of that happy number, made strong by grace, in the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

The Apostle is here closing his Epistle, and, therefore, impresseth his Exhortations on Timothy, with the tenderest Affection. He speaks of several who were Enemies to the cross; and sends his Salutations to several, who were Friends: and concludes with his usual Apostolic Blessing, in praying for Grace.

REFLECTIONS

ALMIGHTY GOD and FATHER! may all, whom the HOLY GHOST hath made ministers in the service of the Church of JESUS, hear the solemn charge of Paul to Timothy, to prompt to faithfulness in their high calling. And, no less, Almighty JESUS! may the sure expectation of thy appearing, and thy kingdom, to judge the quick and dead, awaken such, to be diligent in thy service to thy coming. LORD! give them grace to preach the word, and to be constant, in season, out of season; and especially in these awful times, when the way of truth is evil spoken of, and men will not endure sound doctrine. And, oh! thou blessed, and Almighty SPIRIT of all truth, do thou guard, and guide, lead, and instruct all thy family; that the hearts of thy people, may not be turned unto fables.

Blessed be a faithful Covenant-GOD in CHRIST, for the fulfillment of his faithful promise, in the instance of Paul, in giving such a pastor, after his own heart. The Church of GOD bless the LORD for this man's services, in all his past labors; and in all his future usefulness. Oh! grant, LORD, that all thy faithful,

whether ministers, or people, may like Paul, and from the same cause, live and die, in the full assurance of faith, in expectation of the crown of righteousness, which the LORD the righteous Judge, will, give at that day to all them that love our LORD'S appearing!

Praises to the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, for this, and all the other precious portions of GOD'S word; to make the Church, under divine teaching, more and more acquainted with the Person, and glory of JESUS, for the happiness of the life that now is, and that which, is to come. Amen.

TITUS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THIS Epistle of *Paul* to *Titus* is but short, though highly interesting, and we have much cause to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST for its very clear marks of the LORD'S inspiration are discoverable in it.

It is supposed by some to have been written from *Rome*; and others have thought that *Paul* wrote it from *Ephesus*. In either case the time must differ, though it generally bears the date of our LORD GOD 55.

The Person to whom *Paul* wrote it, is in several parts of the Apostle's other writings spoken of in very high terms of affection. *Paul* calls him *Titus* his own son, and his brother and partner and fellow helper; and as one who walked in the same spirit; and in the same steps. 2 Corinthians 12:18. see also Galatians 2:1-3. 2 Corinthians 8:23. So that he was evidently very dear to *Paul*.

The subject of the Epistle is generally concerning the blessed doctrines of the Gospel; and directions to *Titus* concerning the ministry. I beg the Reader to enter upon the perusal of it, on the knee of prayer, that the Almighty Author of his written Word, may lead the souls of his people by it, to the uncreated WORD, and bless it in JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle, with his usual Benediction. He points out to Titus the Qualifications for the Ministry. He

gives a sad Account of the Grecians, among whom Titus dwelt; and concludes, the Chapter with the same.

REFLECTIONS

I desire to bless GOD the HOLY GHOST, for all his abundant mercies in his divine teachings, and his holy scriptures of truth. And beg his grace, to give me a right understanding in all things, that my faith, may be the faith of GOD's elect. None but this, I am well assured, can come up to the standard of *the truth which is after godliness*. And whatsoever is not of this faith, is sin. Precious LORD JESUS! thou great Author, and finisher of faith, increase my faith!

And do thou, Almighty FATHER of mercies; confirm, and establish my soul, in this blessed hope of eternal life, founded in thine everlasting love; and secured in thine unchangeable promise, given in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. Oh! the preciousness of this life, which is eternal; confirmed by covenant engagements; revealed in the holy scriptures; and resulting from free, unmerited, unsought for, yea, unthought of grace!

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! distinguish thine ordained servants in the ministry, by the special marks of thine own ordination. They, whom thou hast sent forth, will, through thy grace, be found blameless in CHRIST, as the stewards of GOD. But, LORD! stop the mouths of those, who run unsent of thee. The pure in spirit, by regenerating grace, will be pure. But to the unregenerate, who are still in the old unrenewed nature, nothing is pure. Praises to our GOD in CHRIST, for discriminating grace!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

The Apostle is following up the same Directions to Titus, in this Chapter, as the former. His Doctrine, and Commands to the Aged, and Youthful, and Servants, are dwelt upon. The

Apostle, blessedly speaks, of the Grace of GOD in CHRIST, and the Design of its appearing.

REFLECTIONS

READER! is there not renewed occasion at the close of this, and every Chapter, for all the marked attention, GOD the HOLY GHOST hath shown the Church, in watching over the interests, and happiness of his people, that both *young men and maidens, old men and children, may praise the name of the LORD: for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth?* And what a lovely family of the LORD'S would it be, if all were sound in doctrine, sound in faith; and *all adorning the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOR in all things!*

Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, that the grace of GOD that bringeth salvation, hath appeared. And blessed be the LORD, that He hath both taught his Church, and given her members ability, by a life of faith, upon the SON of GOD, to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts; to put off the old man, which is corrupt; and to put on the new man, which, after GOD, is created in righteousness, and true holiness. Oh! for grace, to be always on the lookout, for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of JESUS. LORD! we groan being burthened, under the weaknesses, and unworthinesses of our vile body. Haste, haste my Beloved, and bring on that blessed day, when *thou wilt change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto thy glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby thou art able even to subdue all things unto thyself.*

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

The Chapter opens with a Continuation of Exhortations. The Apostle blessedly speaks of the Doctrine of Regeneration. He closeth the Epistle with Directions, and his Apostolical Benediction.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I would pass by all observations on men and things, while reading this sweet scripture, and beg for grace to have all my thoughts directed to that one, glorious contemplation, brought before the Church in this Chapter, namely, the kindness and love of GOD the FATHER toward man, in his original, and eternal purpose, concerning the Church in CHRIST; JESUS's mercy, in betrothing, and redeeming his Church; and GOD the SPIRIT, pouring out his regenerating, and renewing grace, which he hath shed abundantly on the Church, and is forever shedding, on all the members of the body, through JESUS CHRIST our SAVIOR. Oh! the unspeakable felicity of being justified by the LORD's grace, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life!

Blessed SPIRIT of all Truth! praises to thine Almighty name, for this precious portion of thine inspired scripture, through the ministry of thy servant *Paul*. The memory of all the *Paul's*, and *Titus's*, which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath raised up as servants in his Church, is precious; and thy faithful, desire grace to bless the LORD for their labors of love. But, oh! thou HOLY LORD the Comforter! what praise shall we offer thee, for thine Almighty Ministry, in the glorifying our dear Redeemer, the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Glory, praise, and power, be unto our Covenant GOD in CHRIST, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and ever. Amen.

PHILEMON

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This short, but lovely Epistle, must have been written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome: and at that time when he had liberty to receive in his own hired house, all that came to him. Acts 28:30. This seems evident, because Onesimus, on whose account the Apostle wrote to Philemon, then attended Paul's preaching, and the LORD blessed the word to him. Hence the probable date was Anno 60, though some place it later.

The design of this letter seems to have been, to reconcile Philemon to his runaway servant, Onesimus. The outlines of the subject is in the Epistle. It will not be necessary, therefore, in this place to enlarge upon it. As the Holy Ghost hath classed it among the writings of his inspiration, it will be proper to enter upon the perusal of it in prayer. May the Lord bless it to the glory of God, in our edification, through Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

The Apostle very affectionately addresseth Philemon, on the Subject of his receiving back his Servant Onesimus, and forgiving him all Wrongs. He opens his Epistle, with his usual Salutation, of Grace, and Peace; and closeth with the same.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not fail to observe in this short Epistle, short as it is, the wonderful ways and works of God. In the family of *Philemon* under all the means of grace the heart of *Onesimus* remains hardened But after his departure and unfaithfulness to his Master the grace of God meets him elsewhere, and the Lord changeth the heart of stone into an heart of flesh. And who of God's redeemed Ones but can say the same? Blessed Jesus, thou art the Brother born for adversity. Do, thou, Lord receive all thine as those for whom thou

hast answered. Praised be a Covenant God in Christ for all his mercies. Amen.

HEBREWS

General Observations

I would seek grace from GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of this blessed portion of his holy word, to enter upon the perusal of it, with the most earnest prayer, and praise; and with the most profound humility and joy. No part of the word of GOD hath in it more blessed views of the glory of CHRIST'S Person, and GODHEAD, and Offices, and Character. And none, which more blessedly brings him home to the affections of his people, under all the endearments of union and interest, as the LORD our Righteousness. Oh! that GOD the HOLY GHOST may glorify Him, to his Church's apprehension, under all and form him, in every heart of his redeemed, *the hope of glory*.

There have been doubts in the minds of some, whether the Apostle *Paul* was, or was not, the Pen-man GOD the SPIRIT made use of, for writing this Epistle. But none of the faithful taught of GOD, ever doubted that the Epistle itself, was the immediate work of divine inspiration. Indeed every age of the Church, hath furnished witnesses for GOD, in confirmation of its divine authority. The seal of the SPIRIT, in the heart, to the truths of GOD, written there, becomes an infallible testimony. Hence the royal Psalmist exclaimed: *I shall never forget thy word, for by it thou hast quickened me*, Psalm 119:93. And whoever reads the book of the Hebrews, with an enlightened eye, under the leadings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of it, will not fail to discover, that the Apostle *Paul*, is evidently the inspired Penman of it. What he saith of *Timothy* in the last Chapter, verse 23 (Hebrews 13:23), when it be considered, that *Paul* wrote it from *Rome*, and the probable date of it also, Anno 63 or 64; form a correspondence, to the Apostle's then imprisonment. And yet more decisive is *Peter's* testimony. For *Peter's* Epistle was written to the strangers, (that is, the ten tribes of the *Jews* or *Hebrews*,) scattered at that time,

throughout the lower *Asia*. 1 Peter 1:1. In this Epistle *Peter* refers to this book of the *Hebrews*, when he saith to them, *our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you*, 2 Peter 3:15. Now no part of *Paul's* writings but this Epistle was written to the *Jews*. All his other Epistles were to the *Gentile* Churches, and to particular persons, as *Timothy*, *Titus*, and *Philemon*. And this also explains the cause wherefore the Apostle did not begin this Epistle to the *Hebrews* with his usual salutation.

I do not think it necessary in this place, to enter into a large and circumstantial account, of the Contents of this blessed Epistle. All the interesting particulars will meet us in their proper place. It will be sufficient here to observe, that the one, great, and leading design, of the whole is, to exalt the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Hence his Person, as GOD, and as GOD-Man; his offices, characters, relations; his royal, prophetic, and priestly offices; are most blessedly set forth. And what is worthy of most especial notice is, that the human nature of CHRIST is displayed in so dear, and interesting a light; and the precious consequences resulting from it to his people, so enlarged upon, and recommended to their tenderest regard as is not perhaps so fully inculcated in any other of the Apostle's writings. So that upon the whole, the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is a most blessed part of the divine Word: and for which the Church of the faithful, can never be sufficiently thankful to GOD the HOLY GHOST. I will no longer detain the Reader from entering upon its perusal, than only first to look up with prayer, to the Almighty Author of it, that while passing over it, he will be pleased, mercifully to shine on the heart, of both the Writer, and the Reader, (if it be his holy will,) of this *Poor Man's Commentary*. And from hence, that the LORD JESUS, who is the whole sum and substance of its contents, may be made manifest in every part of it; so blessedly seen by faith, and enjoyed in hope, as to be glorified in the heart; and GOD *the FATHER glorified in his dear SON*. Amen.

Chapter 1

Summary

GOD is declared in the opening of this Chapter, as speaking to the Church, by his SON. Then follows a short, but exalted Description, of the Glories of CHRIST'S Person and Character.

Reflections

PRAISES to the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for the eternal purpose, which he purposed in CHRIST JESUS our LORD! And praises to his holy name, that he hath been pleased to make known the fellowship of the mystery, hid in GOD from the beginning of the world, which in times past was opened in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets; but now, in these last days, fully, and completely made known to the Church, in the Person of his dear SON! LORD JESUS! we hail thy glorious appearing, in all the revelations thou hast made! We adore thee for thy *natural*, and *essential* glories, as One with the FATHER. We adore thee in all thy *mediatorial* characters, as GOD-Man, *heir of all things!* And we would desire grace to praise thee, love thee, delight in thee, for all thy finished redemption-work, and grace, manifested to thy Church, and People; that when by thyself thou hadst purged our sins, thou didst take thy seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Oh! the rapture and the joy, that JESUS, by inheritance hath obtained a more excellent name than angels; and that his people, his fellows, by their union with him, and their right in him, are begotten to the same heritage, and will enter into the joy of their LORD. Oh! that GOD the SPIRIT, who in grace and love, hath brought the Church acquainted with these precious things, may daily, by his quickening, and renewing influences, anoint all the fellows of CHRIST, with the same oil of gladness, as their glorious Head. And while our GOD and FATHER saith unto his dear SON, *Thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever;* all his adopted children may know their oneness and interest in CHRIST, and in that kingdom, which cannot fail!

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle is prosecuting the same blissful Subject in this Chapter as in the former, in speaking of the Glories of CHRIST. His Love to the Church, in taking our Nature: and the Blessedness it brings to all his People.

Reflections

Oh! for grace to take heed to those things, which I have heard of GOD's covenant love and salvation; that, through the sweet office of GOD the HOLY GHOST, as the Remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS, I may never let them slip. And do thou blessed LORD, put such an holy jealousy and fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee, nor neglect so great salvation.

Praises to my gracious GOD and SAVIOR! who in his great condescension for the sufferings of death, was made a little lower than the Angels; and yet was then, and is now, and eternally must be, the LORD both of Angels and Men. And oh! what a thought! He who is the High and Lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, is also the same moment, in his human nature, one with his people. *For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one.* And is it so, (oh! thou blessed LORD,) that thou art not ashamed to call thy people brethren? LORD! grant that I may never feel that false pride, and be ashamed to call thee so! Surely I will tell all the world, whose I am, and Whom I serve; and say to all I meet, JESUS is not ashamed to call me brother. And shall I not say to thee with delight, and joy, in the language of thy Church of old: *Oh! that thou were as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother: when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.*

Reader! do you know the LORD? If so, think of your mercies, and rightly make use of them; amidst the present sinful and adulterous CHRIST-despising generation! Will you be cast down, because of the temptation, and have your soul discouraged by reason of the way? Oh! blessed be the way, however tempted it may be, if it thereby leads the soul, more frequently, more closely, to JESUS. Darkness is a mercy, if it drives me to JESUS the light. Poverty of soul is true riches, if my pinchings endear his enlargements! It is blessed to

know, and blessed to feel, all spiritual wants; to make the soul more sensible, that there is no fulness, but in JESUS. LORD the SPIRIT! cause my soul then to live upon CHRIST!

Chapter 3

Summary

The HOLY GHOST is here still preaching CHRIST. The LORD, the SPIRIT, calls upon the Church, to pause, and contemplate, the Person of JESUS. He draws a Comparison between CHRIST and Moses. He shews the awful State of Unbelief!

Reflections

PAUSE, my soul, and cheerfully obey, the LORD the SPIRIT, and consider, as thou art commanded and hast such abundant reason to do; consider, the Apostle and High Priest of thy profession CHRIST JESUS! Yes! thou glorious GOD and SAVIOR! I would desire to contemplate thy Person, character, offices, and relations! I would desire grace, and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of thee, to behold thee in all that concerns thy Mediatorial glory, in thy faithfulness to thy FATHER, and to thy people. I would gaze on thee, until my whole soul was swallowed up in the contemplation; and until that I found myself one with my LORD in that house, over which, as his own, CHRIST is the rightful owner; and which house, is CHRIST'S body the Church, and He *the fullness which filleth all in all*.

And do thou, Almighty GOD the HOLY GHOST, give me continual grace, to keep in remembrance thy precious exhortation to thy people. LORD! let nothing of sin cleave to my poor fallen nature; neither suffer me to be at any time hardened with the deceitfulness of it. Oh! the long suffering of my GOD, to the forty years provocation of the people in the wilderness! Oh! the numberless years of the LORD'S long suffering now! Cause me, O LORD, to mark that grace which kept back thy people from murmuring *then*, when the LORD brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* by *Moses*; that though *some*, (even the *Israel* after the flesh,) when they had heard, did provoke; yet not *all*, (even those whom grace restrained.) They fell not after

the same example of unbelief. And cause me, O LORD, to know now, that it is grace, and grace alone, by which any are kept *by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation*. Do thou, O LORD the HOLY GHOST! who here so sweetly holds forth our great and glorious Apostle, and High Priest, JESUS CHRIST, to thy Church's view, give grace to the apprehension and knowledge of Him; that through thy blessed influences thy people may all rejoice in him, to the praise of the glory of His grace, who *hath made us accepted in the Beloved*.

Chapter 4

Summary

The same precious Subject is continued through this whole Chapter: The LORD'S People are here shewn, that CHRIST is their Rest. CHRIST having passed into the Heavens, is made an unanswerable Argument, to come unto him boldly.

Reflections

How shall I properly prize my mercies, in the grace the LORD gives me, to receive and believe in JESUS; when I am told, as in this Chapter, that the *professing Israel* of old, to whom the Gospel was preached, found no profit, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it*. Oh! how plain and evident it is, from the experience of mankind in all ages, that grace makes all the difference between *him who serveth GOD, and him who serveth him not*. LORD! cause thy Church, thy people, thy redeemed, to rest in CHRIST and his finished work, as GOD in creation, and CHRIST in redemption, rested from theirs. Oh! the sweet thought! There is a rest, and CHRIST is that rest, *which remaineth for the people of GOD*.

Oh! thou uncreated WORD! let my soul be always under thy soul-warning, and spirit-comforting power. And, as all things are naked, and open to thine all-piercing sight, do thou, LORD, impart the very grace thou seest to be needful for me. Oh! thou risen and exalted SAVIOR! Thou art indeed passed into the heavens. Thither would my soul by faith and love follow thee. JESUS knoweth me, feeleth for me, is sensibly touched with the circumstances of my infirmities. Surely, JESUS can, and JESUS will, impart all necessary strength, and

my GOD and SAVIOR will make me more than conqueror, through his grace helping me!

Chapter 5

Summary

The same most precious Subject, as in the former Chapter, is carried on in this. Melchizedek is spoken of. Precious Views of CHRIST.

Reflections

Precious great High Priest of thy people! LORD! I would hail thee as both my Priest, Altar, and Sacrifice. Thou wert indeed taken from among men: for in thy human nature, thou wert alone suited for the high office. Who, like JESUS, could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way: from a knowledge, like JESUS, of the infirmities of our nature, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin? And who like JESUS, could be begotten to the Sonship of his holy nature, and be sworn into the office of an high priest for ever, after the order of *Melchizedec*? Surely LORD, none but JESUS could offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins. Neither could there be any thing short of thy divine nature, to offer gifts and sacrifices *upon*, and to give acceptance and efficacy to all offerings, but the Person, blood, and righteousness of GOD'S dear SON? And oh! what everlasting efficacy, hath the one offering of my GOD and SAVIOR wrought; and his everlasting unchanging priesthood, made secure, to render both his priesthood and his sacrifice of eternal duration, confirmed also by the oath of Him, who hath sworn, and will not repent; *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek!*

Oh! for grace from GOD the SPIRIT, never to lose sight of the mercy-seat itself, that the whole purpose, for which it is erected is for mercy. There would have needed no mercy-seat, had not CHRIST'S children been sinners. Neither would GOD the FATHER have constituted his dear SON, as high Priest, and formed him in our nature in this office, but that he might have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. The very office itself, and the conscious sense of Him Who sits there, are full to this

purpose, that GOD hath chosen JESUS expressly with this view; and JESUS hath infinite dimensions of love, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest, in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. LORD! may I never lose sight of these things! May I always have in contemplation thy Person, and thy high priestly office; and by faith, behold my LORD, still, clothed in a vesture, dipped in blood, as if to tell me JESUS wears these robes, in proof of his unceasing office. Let me day by day, come boldly to thy throne, and *find grace to help, in all time of need.*

Chapter 6

Summary

The Hebrews are exhorted to Perseverance in the Faith. The Case of the Unregenerate is considered. The Chapter ends, in a very blessed Manner, in relating the Will of JEHOVAH, that the Heirs of Promise, should be shewn his unchangeable Counsel concerning them!

Reflections

CALLED upon as the Church is, in this Chapter, to leave behind first principles in the awakening of the soul to the convictions of sin, and having then but slight views of CHRIST, let us seek from GOD the SPIRIT, that growth in grace which marks those who have long known the LORD, and long found our own nothingness in everything out of CHRIST; that we may discover that life, and light, and joy, are only in CHRIST; while deadness, darkness, and sorrow, are in all we say or do.

But, Reader! while divine teaching infallibly leads every child of on into this conclusion, sooner or later, let no child of GOD be led away, from the features of character GOD the HOLY GHOST hath here drawn of hypocrites, to fancy that such distinguish him also. They differ as wide as the east from the west. GOD'S children are indeed full of defects and unworthiness, and undeserving; nevertheless, they are still children. The new spiritual life imparted to them in regeneration, however, to their view, at times appears hardly

discernible, is in them a *well of water, springing up to everlasting life*. But, the unawakened nature of the hypocrite, amidst all appearance of plentiful showers, is all outward and forming pools only, like *Job's* friends, prove deceitful, as the brook which in summer seasons dry away.

Reader! if so be the LORD hath caused you to know his grace, and by regeneration you are led to the precious discovery of being an heir of promise, see here the unspeakable love of GOD, and his willingness more abundantly, that his children shall live upon, and rejoice in, the immutability of his counsel. Oh! the strength of that consolation, founded in GOD the FATHER'S will! JESUS'S person, blood, and righteousness, and the HOLY GHOST'S regenerating, sanctifying, and renewing mercy. JESUS! be thou the anchor of my soul, both sure and stedfast! Not like the mariner's anchor beneath, but above; not founded on any thing breakable, but in things which are eternal. Not formed by the wisdom of men; but in the power of GOD. Precious, precious JESUS! thou art the Rock of ages! Thy work is perfect. Blessed, for ever blessed, be GOD, for JESUS CHRIST.

Chapter 7

Summary

Some Account of Melchizedec. CHRIST blessedly spoken of, under His High Priestly Character, and the Excellency of his Person and Office.

Reflections

EVERLASTING thanks be given to GOD the HOLY GHOST, for this most sweet and precious Chapter. Never, surely, but for the Lord himself explaining to us in this portion of his holy word, what he had before related concerning *Melchizedec*, in other parts of his revelation; should we have conceived suitable apprehensions on the subject. But now, by his gracious condescension, in saying so much as is here related, of that Priest of the Most High GOD, do we behold the wonders, of his Person, and Office, and the still greater Personage, to whom all that went before ministered. Hail! thou great, thou Almighty *Melchizedec* of thy People? Truly, LORD JESUS!

thou hast been sworn into thine office by JEHOVAH's Oath; and well therefrom do I feel confidence to come unto thee, as the LORD's High Priest, and my High Priest for ever. LORD! I desire grace, and power, to do what is here commanded the Church, namely, to consider, how great the *Melchizedec* was, whom *Abraham* saw; and therefrom to consider, how much greater my LORD JESUS is, to whom even *Melchizedec* acted but as a type and shadow!

Precious LORD JESUS! thou art a Priest upon thy throne! Thou hast an unchangeable priesthood! And indeed, and in truth, such an High Priest as thou art, my poor soul needed: One that can, and will save to the uttermost, all that come to GOD by thee; and One who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And, very sure I am, that though, in thy personal glory, all this, and more, is thine; yet, amidst all the exaltation of thy state, no change hath taken place in thy nature; JESUS, is JESUS still. The same lovely, and all loving JESUS. Here below, men that have infirmities are made priests; but our JESUS that is above, though touched with the feelings of our infirmities, yet, in himself, he is separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. He knows our frame by his own, though without sin; and his priesthood is for ever. LORD! take up my cause, for sure I am, I shall not then fail; thou art consecrated for evermore!

Chapter 8

Summary

We have more, and more precious Views of the LORD JESUS in this chapter. CHRIST the true tabernacle. GOD'S Covenant Love, secured in CHRIST, by Word and Oath.

Reflections

READER! is this indeed the sum and substance of what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath been blessing the Church with, in such gracious teachings concerning the LORD JESUS; that He is gone into heaven, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of Majesty: oh! then, for grace to follow him thither by faith! For, as sure as JESUS the SON of GOD is one there, so sure is He gone as the Head and Husband,

the Surety and Representative of his body the Church, *the fulness that filleth all in all*. Yes! He hath taken possession of heaven itself in their name. And all his redeemed ones may ready, by virtue of their union with Him, behold themselves by faith, *as raised up together with CHRIST, and made to sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS*. Oh! glorious JESUS! *Minister of the Sanctuary*, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD hath pitched, and not man!

And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST for this precious scripture! We now see, through thy divine teaching, how needful it was for our LORD to go away. Had he remained on earth, though he had made his soul an offering for sin, yet could he not have been a priest. Yes! thou dear LORD, it was necessary that thou shouldst priest it also for thy redeemed in heaven. Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! give us grace to be always following our JESUS by faith, and employing our great High Priest with our daily prayers and praises, until we come to see him, as He is, and dwell with him for ever.

Praises to our GOD and FATHER for his covenant CHRIST. Oh! may GOD the FATHER be to me a GOD in CHRIST, and make me his among his people. Oh! that JESUS, my Husband, may be to me my unceasing High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor. And GOD the HOLY GHOST, my Teacher, and the Glorifier of JESUS unto the day of his coming!

Chapter 9

Summary

We have in this Chapter some Account of the Furniture of the Old Tabernacle in the Wilderness. To this succeeds a most blessed Account of CHRIST, whom the HOLY GHOST meant to prefigure by this worldly Sanctuary.

Reflections

Oh! the distinguishing mercy, to which, by the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Church is brought, in exchanging a worldly sanctuary, and carnal ordinances; for the open displays of grace, in the Person, work, blood-shedding, and righteousness of our adorable High Priest, who is the whole sum and substance of every thing

blessed; and having, by his own blood, obtained eternal redemption for us, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. Precious LORD JESUS! thou art indeed the Testator of the New Testament in thy blood. Thou hast ensured all the blessings of the New Covenant to thy people. And blessed be the HOLY GHOST, in his Person, GODHEAD, and Ministry, for all his divine teaching, both of the old Church, in type, and figure; and the new dispensation, in sum and substance; and all of CHRIST JESUS.

LORD JESUS! let thy sweet supper for ever refresh the souls of thy redeemed, in the celebration of the New Testament in thy blood. Let it be a continual feast upon that one all-sufficient sacrifice, whereby thou hast perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Oh! let the consciousness of thy continually appearing for us, in the presence of GOD, keep our souls alive, in the expectation of thy coming, that we may look for thee the second time, without sin unto salvation.

Chapter 10

Summary

In this Chapter the Inefficacy of the Law, and the Sufficiency of the Gospel are stated, The LORD JESUS, is most blessedly represented, under the SPIRIT of Prophecy, as coming for the Salvation of his People. The gracious Encouragement, of drawing nigh by his Blood.

Reflections

PRECIOUS LORD JESUS! how blessedly hast thou manifested in thy Person, blood-shedding, and righteousness, that thou art the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believeth; and that the law was but a shadow of good things to come, which never could, neither ever was designed to make the corners thereunto perfect. Oh! for that sweet voice, *Lo! I come!* to be heard daily, hourly, in my soul, by the ear of faith, until I see thee as thou art, and dwell with thee for ever. Come, LORD, in thy SPIRIT, in thine ordinances, thy means of grace, and open my soul to receive thee. Come, LORD, continually in the love-visits of thy mercy, until thou shalt come in the glory of thy Majesty, to take me home to thyself,

that I may dwell with thee for ever! Praised be GOD the HOLY GHOST for the many blessed things contained in this delightful Chapter. Yes! LORD! through thy grace enabling us, we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of JESUS. And under thy leadings and influences, thy people, are hereby distinguished, from those awful characters, in this CHRIST-despising generation, who tread under-foot the SON of GOD, by denying his GODHEAD, the efficacy of his atoning blood, the blood of the Covenant; and do despite unto the SPIRIT of grace. LORD! comfort thy poor little ones, in the faith, in giving them to see, their adoption-character, and that they are not of them *that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul,*

Chapter 11

Summary

Here is the Record of Old Testament Saints, who lived and died, triumphant in Faith. The sweet Assurance to New Testament Believers that they, and all the Faithful, will together be made perfect in JESUS.

Reflections

BLESSED be GOD the HOLY GHOST, the Almighty Author of his sacred Word, for this precious Chapter, which he hath so graciously given to the Church Of GOD! for the LORD the SPIRIT, who hath so freely caused such illustrious acts of his people to be recorded for the consolation of the faithful, to bless it to the faithful, whenever, and wheresoever the LORD causeth it to be heard, or read, in all the Churches of the saints. And oh! that amidst all the awful circumstances of the present awful day, when, if the SON of GOD should come, the question of our LORD might be put forth, with trembling apprehensions for the answer; *will He find faith in the earth?* oh! grant that there may be known by our LORD, though hidden from our imperfect view, *a remnant according to the election of grace, both sons and daughters, who do not bow the knee to the image of Baal!*

LORD JESUS! thou Almighty Author and Finisher of faith! do thou increase our faith! Surely, LORD! the gift is thine; faith is thine. As none can first quicken, so none can keep alive his own soul. And, as none can first create faith; so none can exercise it, but by thee. *All our fresh springs are in thee:* Yea, LORD! Is not faith itself thine act in the soul, and the whole result of thy grace upon the heart? Precious JESUS! make thy redeemed now strong in the grace that is in thyself; that we may be *the followers of them, who inherit the promises.*

Almighty FATHER! All the triumphs of faith begin in thy fatherly love. Thy choice of the Church *in* CHRIST, and thy gift of the Church *to* CHRIST, become the surest testimony of thine everlasting love, which time, or eternity can shew. Oh! then, let a sense of it silence for ever all the natural Atheism, and unbelief, thy children bring with them into the world, from the *Adam*-nature, in which we are all born. Oh! gracious GOD and FATHER! let thy children stand impressed with an unshaken, and steady assurance, that thou hast not called thyself I AM, for nothing; but that the very name, by which thou hast been pleased to be made known to them, becomes a confirmation of all thy promises. I AM will give both a being, and an accomplishment, to all he hath said. Amen. Oh! then, like those holy men in CHRIST gone before, grant that thy people may all live, and when called upon, all die, in the faith of GOD's elect. And both in life and death, in time, and to all eternity, bless the united Source of all their mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, now, and ever Amen.

Chapter 12

Summary

The opening of this Chapter contains an earnest and an affectionate Exhortation to the Church, from the View of the Faithful, which had been given in the preceding Chapter, to be steadfastly looking unto JESUS. To this succeeds a striking Account of the Difference between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

Reflections

READER hear what GOD the SPIRIT saith to the Churches! Behold, what animating prospects are opened to New Testament saints, in the contemplation of Old Testament believers. And while we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, O LORD the SPIRIT! do thou give thy people grace, to pass on through all besetting difficulties, looking unto JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And oh! thou precious LORD JESUS! give thy people grace, to consider, and very blessedly to improve, under the sweet influences of thy SPIRIT, in marking what a contradiction of sinners thou didst endure against thyself. LORD! who can faint when beholding the SON of GOD, in his unequalled conflicts? Surely, if JESUS learned obedience, by the things which he suffered, well may his brethren desire to be trained in the same school. Then will they know their sonship, and be sanctified under the hand of a tender FATHER. Let the *Esaus*, and the profane persons of every age, relinquish, as they always do, the blessing; but, LORD, let no root of bitterness spring up to trouble thy *Jacobs*, and the *Israels* thy people.

Blessed be GOD, that Mount *Sinai* is no more; but the Church is come to Mount *Zion*. There may thy people, O LORD, daily come. There are the firstborn. There the assembly of the faithful. There JESUS, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and the blood of sprinkling. And there GOD the Judge of all. And, LORD, while through thy grace, thy people come to thee in faith; do thou help them to look forward to thy coming to them in glory. JESUS will shake both heaven and earth. But JESUS'S redeemed belong to Him and in Him they receive a kingdom, which cannot be moved. Precious LORD! grant all thy grace, to serve GOD acceptably, *with reverence and godly fear*.

Chapter 13

Summary

The Epistle is here closed; and a Blessed Conclusion is made. CHRIST in his Person, Relations, and Character, the same for ever:

Several weighty Exhortations are used; and the whole is summed up in praying for grace to the whole Church.

Reflections

HERE let us pause, while reading the closing words of this most precious Epistle: and, as a man who hath been ascending an high hill, and is arrived at the summit of it, looks round, and takes a leisurely survey of the many beautiful prospects which come up to his view, from the rising ground he hath trodden; so may the Writer, and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, contemplate the unspeakable glories which GOD the SPIRIT hath presented before both, in this his Holy Scripture. Gracious LORD! I would say for myself, what praises do I owe thee, for the divine revelation herein contained? From the first opening of the subject, in the first Chapter, through all the portions of the sacred contents; what beauties, and glories, hast thou unveiled, of his Person, and Character, who is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! Beginning with the proofs of his GODHEAD, then of his Manhood, then of His glorious Person in union with *both*, as the GOD-Man-Mediator; how sweetly and blessedly hath my LORD the HOLY GHOST held him up to my view, and (shall I not hope) brought him home to my heart, in all his offices, characters, and relations, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people! Hail! thou Great, and glorious LORD JESUS CHRIST! thou *High Priest of thy people for ever, after the order of Melchizedec!*

Here then, let both Writer and Reader fall down on the knee of prayer and praise, before the throne, and *in* Him, and *through* Him, and *by* Him, through whom alone we can *offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually*; bless the united Source of all our mercies, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the ONE Glorious, and Eternal JEHOVAH, for the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself; and all the fullness of grace and glory; in Him, for his Church, in time, and to all eternity.

And, as an instrument in the LORD's hand, let neither Writer, nor Reader of this little Work, overlook the faithful Apostle, whom GOD the SPIRIT was graciously pleased to appoint to this ministry, in handing down to the Church, from age to age, those sacred records, we have here gone over in the perusal. Truly, LORD, we cannot but see GOD the HOLY GHOST'S distinguishing grace to this man, in this most honorable appointment. Well is it recorded, of the LORD's

personal ordination of him to the ministry, when in the Church the voice was heard: *Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them!* And oh! what a work indeed, not only in the then living ministry in person, to the Churches; but by his writings, in this, and the other blessed Epistles left on record for the everlasting instruction and comfort of the saints of GOD; whereby *he being dead, yet speaketh.* Farewell *Paul*, farewell, until the whole Church shall meet thee in glory, there together to praise GOD and the LAMB, for electing, redeeming, regenerating love, and favor, both to Pastor and People, all in One and the same glorious Head, to all eternity. Blessed be the LORD JESUS! for making thee his chosen vessel to bear his name as thou hast in those sacred writings done before Gentiles and Kings in every age of the Church.

LORD! add one blessing more. Pardon every thing of error in this humble work: and bless all that is offered upon it, as far as is agreeable to thy truth, and to thy mind, and will; that GOD *in all things may be glorified in JESUS CHRIST.*

Amen.

JAMES

General Observations

It should seem that the term *General Epistle*, is given to this part of the Holy Scriptures, in that, it is not addressed either to any particular Church or Person; but intended for the whole of CHRIST'S Church and People. And though it appears to have been directed to the *twelve tribes of Israel*, scattered abroad, yet not Israel after the flesh, but the LORD'S *Israel* after the SPIRIT, even the children of GOD, wheresoever scattered.

The writer of this Epistle, under GOD the HOLY GHOST, was *James*. It is not said, whether James, the son of *Zebedee*, and brother of *John*; or *James*, the son of *Alpheus*. But, indeed, there needed not this distinction. For *James* the son of *Zebedee*, was murdered by *Herod*, about the year of our LORD GOD 44; whereas this Epistle could not have been of an earlier date than 60. Hence *James*, the son of *Alpheus*, must have been the penman of it.

The great and leading design of this Epistle need not be entered upon in this Preface; it will meet us in due season, in its proper place. But the objection which *Eusebius* saith, some of the ancient writers had to this Epistle, from an idea, that it was contradictory, on the subject of faith, to that of the Scriptures in general, and particularly to *Paul's* statements of it, under the HOLY GHOST, is wholly void. The supposed contradiction is merely ideal; for there never did exist the least difference between *Paul* and *James*, on this subject. Both perfectly agree; and both evidently prove, that one and the same Almighty SPIRIT, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, guided the pens of both.

I have only here, as on the entrance in every former Book, to ask that *wisdom, which is from above*, (and which this Apostle so blessedly speaks of,) to be with me in going over this part of the LORD'S sacred word, as before; and to ask it *in faith, nothing wavering*. And may the LORD, if it be his blessed will, give it in

large portions, both to the Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*; who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.

Chapter 1

Summary

The Epistle opens with a general, Salutation. Various Directions are given to the Church. GOD'S Grace and Love to the Church are very blessedly set forth.

Reflections

Reader! observe the Apostle's salutation, addressed to the brethren, and see whether you have a personal interest in it. Can you count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations? Yet! If so be, by regeneration you know the LORD, and therefrom can discover GOD's love and favor, in the appointment of exercises. To every child of GOD, renewed by grace trials, whose issue can never be finally doubtful, will always bring joy, when patience hath her perfect work, in the perfection of JESUS. In Him, and Him only, can the Church find themselves perfect and entire, and lacking nothing. And when taught these precious things, every child of GOD, will daily find his lack of wisdom, and as daily be led, to seek his supplies from Him, and in Him; *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Yea, and in faith, and without doubt and wavering, will the child of GOD seek it in JESUS, and from JESUS. And oh! how truly blessed is that child of GOD, who when tried, takes all his confidence in CHRIST.

Great Father of light! blessed for ever be thy glorious Name, for that good and perfect gift, which comprehends every other, thy dear SON! And blessed be thou, O LORD, that thy gifts and callings are without repentance. Thy will, and not our purpose; thy grace, and not our deservings, are the alone standards of thy love and favor. Oh! the blessedness of that one scripture, which hath more in it of value, than a million worlds; *Of his own will, begat he us with the word of truth!* LORD! write it in the living tablet of my heart, for daily use, and every moment's joy.

Precious JESUS! be thou the perfect law of liberty to my poor soul, to look into, as in a glass, from day to day. Oh! for a blessed conformity to my LORD'S image; in all things! May GOD the HOLY GHOST, so take of the things of JESUS, and shew to me, that now by faith, I may daily behold thy face in righteousness; and ere long be satisfied in full sight, *when I awake with thy likeness.*

Chapter 2

Summary

We have in this Chapter, an interesting Statement, of the Conduct to be observed by the LORD'S People, towards the LORD'S Poor. And also, a blessed Account of the Works of Faith, as distinguished from a dead Faith, of a mere hearsay Knowledge!

Reflections

Oh! for grace, while reading what GOD the HOLY GHOST hath said in this Chapter, in reprovng any respect of persons, in his house of prayer; that I may everlastingly keep in view the LORD'S pleasure, and so have not the faith of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as to regard the rich more than the poor; but to love the LORD'S poor with peculiar delight for Jesus's sake; and GOD'S chosen may be my chosen; and the poor of this world, if rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, may be *the excellent in whom is all my delight.*

Blessed and Eternal SPIRIT! keep my soul from all error, in the right apprehension of all thy gracious truths. Teach me, LORD, that if it were possible for a man to keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And, as we have all sinned, and come short of thy glory, never may my soul seek the smallest justification by the deeds of the law.

And I do beseech thee, O LORD, who leadeth thy people unto all truth, that I may so fully learn, from what thou hast here taught the Church, how unprofitable the dead faith of merely acknowledging divine truths, while not living under the influence of them, is before GOD; that my faith, like the faith of *Abraham* and *Rahab*, may be works of faith; in proof, that my profession and practice are in perfect correspondence to each other. Let my soul abhor the thought,

and much more the conduct, of professing love to a poor brother or sister, while withholding from them the tokens of that love. And in the higher concerns with my GOD and Savior, far be it from me, O LORD, to profess, that I know GOD, but in works deny him! Oh! for grace, while seeking justification before GOD, upon the sole footing of the Person, blood-shedding, and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, to be found an eminent *example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity!*

Chapter 3

Summary

This Chapter contains much wholesome Exhortation to the People of GOD, on the several Parts of Conduct. The close of it hath a beautiful Description of the Wisdom which is from above, in Opposition to that which is earthly.

Reflections

Precious LORD JESUS! how sweetly doth this Chapter bring to my recollection thy tender, and endearing precept, to call no man master upon earth! for One is our Master, even CHRIST! Yes! truly, LORD, thou art, both by right and by purchase, by conquest, and by the voluntary surrender of my soul, in the day which made me willing, the day of thy power; thou art my lawful right, and highly honored Master, Sovereign, and LORD! And oh! for grace, everlastingly in willing homage, to bow my knee to the sceptre of thy grace. And as all creatures in nature have been, and are tamed and governed, let it never be said, that any of thy redeemed ones arose at any time in disobedience against thee!

And do thou, blessed and Wonderful Counselor! in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, grant me daily portions, from thyself, in that wisdom which is from above. LORD! be it my happiness to be distinguished, in all my dealings with men, from that worldly wisdom which begets envying, and strife, and every evil work; but out of a good conversation, by the in-dwelling power of GOD, the HOLY GHOST, may I be enabled to show forth all the practical fruits of godliness, *with meekness of wisdom.*

Chapter 4

Summary

The same Subject of Exhortation is continued in this Chapter as in the former. Several striking Expressions are made use of, to enforce what the Apostle is recommending,

Reflections

My soul! while reading this Chapter, and hearing GOD the SPIRIT putting that Solemn question to thee, *from whence come wars and fightings* in thy two-fold nature; a spirit regenerated; and a body of flesh virtually all sin: oh! bless that gracious, that sovereign, that bountiful GOD, who, by his quickening and illuminating power, hath opened thine eyes to the view of the awful state in which thou wert born in nature, and the distinguishing mercy manifested to thee in grace; and though still groaning under a body of sin and corruption, bless the LORD for thy redemption in CHRIST, by which thou hast gotten the victory, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And, my soul, see! that amidst all the wounds from sin, which, in the present warfare thou art daily sustaining, bless thy GOD and Savior, the issue of the conflict is not doubtful. Thy GOD will give thee grace to resist the devil, and he will flee from thee. Thy GOD will enable thee to draw nigh to him, and he will draw nigh to thee. *Satan* knoweth that he hath but a short time. Let nothing keep thee from the throne of grace. Here all thy strength is found. Look to JESUS, who is both thy wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, as well as redemption. *In Him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.* And, do thou look forward with holy joy to the morrow, the day, even the great day of GOD, when JESUS will come to take thee home to his eternal kingdom. Let men of the world, from the world, seek their supreme joy. Yea, let them go from city to city, to traffic in the concerns of this world's good. Be it thy happiness to eye JESUS, even in the necessary things the body is occupied with here below. Soon thou shalt have done with all earthly employments, and the everlasting enjoyment of GOD in CHRIST will be thy portion for evermore.

Chapter 5

Summary

The Church is here taught, in the Opening of this Chapter, the short-lived Enjoyments of the Wicked. GOD's faithful Ones are reminded of the Blessedness of Patience; and what precious Advantages arise from Prayer.

Reflections

In closing up this short, but sweet scripture, let not the Reader overlook the tender care and watchful love of GOD the HOLY GHOST to the Church, in uniformly, from Chapter to Chapter, shewing the striking contrast between his people and the ungodly. While the rich worldling is bid to weep and howl in the awful prospect of miseries before him, the faithful, though poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, are desired to rejoice in their exercises, and in patience to possess their souls, for the coming of the LORD draweth nigh.

1st PETER

General Observations

WE enter here upon a most blessed portion of the Inspired Word of GOD. Oh! what unspeakable mercies doth the Church owe GOD the HOLY GHOST, for such an invaluable treasure! This is indeed so precious a part of the sacred canon of scripture, that in the most daring days of infidelity, none ventured to call its authority in question. But, Reader! do not fail to remark, that the most blessed testimony of GOD'S word is, GOD'S teaching by it. And thousands now upon earth, can set their seal to this Epistle of *Peter*, in having been taught in it by the LORD. And tens of thousand's are blessing GOD for the instructions they once received from it, when upon earth, who are now in glory.

The Epistle is not addressed to any particular Church or person, and therefore it is called *General*. It should seem, that though *Peter* was himself a Jew, and once deeply entrenched in *Jewish* prejudices, yet, in his own history, under the LORD'S grace to him, he learnt enough, before his departure out of life, to see very clearly, that CHRIST'S Church was but ONE. *Peter* well understood this, Song of Solomon 6:9. And with joy, being so directed by the HOLY GHOST, sends his Epistle, with his Apostolic benediction, to the strangers scattered abroad.

The *time* when this Epistle was written, is not so perfectly known, as to speak upon it decidedly. Some place it as early as the year of our LORD GOD, 44. And some as late as 65. The *place* appears to have been *Babylon*, from whence the Apostle wrote it. Not figuratively, but literally *Babylon*, the chief city of the *Chaldean* empire. All times, and all places, when and where the LORD the SPIRIT is pleased to raise up and send forth his servants, with what a demonstration of the SPIRIT, and of the power, do they come?

But the chief observations, in a general way, that we are concerned to remark in this place, is, the blessed contents of this

holy book, in relation to doctrine. And here it must be said, that though short (according to our greediness for more) this blessed Epistle is, yet we have in it all the leading points of our most holy faith. The everlasting love of GOD, our FATHER, in his choice of the Church in CHRIST, before all worlds; the redeeming grace, and love, and mercy of JESUS to his Church; and the regenerating, illuminating, sanctifying love of GOD the HOLY SPIRIT; all, and every part of these foundation-truths, are most blessedly, sweetly, and powerfully set forth, through the whole of this Epistle. I will not in this place anticipate the Reader's expectation, by here entering upon them. My soul is looking forward, with much pleasing delight, of going over the several Chapters, and there to contemplate at large, the precious features as they arise before us: The LORD give both Writer and Reader of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, if it be his HOLY will, a blessed opportunity! Do thou, Almighty Author of thine own most sacred word, *take of the things of CHRIST, which thou hast here recorded, and shew to us*; and refresh our souls abundantly with this feast of fat things, that *our hearts may rejoice, and our joy none take from us. Amen!*

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle, after opening his Epistle with Salutation, immediately establisheth the fundamental Truth of the Covenant in CHRIST, and breaks out into an Hymn of Praise for the Divine Love. He shews, that Redemption by CHRIST is nothing new. He dwells most delightfully on the infinite Preciousness of CHRIST'S Blood; and finisheth this first Chapter with an affectionate Exhortation.

Reflections

SURELY we have reason to bless GOD for the dispersion of his people, in that so much grace is manifested, and hath been manifested in their recovery. All which proves the original and eternal election of the Church by GOD the FATHER, the purchase of their redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and their regeneration and sanctification by the HOLY GHOST. And that sweet promise is

confirmed in every instance of a child of GOD brought back by sovereign grace, *Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel, will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock!*

And, Reader! shall we not both join the Apostle's hymn, in the conscious recovery of our poor fallen nature, by the resurrection of CHRIST from the dead, and in the assurance of that inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, to which all his redeemed are begotten, and which is reserved for them in heaven, who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation; shall we not bless GOD for his unspeakable gift! And though in the way to our possession of this secured inheritance, there is a *needs-be* to meet with manifold temptations, yet, even these temptations, under divine grace, minister but to greater glory; and every exercise of faith becomes more precious than gold that perisheth!

Precious JESUS thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. And though we see thee not by sight, yet do thy people love thee, the fairest and the loveliest of ten thousand. Thy salvation, the Prophets spoke of, guided by thy SPIRIT within them. Thy finished redemption, the HOLY GHOST hath given thy Church grace to believe, in the preaching of the Gospel, in thy presence and power, sent down from heaven. And while angels desire to look into these things, by way of discovery of their wonderful nature and extent, it is the unspeakable happiness of thy people to be taught of GOD, and to believe in GOD, that their faith and hope might be in GOD.

Oh! LORD the SPIRIT! thou who hast given to thy Church this sweet scripture, give to them the knowledge and apprehension of all its blessed contents in their hearts. And, since, by thy sovereign work of regeneration, thy people are born again, and brought into the knowledge and love of GOD in CHRIST, give them also grace to live in the daily enjoyment of their high privileges. May they have such a daily sense of the electing love of GOD, the sanctification of the SPIRIT, and the redeeming, cleansing, and renewing efficacy of the blood of JESUS, as to believing in the sweet communion and fellowship of the whole, as to be found, *unto the praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST.*

Chapter 2

Summary

This Chapter begins with an Exhortation arising from the former. A blessed Account of CHRIST is given, both in the Beginning and Close of the Chapter. Very interesting Relations are made of CHRIST, to allure the Church to the Love of Him.

Reflections

BLESSED LORD GOD the HOLY GHOST! since by regeneration thou bringest the children into their adoption character in CHRIST JESUS, give me the daily influences of thy grace, that I may live and act up to the high character of my calling; and laying aside all the old corruptions of the old nature, of malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and evil speaking, as one new-born in CHRIST, may all the longings of my soul be after JESUS. Having tasted his graciousness, excite in me a thirst for unceasing enjoyments of him. And however my LORD becomes a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to the world, may my soul be building upon him, as JEHOVAH'S chief corner stone, elect and precious in Zion; every thing that is blessed for faith to rest upon, in life and death, in time and to all eternity, And amidst my weakness and unworthiness, and the slenderness of my faith, give me grace to attend to what thou hast here said as a token of faith; *unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.* Surely CHRIST is more precious to me than thousands of gold and silver. And therefore, my GOD saith, this is faith. LORD, *I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

Precious JESUS! thy people is a chosen generation; GOD the FATHER hath chosen them, and made them so. They are from the same source, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people! And will not the same grace which hath so distinguished them, cause them to be distinguished also as lights in the world, among whom they shine in a crooked and perverse generation? That grace must be from thee, for all grace is in thee. Enable them, O LORD, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and to adorn thy doctrine in all things. And while rejoicing in being delivered from sin, and all its tremendous consequences, by thy blood, may

they follow, through the sweet influences of HOLY SPIRIT, thy example!

Yes! thou Almighty Shepherd and Bishop of souls, thou hast brought back thy blood-bought sheep to thy fold, and thou wilt keep them thine for ever.

Chapter 3

Summary

The greater Part of this Chapter is Exhortation. Some few, but deep Things of Divine Truths, towards the Close of this Chapter, are touched upon.

Reflections

READER! what a beautiful illustration doth this Chapter afford, of the sweet effects of regeneration? All the relative and social duties arise from the work of grace upon the heart, as fruits from good seed, sown in good ground. And where the hidden man of the heart is found, there will be all the sweet properties of grace, in testimony, that GOD dwelleth in his people, by his HOLY SPIRIT.

Blessed LORD! diffuse the sweet influences of thy love, in the minds of thy redeemed, and in the 'contemplation of the example of JESUS; grant that there may be more of that SPIRIT of the LORD, reigning and ruling among thy people; so that by sanctifying the LORD GOD in our hearts, we may be always ready to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

Everlastingly be adored and loved, the sinner's LORD, who died, *the just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD.* LORD let thy quickening SPIRIT, be unceasingly working in our souls, to keep alive in us thy grace, in endless communication, until thou shalt bring all thy Church, in body, soul, and spirit, to the everlasting enjoyment of our GOD in glory. Let there be no prison frame to thy people; but as thou art gone into heaven, and all power thine, for thy redeemed upon earth; let every thought of ours, be subject unto thee here below, as all authorities and powers, are subject unto thee above.

Chapter 4

Summary

This Chapter is full of Exhortations, in proposing to the Church, as an Object of unceasing Love, the LORD JESUS CHRIST; the People are tenderly invited to follow the LORD in the Regeneration.

Reflections

BE faithful followers of JESUS! what can arm you for the fight, and holy warfare equal to constant, firm, unshaken views of JESUS, and his unequalled sufferings? And look forward to the sure, and the not very distant hour, when you will cease from suffering, and for ever cease from sin! Enough of transgression hath indeed marked our lives while we were in a state of unregeneracy. Oh! that the days to come may be marked with grace, for the end of all things is it hand; and, therefore, may we always be seeking strength from the LORD, to wait on the LORD, and to watch in prayer.

Precious JESUS! do thou prepare all thy redeemed for every fiery trial, and for every conflict. Thy presence will make even the wilderness and the solitary place to blossom as the rose. And, oh! the blessedness of reproach, when it is truly for thy sake. But do thou, LORD, keep all thy little ones from every thing of evil, which might bring reproach on thy blessed cause. Let there be no temptation to dishonesty suffered to prevail over thy people, and still less to cruelty and evil doing. But to all the unjust sufferings of thy redeemed, may we learn to glorify GOD on this behalf. And oh! blessed LORD, grant all thy martyrs, like *Stephen*, to die in the full enjoyment of faith, and in and through thee, to commit their souls into thy hands, as *unto a faithful Creator!*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this chapter: and a blessed Close it is. As an Elder himself; he calleth upon the Elders, to feed CHRIST'S Flock; and both Elder and Younger to be in the Affection

of Brethren. Peter speaks very delightfully on the GOD of all Grace, and ends with his Apostolic Blessing.

Reflections

BLESSED be GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for this precious Epistle, among all the other divine revelations of covenant-love and mercy in JESUS CHRIST! What a review of the most out-refreshing truths, in looking back over this short, but comprehensive compendium of GOD'S holy word, do we behold, concerning the great things of GOD? Surely, the LORD hath been most gracious to the Church, in the gift of this divine treasury. May the Almighty Giver add to it another blessing, and, make it for ever profitable to every child of GOD, in every renewed perusal, as long as the Church continues on earth, until brought home to glory.

Dear *Peter*; thou wert an elder indeed, when as in this Chapter, thou didst exhort the elders. Blessedly called by JESUS, blessedly distinguished by JESUS, among the Apostles; no wonder *Satan* marked thee as an object to vent his hellish malice upon, with the most decided hatred. The LORD be praised for thy recovery from his infernal spoils. The LORD be praised, for having recorded both thy fall, and thy restoration. And the LORD be praised for every single instance, where both have been made blessed to the Church, in teaching, by so remarkable an example, the weakness of our poor nature in the greatest of men; and the strength of divine grace, in recovering the LORD'S people in the most desperate cases. Oh! how fully doth both prove, that, as the Apostle himself could well certify, that they who are kept, *are kept by the power of GOD, through faith, unto salvation.*

Reader! let us not close our meditation on this blessed book of GOD, without taking one view more of the GOD of all grace, in this most precious account of his rich, free, and sovereign mercy. What, but grace, can call to his eternal glory? What, but grace, can prepare the soul of any one individual for the enjoyment of it? And, what, but a GOD of all grace, can bear up, and bear on, and bear home the tried and buffeted child of GOD, against the roaring lion *Satan*, and sometimes the more raging lusts of sin, which arise in our fallen nature? Blessed be the GOD of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by CHRIST JESUS!

2nd PETER

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

If there were any real doubts entertained by the Church of God, concerning the authenticity of this divine record of God's Holy Word, the several parts of its own internal evidence, must have carried every objection before it For the grand testimony, after all, to the truth of God is, God's own testimony, in divine teaching. For this comes home to the heart. God speaketh in the word, and by the word. And when the Lord's word is accompanied by the Lord's power, and the heart is made to receive *the truth*, in *the love of it*, here is the threefold witness, by which, as the Scripture saith, every word is established.

This Epistle of the Apostle *Peter*; like the former, is not addressed to any one in particular, but to the church in general, and therefore called, *the General Epistle*. It is to *them that have obtained like precious faith* with the writer; consequently, the regenerated church. The Reader should note this in every Epistle.

There are some very blessed and precious points of doctrine, beside the more general, which are insisted upon some what more largely in these chapters. And very blessed they have proved, and must prove, to the people of God, who base read, and are taught by the Holy Ghost the gracious knowledge and enjoyment of them.

The *time*, in which it was written, is generally supposed to have been about *two years* after the *former*; not above *three* or *four* years before the overthrow of Jerusalem; and but little more than a *year* before the Apostle suffered in martyrdom let us enter upon its perusal in prayer, and this will encourage us to hope that 'we shall close it in praise.'

CHAPTER I

SUMMARY

The Apostle opens his Epistle in a short Salutation of the Church, and immediately enters upon the blessed Subject of Regeneration. He dwells upon the glorious Manifestation made to him in the Mount of Transfiguration; and concludes the Chapter, in declaring of God the Spirit's speaking by Holy Men of old.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed and Holy Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Praised be our Covenant God in Christ, for his unspeakable gift. What everlasting love, adoration, and praise, do thy people owe thee, O Father of mercies, and God of all grace, for having chose the Church in Christ, before the world! And thee, no less, thou glorious Son of God, for having taken thy Church into union with thyself, when the Lord possessed thee, in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; and for redeeming thy Church from the Adam-fall of ruin, in which, in this time-state, she was involved. And thee, with equal love and praise, O thou eternal Spirit, for thy gracious act of regeneration, in quickening the Church, in every individual of her members, whereby alone each child of God is brought into an apprehension of the Father's love, the Son's grace, and the Spirit's fellowship. Blessed, for ever blessed be God.

And we specially praise thee, dearest Jesus, for thy mercies to all thy Church, in this grace of thine to the Apostles, in the Mount of Transfiguration. It was surely for thy Church, in all ages, as well as for their personal comfort, so glorious a display of thy glory was vouchsafed. God, our Father, be praised, for the precious testimony then given to thy Son-ship. And God the Holy Ghost, in causing Peter, with his dying testimony, to bless the Church once more in the relation. And now, O Lord, may thy Church, and especially in the present awful day, be blessed of our God, with-grace to receive and treasure up so sweet a record of the glory of our risen and exalted Savior. Oh! Lord, continually make known to all thy members in grace, thy power and coming. Make known to us, in the blessed

prophecies of our God, and in all the ordinances of his house of prayer, this power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! to be heart-witnesses of Christ's majesty here on earth, till we come to be eye-witnesses of his majesty in heaven. Amen!

Chapter 2

Summary

We have in this Chapter a very awful Account of the latter-day Heresies. But, while the Holy Ghost graciously, informs the Church of those Seasons, he as graciously teacheth the Church how to discern their Features, and discover them from the Faithful.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful thing it must be, in a church, calling itself Christian, to be under the direction of false teachers. Professing the name of Christ, and yet denying his Godhead! Feeling their own daily state of sin and corruption before God, and yet rejecting the only possible way of finding peace and pardon with God, in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ! *My soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assemble mine honor be not thou united,* Oh! for grace, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to brave every opposition of men; and faithfully, fully, and unceasingly to proclaim the Lord our Righteousness.

Precious Lord Jesus! let thy name be as ointment poured forth. And, as thou knowest how to deliver the godly out of temptation; do thou keep them now, O Lord, in these awful seasons, when the Holy Ghost is admonishing the Church, that false teachers will arise, even among the people. Lord! give! us grace, to discern grievous wolves from true shepherds, and those that love the flock from those that live only to fleece them. My soul is relieved in the view, that Jesus knows his sheep, and is known of them. He will keep them in the dark and cloudy day. He will watch over them for good. He will bring them home, and bring them in, to his everlasting kingdom. Precious Lord Jesus! how safe and secure are all thine, kept by thine own power!

Chapter 3

Summary

In this Chapter the Apostle--closeth his Epistle, and a beautiful Close he maketh of it. He foretells of the last Days being marked with Scoffers. He assureth the Church of the Certainty of the Lord's coming, and the Suddenness of it; and ends all in giving Glory to Christ.

REFLECTIONS

Glory be to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *Israel's God* in covenant for ever and ever! What praises thy people have now to offer, and what praises to all eternity, for thy love to the Church, in Christ! Praises to the Father's love, in his choice of the Church, from everlasting! Praises to the Son's grace, in marrying his Church, and redeeming her from all iniquity to himself; by his blood! And, praises to the Holy Ghost, for his love in regenerating mercy, and all his watchful care over the Church, from grace to glory!

And, Lord, while we praise thee, in thy distinguishing mercy, in founding the Church in Christ, presiding over it as the Almighty Minister, in the appointment of ordinances, and means of grace; and giving the whole scriptures of our God, by inspiration, to make thy people wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, we find renewed cause to praise thee, O thou eternal Spirit, for raising up this blessed scripture, by the instrumentality of thy servant *Peter*, to comfort thy Church with those glorious truths herein contained. Yes! most gracious Lord! it was not only meant to refresh the dying Apostle, in bringing to his recollection Christ's glory in the Mount; but the record of it was designed, as it hath often proved, still is proving, and will, to the end of time, be proved a blessed testimony to refresh the souls of thousands! Lord! let it frequently refresh my soul also! And, amidst all the scoffers of the present awful day, let thy people be always on their watch-tower, waiting the Lord's coming. And, in the mean time, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Farewell, *Peter*, while we bless thy Lord, and our *Lord*, for thy ministry, we find no less cause to bless the Lord for all the improvements in grace we receive, under divine teaching, for all that

is recorded in thine history. The Church of *God*, in heaven and earth, have profited by it. And, ere long, will all join together in the same song of glory, praise, and power, to God and the Lamb, for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

1st JOHN

General Observations

ALL antiquity have, with one consent, ascribed this lovely and loving Epistle to *John*, the Apostle and Evangelist, although he hath not put his name to it. There is a great sameness of style, and manner in it, as well as in the doctrine, to the other writings of the beloved disciple. The *place* from whence written, and the *time* when, are not so generally agreed upon. But, certainly, it must have been towards the close of John's life, for he speaks of *the last time*, by which he meant the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which JESUS foretold, and which took place but a little while (as some think) after *John* wrote this Epistle: though some have dated it before. The term of *General* Epistle, is intended only to intimate, that it was not directed to any individual person or Church.

But the most material point to be regarded on this occasion is the very plain and clear marks it bears with it of divine inspiration. Here we rest more than satisfied, and find occasion for thanksgiving and joy. One sweet feature runs through the whole of it, in relation to the Church, namely, the Apostle's testimony to the FATHER'S love, the SON'S grace, and the HOLY GHOST'S fellowship. And, as *John* lived to behold the springing up of deadly heresies in the coming of Antichrist, and the denial of the GODHEAD of our LORD, we have reason to bless GOD for lengthening the Apostle's life, to give the evidence which we have in this Epistle upon record, to this glorious fundamental truth of our most holy faith.

I shall not detain the Reader with any further observations, but only beg of him to bend the knee with me in prayer, that the LORD the SPIRIT, who hath graciously given us the scripture will give us with it the understanding to apprehend it, that *having an unction from the HOLY ONE, We may know all things.*

Chapter 1

Summary

The Apostle begins his Epistle with a glorious Account of CHRIST And he assigns this Reason of his Writing to the Church, to bring them into Fellowship with his glorious Person, and the FATHER in Him. A blessed Testimony is given to the Blood of CHRIST cleansing from all Sin.

Reflections

Reader! You and I may well enter upon this blessed portion of GOD with prayer. And surely, under divine teaching, we shall end it in praise. Oh! who can contemplate Him whom *John* saw, heard, and handled, even THAT which was from the beginning, but with holy rapture and delight. Oh! that the object for which *John* declared these things, may be in my instance fully answered; and that I may truly have *fellowship with the FATHER, and with his SON JESUS CHRIST!*

Blessed GOD and FATHER! grant that light to thy redeemed, which may enable them to walk in thy light; and to know, by heartfelt experience, that *the blood of JESUS CHRIST thy SON cleanseth us from all sin.* And, LORD! let thy faithfulness and justice, as well as thy mercy and grace, be my everlasting comfort. GOD *can be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in JESUS.* And GOD, for CHRIST's sake, will cleanse his redeemed *from all unrighteousness.*

Chapter 2

Summary

The Apostle is here affectionately addressing the Church. He speaks sweetly of CHRIST, in his Advocacy, and in his Propitiation. He calls upon little Children, young Men, and Fathers, in speaking to them of the great Subject of Salvation.

Reflections

READER! let us behold, with holy joy, the gracious provision which GOD, who is rich in mercy, hath made for sin, in the person, blood, and righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. It is GOD who hath set CHRIST forth a Propitiation. And it is GOD who hath sworn him into the office of our Advocate. Blessed therefore with such a Propitiation, and such an Advocate, in One and the same Person, and of GOD our FATHER'S own providing, with what confidence may we draw nigh the mercy-seat, under all the discouragements and infirmities of our poor fallen nature?

And, dearest JESUS! may not all thy redeemed behold thee, waiting with delight for employment in that high character of thine, our Advocate, for all thy people, since thou hast already acted as their propitiation, and made compleat satisfaction for them in thy blood? Do thou, LORD, then, take up every cause, and plead in thine own infinite merits, and death, for every one of thine, against all the accusations of Satan, the demands of GOD'S law and justice, and all the fears and misgivings of unbelief, and our own guilty consciences! Oh! the blessedness of the assurance, JESUS can and will save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them!*

Hail! no less thou HOLY and Eternal SPIRIT! It is from thee cometh that unction, by which thy people know all things. Oh! for grace from GOD, to believe in GOD, and to continue *in the FATHER, and in the SON, in the full assurance of the promise of eternal life!*

Chapter 3

Summary

The Apostle breaks out in the Opening of this Chapter, into a devout Strain of Admiration and Praise, in the Contemplation of the Love of GOD. He draws a Line of Discrimination between the Children of GOD, and the Children of the Devil. Some very sweet Proofs are given of the Character of GOD'S Children.

Reflections

Who can contemplate the love of GOD, as set forth in this Chapter, in adopting sinners into his family, and calling them sons of GOD, without being overwhelmed in the view. To behold some of the LORD'S family, indigent and poor in all the worldly accommodations of this life; and yet by regeneration, to know them kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER? They are indeed unnoticed, unregarded, yea, often despised by the great ones of the earth; and yet, considered in CHRIST it may be said of them; *of whom the world is not worthy!* And though overlooked and disowned now, what will be the consternation of the ungodly at that great day, when they shall behold them in the likeness of Him, in whose image they will arise.

My soul, I charge it upon thee, to mark well the characters so accurately drawn in this scripture, between the children of GOD, and the children of the devil. Oh! how gracious hath GOD the HOLY GHOST shewn himself, in those striking discriminations of character, that GOD'S little children may not be deceived. Blessed and eternal SPIRIT! grant to me thy gracious teachings. So shall learn the precious tokens of JESUS'S love, in laying down his life for his people! Give me grace in the view of it, for his sake to be always alive to testify my love to the brethren. LORD keep my poor soul from the errors of the present day, in high professions mixed with low apprehensions of JESUS. Dearest LORD JESUS! cause me to dwell, by faith, in thee; whilst thou art everlastingly abiding in my heart. And let my daily testimony, that I am thine, be always uppermost in my heart, *by the sweet teachings of thy SPIRIT, which thou hast given me.*

Chapter 4

Summary

Here are contained Commands to try the Spirits, and Rules given for discovering of them. Some blessed Things are spoken of CHRIST. The Chapter concludes with an Account of GOD'S Love.

Reflections

WHAT a relief is it to the child of GOD, amidst all the antichrists, and false prophets and teachers, which the latter day dispensation is to bring forth, that JESUS hath said, though if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect; yet this assurance confirms their safety in JESUS, they shall not. Whither but for this, might a believer be *tossed about, with every wind of doctrine, and the cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive?* Blessed GOD the SPIRIT! be thou everlastingly praised, and loved, and adored, for what thou hast taught the Church in this precious Chapter! Here from thee, thy regenerated people learn, that the knowledge of CHRIST being come in the flesh, having proclaimed redemption in his blood, and regenerating the souls of his redeemed, by his holy SPIRIT; becomes an infallible security, against all the awful heresies abounding, in this CHRIST-despising generation. LORD! let thy children know, and especially thy little children, that we have overcome the whole enemies of our salvation in our new birth. *Greater is he that is in us, than all that is in the world.* And oh! for the LORD to shed, abroad his love in our hearts, that we may love him who hath first loved us. And, do thou grant, gracious GOD, that in thy strength we may have boldness, looking forward to that great day of our GOD, that when he shall appear, who is our life our portion, our righteousness, and compleat justification; we may confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. *For as he is, so are we in this world!*

Chapter 5

Summary

The Apostle closeth his Epistle with this Chapter. He points out the Victory of the Regenerate. He most blessedly declares, of the three heavenly, and the three earthly Witnesses. And shews, that the Possession of Christ, by Union with him, is eternal Life.

Reflections

Reader! how gracious was it in our GOD, to give his Church such tokens as are here marked down, in order that every child of GOD might know; his having been begotten, to the adoption of children in JESUS CHRIST. Yes! blessed GOD, we do know whose we are, and to whom we belong, by our being made believers in CHRIST JESUS. It is sweet, it is blessed, to know him, and to love him, and to delight in him, who came by water and blood, even JESUS CHRIST!

Glory be to the three heavenly witnesses, for their united testimony to the SON-ship of JESUS CHRIST! LORD! give all thy redeemed grace, to receive with holy joy, the record GOD hath given to his dear SON, and that eternal life which is in him. And oh! may every individual member of his mystical body, rejoice in CHRIST, and live by faith here, until he come to live in glory hereafter on JESUS, and eternal life in him.

Farewell, thou beloved disciple! we thank our GOD for his love to thee, and his employment of thee, and for all the benefit the Church hath derived under the HOLY GHOST, from thee, in thy ministry. Shortly JESUS will come, and take home his Church, and the LORD shall be then seen, surrounded by his saints, with the whole redeemed Church of GOD, and all the disciples whom JESUS hath loved.

2nd JOHN

General Observation

It is highly probable, from the opening of this Epistle, that it was particularly directed to some one Person, and not the church at large. But still, from the contents of it, designed for general use. The word translated *Lady*, which corresponds to the Hebrew name *Martha*, might be a general name. But, certain it is, that it hath respect to every child of God, for it is connected with the title *Elect*.

Our chief concern is, to know, that the Writer of it was inspired to the service, and that he wrote it under the immediate influence and direction of the Holy Ghost. And this the testimony of the Church bears witness to, in every age, wherever the Lord hath blessed it in instruction to his people.

We have no particular date to it, neither of the place from whence it was written. But, neither are these things material. It is but short: yet, if the Lord teach in it, and by it, He can render it sweet. Lord! Let thy unction be upon it, and it will then send forth the fragrancy of Christ's name, as the ointment poured forth!

Summary

The Apostle opens his Epistle, in calling the Person to whom he writes, Elect. He speaks of the joy he and his companions, who were Lovers of the Truth, found in the opinion they had of the grace the Lord had given her. He speaks of the Antichrist of the time, and warns her against all such teachers. He concludes with affectionate salutations.

Reflections

The Elders in the Church of Jesus may learn from this short, but gracious Epistle of John the elder, how to address the Elect, and with what words of comfort and consolation in Jesus, they are to be spoken to. And there is nothing more strengthening to the Church of

God, than when old disciples speak to young ones, concerning God's purposes in Christ, as manifested in his electing, converting, redeeming, establishing grace! It is blessedly said by one of old, "*the righteous shall bring forth fruit in his old age, to shew that the Lord is upright.*" I do not presume to say so much, but I humbly ask, did not the Lord the Spirit cause this Epistle to be sent by John to one Elect Lady, to be recorded in the Church, and handed down, through the several ages, to the present hour, on purpose to teach old saints, and especially faithful old ministers, how to speak to the elect children of Christ, in the several stations and characters as they stand in grace?

Blessed and eternal Spirit! Be thou praised for this sweet morsel of thy holy scripture! Let it be a savor, in thine Almighty hand, for good. And let thy servant John's ministry in it be owned and blessed of the Lord for good to all thy people, that though the Apostle be dead, he may be said yet to speak. Praised be God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for all blessings in Christ. Amen.

3rd JOHN

General Observation

Here is another short, but precious Epistle of the same writer, under God the Holy Ghost, as the former. And this is also written to a private person, and not publicly to the church. Who this Gaius was, to whom the beloved Apostle sent this Epistle, is not known, though it hath occasioned much conjecture. He calls him *well-beloved*. No doubt, as a child of God, he was so; and, on this account, John called him so. Paul had a companion of this name, which we read of, Acts 19:29 and Acts 20:4. But, it is hardly possible that this was the same person to whom John writes this Epistle, for there must have been more than thirty years between the date of those times. However, this is not so material. It is enough for us to know, that this Gaius was well-beloved of John; and, consequently, one of the elect of God. And we know also, that God the Holy Ghost directed the Apostle's heart and pen to write it, and hath caused it to be recorded for the Church's benefit. These things are enough in recommendation.

I beg the reader to enter, with me, upon the perusal of it in prayer. And very sure I am, if we pray over it, we shall profit under it. May the Lord therefore bless it to our use, and to the whole Church of God in Christ. Amen.

Summary

After his usual salutation, the Apostle tells his beloved Gaius of his desires, both for his temporal and spiritual prosperity. He commends him for his kindness to the brethren. He remarks of the opposition made to the Church, by a man called Diotrephes. He commends another man of the name of Demetrius. And concludes his Epistle with greetings from friends.

Reflections

What a beautiful view is here afforded, of the beloved Apostle in his pastoral office, addressing the faithful Gaius, beloved in the Lord. To behold the venerable saint of God, amidst all the infirmities of declining years, thus blessing God, and blessing the servant of God, in his wishes both for spiritual and temporal prosperity.

But while we look at John, who justly commands our veneration and our love, let us look infinitely above John, and behold John's Lord still blessing all his church; and every Gaius of his redeemed family below, with blessings in himself. Precious, precious Jesus! We desire to praise thee for all that is lovely, in the disciple whom Jesus loved; for all that is lovely in John, was, and is derived from thee! Lord! Hasten on thy blessed purposes, and bring on thy glorious day when thou wilt come to be glorified in thy saints, and to be admired in all that believe! To thee, Lord, it belongs, to keep thy Church from falling, and to present it faultless before the presence of thy glory with exceeding joy. In the blessed hope of thy appearing, may all thy Church in thee, and through thee, daily ascribe to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Israel's God in covenant, endless praises. Amen.

JUDE

General Observation

Jude is particularly spoken of as the brother of James, perhaps to distinguish him from Judas the Traitor. For otherwise, it was more the custom to speak of the Jews by descent. Jude lived the last of all the Apostles, except John. And it could not be well less than thirty years after Christ's ascension, that he wrote this Epistle. He hath evidently followed the Apostle Peter, in his Second Epistle, and thereby confirmed the words of God, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established (Deut. 17:6; 2 Cor. 12:1).

The design of God the Holy Ghost, in sending this Epistle generally to the Church, seems very evident from its contents. Heresies had at this time sprung up, and the Church was infested with them. It is our mercy, that Jude as well as John, lived to see them. For under God the Holy Ghost, we owe our possession of those blessed Epistles to this cause. And both the origin and support of heresies, we are expressly told, is, that the truth of God may be thereby manifested among us.

I have only to request the reader, that here, as in all the former books of Divine Inspiration, we may enter upon the study of it with prayer, that we may end it in praise!

Summary

The opening of this Epistle is truly sweet. Jude addresseth all he hath to say to the Church. It is to you, Beloved, Jude saith that he writes. He then, through the greater Part of the Chapter, points out the awful state of the reprobate. But still it is to the Church he speaks of those things, for their consolation and instruction. Towards the end, he points out the safety and blessedness of the Church, and concludes in praise.

Reflections

Reader! Hath God the Holy Ghost in his gracious teachings blest to your perusal and mine, this precious portion of his sacred Word? Are we that of distinguished people, who are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called? Oh! Then let us both beg another blessing from our bountiful God, and ask for grace, that on our bended knees we may cry out with the Apostle, "*thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*"

And we desire to praise the Almighty Minister of his Church, even God the Holy Ghost, for the grace he hath shewn, in forewarning, and fore-arming his people, concerning the last days heresies. Truly, Lord, we live to see them. We live among them. And thanks tour God, for giving his Church such plain features of character, as are here drawn by his servant, and by which, under the Lord's teaching, we cannot fail to know them. Oh! What shall thy people say; what praise shall thy people offer, while reading the striking distinction, which mark thy redeemed from the world. The one, sanctified, preserved, and called; the other, ordained of old to this condemnation, denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ!

We bless our God for the faithfulness of his servant Jude, in this Scripture. And, while we look to the eternal Spirit with praise for making him faithful, we would honor the instrument, whom God so graciously made use of in the work. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, we thank thee for thy labor of love. The whole Church, in all ages have found cause to thank thee for it, from thy time to the present hour. And, oh! Lord the Spirit, give grace to thy faithful now to testify their sense of the mercy vouchsafed the church in this precious Epistle, "*by earnestly contending for the faith, once delivered unto saints.*" Oh! Keep thy people, Lord, from being led away with the speciousness of the times! Oh! For an holy boldness, from the Lord, to stand up for the Lord, and to resist the bait of supposing we can honor God's glory, while silently sitting and mingling with those who dishonor his Godhead, disown the person and Work of the Spirit, and boldly deny the electing love of God the Father. Unto such assemblies, my soul, be not thou united! Lord Jesus! Do thou keep all thine from this, and every other evil until thou shalt bring all thy redeemed home, and

“present them faultless before thy presence of thy glory with exceeding joy.” Amen

REVELATION

General Observations

I PRAY for grace, to enter upon this sublime and mysterious Book of God, while proposing my humble observations upon it, with the most profound reverence and godly fear: And as I approach the mercy-seat, to bend the knee of my soul, before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in meditating on this blessed portion of his holy word, which relates so immediately to the Person of Christ and his kingdom, the Lord may give unto me, the *spirit* of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Indeed, when first I ventured on this Poor Man's Commentary of the Bible, I fully intended, if it should please the Lord to guide me through it, and bring me to this Book of the Revelation, to have passed over those sacred Chapters, without presuming to offer any observations of mine. I had seen so many erroneous opinions, from great and good men on this part of the word of God, and especially in their calculations of the times, when the several Prophecies, yet remaining to be fulfilled, would be accomplished, that I judged it rather presumptuous than wise, to touch this part of the inspired records. And I still think, that as those great and good men, (for great and good men they certainly were, in their day and generation,) have all been found in error, in limiting the period when those prophecies would certainly be fulfilled, it can neither be decent nor proper in men taught of God to presume to be wise, above what is written, and to offer their conjectures concerning what God hath not been pleased to discover. The words of Jesus to his disciples after he arose from the dead, in answer to the anxious enquiry they put to him, concerning the time of the Lord's restoring the kingdom of Israel, appears decided on this point; It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, Acts 1:6-7. But when I read again and again, what is said in the opening of this precious Book of God; Blessed is he that

readeth, and *they that hear* the Words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; I dared not be wholly silent. And I thought moreover, that if God the Holy Ghost (whose guidings in this work I had all along implored, and whose grace in instruction in it I hope I can now, with truth, say I have found,) would still graciously condescend to go before, and follow me, the Lord would keep me from treading in, to that part of the sacred ground, which relates to prophecies yet unfulfilled, by attempting to calculate any time, when I might presume on their accomplishment, but leave it wholly to the Lord; while; under his teaching, I might humbly offer my observations, on such only, as we have seen come to pass. With these limitations I felt encouraged to prosecute my Poor Man's Commentary on this part also of the divine word, deriving advantage, even from the mistakes of those great servants of the Lord, which have gone before, and which in those points act as light-houses at sea, purposely placed there to keep off the mariner, from approaching too near the rocks, and quicksands around them.

And I confess, that under these later views I have taken of the subject, I have felt additional encouragement, to prosecute my feeble labors for the Poor Man's Commentary, on this part of the word of God, from the recollection, that now in the present hour, time hath brought forward many things to view in this scripture, and, through the Lord's teaching, more light hath been thrown upon the predictions here given, than in the day when those great and good men lived, whom I allude to, who for years past have been gathered to their fathers, and have seen corruption. Many of the prophecies have since been accomplished, and more seem to be now accomplishing in the earth. And, indeed, on the supposition that we, who are now entered some years into the nineteenth Century, are they upon whom the ends of the world are come, it must behove the people of God to be on the look-out, like the Prophet on the watch-tower, and in prayer and humble waitings on the Lord, expect those manifestations predicted to be accomplished, concerning his Church. That the interests of Zion, are at the bottom of all God's designs in the earth, and that the putting down of one kingdom, and raising up of another, have no ultimate object, but of bringing on the Lord's purposes, concerning Christ and his Church; is too clear a truth to need the being insisted upon. And fully assured we are, that when all

the prophecies which are in this Holy Scripture, yet remaining to be fulfilled, are accomplished, the last sand, in the hour-glass of time, will have run out; and the whole purposes of the Lord concerning this earth, will be completed. And then, that event takes place, which John heard proclaimed by the Angel, *he lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer. Then, the mystery of GOD shall be finished. Then, the seventh Angel shall sound, and great voices will be heard in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world, are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever,* Revelation 10:5-7 and Revelation 11:15.

The great point of error, into which all my predecessors of Commentators, on this blessed Book of GOD, more or less, have fallen, I shall, through grace, wholly avoid. I shall not knowingly, offer a single attempt, in a way of calculation as to the *time* many have supposed, in which the prophecies herein contained, yet remaining to be fulfilled, will be accomplished. Here I desire to remain, as much as ever, wholly silent. Indeed, it hath always appeared unto me, to have been along the LORD'S design, in relation to the prophecies in general, to throw a veil over them, until they are fulfilled. And then, when they have been brought to pass, so complete an agreement hath discovered itself, between the prediction and the event, that the LORD'S people have found cause to stand the more amazed, at their dullness of perception and the LORD'S glory. But there is a manifest wisdom of GOD in the obscurity. It tends to the promotion of greater faith. It calls forth greater dependence upon the LORD. And GOD speaks in his word, and by his word to his people, during the suspense of accomplishment, as he did to the Prophet of old; *Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed the time of the end. Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days,* Daniel 12:8-9; Daniel 12:13.

I must not indulge myself with any longer Preface, in a humble work like this, on general points. But I must beg to extend these observations a little further, by way of introduction to the sacred Book of the *Revelation*, which we are going to enter upon. It will be proper at the threshold, to pause a moment and consider, both the LORD'S gracious design, in his gift of it to the Church, and also to

pray over it, as we enter upon it, that this blessing of a Covenant GOD in CHRIST may be made profitable to our souls.

That *John*, the beloved Apostle was the Writer of it under GOD, and that the place where those revelations were made to him, was *Patmos* in the *Mediterranean* Sea, and where he was banished for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST, about the year of our LORD GOD *ninety-four*; these are truths, so generally allowed and confirmed, as can need nothing additional, by way of proof, to be observed. And the gracious design of GOD the Holy GHOST, in sealing up the sacred Canon of Scripture, with so divine a portion of his holy word, hardly requires to be remarked to any gracious Reader. This is a subject which GOD the HOLY GHOST hath had the unwearied thanksgivings of the Church for, in every age, from John's days to ours; neither will this precious portion of divine truth ever cease to call forth the continued praises of the Lord's people, till time shall be no more.

I shall request permission in this place, to give the Reader a brief statement, according to my view of the whole subject, of this Book of God, that he may have a general idea of the whole contents. Such a plan will serve, under the Holy Ghost'S teaching, to guide both the Writer and Reader of this Poor Man s Commentary, through the several Chapters; and enable him to discover, that there is a beautiful uniformity of order in the whole design, comprehending the several periods of the Church's history, from Christ's appearing to John at *Patmos*, until his second coming at judgment. From such a view, we shall proceed through the several Chapters, with a greater clearness of apprehension, of the whole subject; and, through grace, have our minds better prepared, to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches!

For the better understanding this sublime Book of God, let the Reader recollect, that when the Son of God appeared to John, as the opening of the first Chapter declares, the Seven Churches to whom he sent the messages, contained in the second and third Chapters, were then in being. Of these the Lord speaks, he calls them the things which are, Revelation 1:19, and all is contained in those two Chapters, refer to them. But the prophetic part of the Revelation, which begins at the fourth Chapter, comes under, what Christ calls the things which shall be hereafter, Revelation 1:19. Hence from the fourth Chapter is commenced, the prophecies of events, which the Lord, foretold his servant John should be accomplished in his Church. And in the fifth Chapter, we have what may be called the

installment of Christ into his High Offices, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. With these preliminary views, if we prosecute the Book, through the several Chapters, we shall discover the beautiful order, connection, and harmony of one great whole, from beginning to end.

And let the Reader recollect no less, that at the time when the Lord Jesus manifested himself to his Apostle John, to give to him these revelations, to show unto his Churches, the Roman Empire, which was mistress of the world, was then heathen. Satan had universal sway, and excepting that handful of the Lord's people, formed here and there into Churches, the earth was full of idols. The Jews nationally considered, for their rejection of the Lord of life and glory, had lost their temple, their government, their beloved Jerusalem, and were now scattered over various parts of the globe. This was the state of things respecting religion, when the Son of God appeared to his servant John as here stated; and delivered to him these predictions, which were from age to age, to be progressively accomplished in the Church, from that period to the final consummation of all things. The sum and substance of the whole, is set forth, though in mysterious terms, to intimate that the Church of CHRIST should be opposed by the powers of darkness; during which, *seals* were to be opened, *trumpets sounded*, and *vials* poured out; but, at length, order should arise out of confusion, and light from darkness. The Church of GOD should triumph over all, and the throne of GOD and the LAMB, be discovered as established for ever.

Such was the state of things, when the subject of prophecy begins at the sixth Chapter, with the opening of the seals. The ministry of the seals, appears to be principally, if not wholly directed, in the preaching of the Gospel against heathenism. And we find from history, that from about three hundred years from the period at the opening of the first seal, the Roman Empire became Christian; that is, made a national profession of christianity. This event took place in the government of the Emperor Constantine.

To the ministry of the seals, when finished, succeeded that of the Trumpets. The time to the Trumpet ministry takes in a much larger compass than that of the Seals; yea, it should seem is not yet finished. For the sounding of the seventh Trumpet is, when the mystery of God shall be finished, Revelation 10:7. And it should

appear very plainly, that the opening of the twelfth Chapter, begins with a new subject of prophecy; I say a new subject of prophecy, because the former terminates in the preceding Chapter, with the relation of the day of the Lord being come, and the temple of God *being opened in heaven*. Revelation 11:18-19. But though a new subject of prophecy, yet not a new subject, as it concerns Christ and his kingdom, for this is but one and the same, through the whole book of Revelation from the first opening of the seals at the sixth Chapter, to the account of the paradise of God, in the twenty-second. All, and every part under the different predictions, is in relation to Christ and his Church.

The twelfth Chapter, as it appears to me, opens with the state of the Roman Empire, when it became (nationally considered) no longer heathen, but professing christianity. And now, according to this Chapter, persecution began, from the heresies springing up in the Empire, among the Christians themselves, And this subject occupies the following Chapters to the eighteenth, where the final destruction of Antichrist is shown, in the total overthrow of the two great branches of those powers, subverting the truths of God in the Eastern and Western world. And these events, evidently remain, at present, unfulfilled.

During this period, the ministry of the *Vials* is said to exercised. These will all be noted in their proper place. In the Mean time, it will be sufficient here to observe, that with the pouring out of the last Vial upon the air, which figuratively should seem to intimate the whole kingdom of Satan, (who in this sense is called *the Prince of the power of the air*; Ephesians 2:2) the opposition to CHRIST'S kingdom ceaseth for ever. Hence the *nineteenth* Chapter opens with the accounts of the triumphs in heaven, over all the enemies of CHRIST and his salvation. The chaining of *Satan* in the bottomless pit follows in the *twentieth*; and the Church of CHRIST coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband, is related in the *twenty-first* Chapter. And the whole subject is closed up in the *twenty-second*, with the description of the glory of GOD and of the LAMB, in the salvation of the Church, and the destruction of the wicked. These are the general outlines of this most blessed and precious Book of GOD. I will detain the Reader no longer from entering upon it, than only once again to look up for grace, and the light of the HOLY GHOST, to guide both at the entrance and through

all the departments of it to the end. May that Almighty and Infallible Teacher, direct both heart and pen, that nothing of error may be found in those pages, but all be so graciously dictated by Him, that the LORD'S glory, and the Church's happiness, may be ministered unto in these feeble services, through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

SUMMARY

After a short Preface of what the Apostle is called to, in the Ministry of this Book of Revelation, he addresseth the Seven Churches of Asia, with the Salutation of Grace and Peace. He speaks most blessedly of the Person and Glory of CHRIST, in his appearing to Him, and relates what passed at this Interview.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED! for ever blessed, be GOD the FATHER, for the gift of his dear SON JESUS CHRIST. Blessed! for ever blessed, be GOD the SON, for this gracious revelation of himself to his servant *John*, to comfort, and instruct the Church. And blessed be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for causing so sweet and precious a record, to be handed down to the Church from generation to generation, of the word of GOD, and of the testimony of JESUS CHRIST. LORD! add a blessing to the whole, and give grace to thy people, that *they may hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.*

May it be the blessedness and felicity of the LORD'S redeemed, to find grace and peace, according to the Apostle's benediction, from Him, *which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Yea! may the Church daily find all Covenant blessings, from GOD the Judge of all, from JESUS the Mediator of the New Covenant, and from the influence of the HOLY GHOST, in his sevenfold gifts and graces, which are before the throne. Oh! the unspeakable mercy of GOD in CHRIST. He who hath made us Kings and Priests, unto GOD and the FATHER, *having loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his blood!*

Precious Emmanuel! thou who didst bless John with thy presence, and gavest him those blessed revelations, to deliver unto thy Church, condescend to visit thy people now. Thou art still the

Alpha and the Omega. Thou art still all the blessedness of thy Church and people. LORD! visit thy Churches. No *Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, or Laodicea*, ever needed thee more, than the professing Churches of this land, where we dwell. Oh! then, come LORD, and take up thine own cause, lest our Churches, like those of Asia, which are now no more, be desolated, and without inhabitants. If JESUS will come forth with his people, if GOD the SPIRIT will ordain ministers, and walk up and down in the midst of his people; then will thy servants be as stars to the right hand of CHRIST, and his people, like the candlesticks, shining bright with the oil of grace, from JESUS walking in and out among them. Oh! for a little revival *in* the present day, that the LORD may not remove our candlestick out of its place!

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY

Here begins the LORD'S Message to the seven Churches. This Chapter contains what was commanded to be delivered to four of them; namely, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. And the Chapter closeth with a solemn Admonition, which is repeated to each: to hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the Churches.

REFLECTIONS

HAIL! thou glorious LORD! thou Almighty Head of thy Church, and people. Blessed be thy Name, for those gracious messages, to thy redeemed. Truly, LORD, amidst all their spots and defilements, we behold thy mercy over them, and thy grace towards them. Thou bearest testimony to their faith and patience, for all that is wrought in them is thy grace and of thee, have they received it. And yet, JESUS graciously beholds it, and speaks of it, as their own. LORD! give thy Churches, under every state, grace, to be looking wholly unto thee, and to know thee, under all these distinguishing characters. It is thine, O LORD, to hold thy ministers, as stars in thy right hand, and to walk in the favorite haunts of thy Churches, as amidst the golden Candlesticks, thy people. Thou art the first and the last in all the designs of JEHOVAH; and the first and the last, yea, the

whole sum and substance of everlasting joy to all thy people! Thou art the bright, and the morning-star, the sure harbinger of everlasting day, and in the souls of thy people, thou arisest when the Day-spring from on high visitest them. Be thou, LORD, my light, my life, my everlasting portion, that amidst all the darkness of the present state of the world, in thy light I may see light, and walk under the light of thy countenance for ever!

CHAPTER 3

SUMMARY

This Chapter contains the remaining Messages of CHRIST to the Churches, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. JESUS manifests his Grace in the sweet Promise of coming and supping with his People.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD of thy Churches! Give thy servants grace to praise thee for such love-tokens of thy favor, that in thine infinite condescension thou didst send those gracious messages to thy Churches; and still more, didst cause them to be handed down to us, even to the present hour. LORD! we see enough to be humbled to the dust in all. There are now the same features of character among thy people. Like *Ephesus*, too many of thy dear children have left their first love. Like *Smyrna*, we have the blasphemy among us of those who profess the truth, but are not. Like *Pergamos*, we have men of corrupt minds, who follow doctrines in head-knowledge, but void of hearth influence: and, like *Thyatira*, we have multitudes now in our land, who not only suffer, but follow the doctrine of *Jezebel*, and are running back to the idolatry, of false worship. LORD JESUS! do thou purge the land! And amidst the *Sardis* state, if we are in that state, prepare us for the more glorious one that is to follow, under the *Philadelphian*, and bring on the great day of our GOD. LORD make it a short work among all *Laodicean* spirits, and hasten that blessed period, when JESUS will close up all in glory.

In the mean time, blessed LORD JESUS, be not sparing of the sweet visits of thy love to thy people! Oh! for grace to hear thy voice, at the door of our hearts, and to receive CHRIST to his holy

supper, and to be among those that eat bread in thy kingdom. Even so, Amen. The LORD be praised for these sweet Epistles to his Churches.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY

At this Chapter, we enter upon those Prophecies which relate to the Church of GOD, from the Ascension of CHRIST, going on through a regular Progression, to the Descension of CHRIST, at the great Day of GOD. John is here introduced into the Visions concerning those wonderful Events. He is led to behold the Throne of GOD, and the glorified Inhabitants of Heaven round the Throne.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Let us seek grace, that, like the beloved Apostle, we may by faith hear the sweet voice, saying, Come up hither, and like him, may be immediately in the SPIRIT, when we come to visions and revelations of the LORD!

Oh! LORD the HOLY GHOST! as it is thy blessed office to glorify the LORD JESUS; do thou for ever glorify him to the view of thy people, that as oft as thou liftest the eye, and the soul to look to the throne; oh! to see the LORD JESUS, as the Rainbow encircling the throne, and, as GOD the Father's bow, the everlasting token of GOD's good will to man. Yea, Almighty FATHER, behold thy Church in *Him*, through *Him*, and by *Him*, as our everlasting security and portion. And let thy Church begin the Hymn, and all thy redeemed Elders and Men, follow in one vast song in the same, to celebrate the wonders of thy grace. And what a song will that be finally in heaven, when all the redeemed from every nation, country, and clime, shall be assembled before thee, to sing to the LORD'S glory for evermore?

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

The preceding chapter, having in Vision opened Heaven; this prosecutes the same Subject, in describing what took place, when the Hymn of the Church had celebrated the LORD'S Glory. Here is an Account of a Book with Seven Seals. None was found worthy to open it but the LAMB. The Events which followed.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

With this chapter commenceth the Opening of the Seals. Here are six of them opened in this Chapter; the various Events of which are enumerated in Prophetical Language, and with these the Chapter closeth.

REFLECTIONS

Methinks I would wait in silent humble adoration, while my GOD and SAVIOR opens the seals one by one, to make known to his Church the mysteries of his kingdom. And while I hear the voice of invitation, *come and see!* oh! for the LORD that calls to give grace also to hear, that I may understand those prophecies of our GOD.

Precious LORD JESUS! IS it not thou that I behold, going forth on the white horse crowned with victory, *conquering, and to conquer?* And do I not hear thee say, and my soul makes her cheerful responses to the same; *As for those that will not I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me!* Yes, LORD, the red horse of blood, and the black horse of famine, and the pale horse or death, with hell in the rear, are suitable to follow in the execution of thy judgments.

I bless my GOD for unfolding to his Church, the precious view of the souls under the Altar, beseeching the LORD, to avenge their blood on their enemies. May I learn many a sweet lesson herefrom! And when at any time, I am impatient under exercises, waiting for answers to prayer, here may I look up and learn, how to explain all

seeming difficulties. If JESUS deferred the answer to them, how shall I complain? I here discover, that delay is not denial. There is a *set time to favor Zion*. And learn, O my soul, a sweeter lesson still. *Abel's* blood called for vengeance. The martyrs of my GOD plead to be avenged. But JESUS's blood for mercy. Oh what a thought to comfort a poor sinner!

LORD! what an awful account this Chapter closeth with, of those apostates under the *sixth* seal, and every other who deny CHRIST'S GODHEAD, and cause even sun, moon, and stars to blush at their foul ingratitude. Surely their judgment is just. For to whom can they look for salvation, while they deny his power who alone can save. Think then my soul of thy safety and happiness, in having CHRIST for thy portion! Precious LORD JESUS, say to my soul, fear *not, I am thy salvation!*

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an Account of the Sealing of the Servants of GOD. The Number sealed! John hath shown Him an innumerable Multitude, gathered out of all Nations, standing before the Throne. They are described who they are, and how they came there. The Glories of the LAMB.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we look with holy meditation at this vision which *John* saw, and mark the four Angels holding as they were commanded, the four winds of the earth, from going forth to destruction; until the LORD had done his gracious purpose towards his servants; Let us behold our Almighty JESUS ascending from the East, to mark, his own against the day of tribulation! And while we see him so gracious to his *Israel*, and while we see him so gracious to his Gentile Church also, to which you and I belong, oh! for grace, to stand impressed with this most certain assurance that He is the same watchful, loving, and all lovely LORD now, as he was then. He is; He must be JESUS CHRIST; *the Same yesterday, and to day, and for*

ever. Oh! then, depend upon it, that he hath sealed, he doth seal, and he will seal, every individual one of his redeemed.

And, Reader! let you and I behold our JESUS, (if so be, by regeneration you can call him yours,) encircled with his blood bought sons and daughters, now on his throne. Hath JESUS washed their robes, and will he not wash ours? Hath he made them white in his blood, and shall ours remain uncleansed? Hath he loved his Church only in heaven; and doth he not regard his Church upon earth? Did JESUS show so much attention to his beloved at the time here shown, and would not suffer the winds or wars to come on; until that he had sealed his redeemed, and will he behold Our exercises, our difficulties and tribulations, and look on unmoved? Oh! no, thou dear REDEEMER! thou art still the LAMB, and still in the midst of the throne. All power is thine, in heaven, and in earth. And such is thy love to thy poor ones below, that thou art watching over them night and day, lest any hurt them, and whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of thine eye! Oh! how sure, how safe, how blessed are all thine, both in earth and heaven.

Reader! let us seek grace, to eye CHRIST unceasingly, as in the midst of the throne. He hath all divine attributes, all divine blessings, all suited grace, all suited mercy. To Him may all his people come. In Him they find all suited fulness. From Him they receive the every needed grace. And to Him offer all praise and glory. LORD! hasten the hour, when thy whole Church shall be round thy throne, and thou shalt have wiped all tears from off all eyes. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY

We have here, the Opening of the seventh Seal. To this succeeds the seven Angels coming forward with their seven Trumpets. An Angel is seen at the Altar of Incense. Four of the Angels in succession sound their Trumpets. Great Plagues follow.

REFLECTIONS

MY Soul! behold the grace of thy GOD, when at opening of the seventh seal, and silence took place in the Church, before the new circumstances of sorrow began, JESUS will be seen at the Altar, in his High Priestly Office, with his golden Censer! Was it not to teach the Church, both then, and now, yea, in all ages, that under every *seal* opened, every *trumpet* sounded, every *vial* poured out, He is unceasingly engaged, for all his redeemed ones, and not a moment intermits his care, but is for ever carrying on the whole purposes of his unchangeable priesthood? Oh! what a blessed view was here opened, for the everlasting consolation of the Church. Ye redeemed of the LORD! Ye Priests of my GOD! Ye Ministers of the sanctuary! never cease to shew the Church JESUS in this endearing office, as always engaged for his people. And do ye follow up petition after petition, neither keep silence, nor give him rest, until he hath made his *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth. Oh! the preciousness, from this blessed view of our GOD, that JESUS it is, at the Altar, which offers up in his incense, the prayers of his saints; and both the persons and offerings of his people ascend before GOD out of this Almighty Angel of the Covenant's hands!

LORD! thy Church finds cause to bless thee to this day, that amidst the destructions which have followed those trumpets, JESUS hath yet a seed to serve him, which are *counted to the LORD for a generation*, And, though heresies still abound, yea, are in various instances, increasing in the earth; yet *the LORD knoweth them that are his*. Oh! for grace, to be found faithful, and to live above the reproach of men, by living upon the faithfulness of GOD in CHRIST. And then, while all the woe trumpets have been, or now are sounding, and our GOD shall show wonders above, and signs in the earth, beneath, blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke, JESUS will own them whom he hath sealed; and the world shall know whose they are, and to whom they belong, when that *great and notable day of the LORD shall come!*

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY

The fifth Angel sounds his Trumpet. Great and fearful Signs follow. The first Woe is past. The sixth Angel succeeds, and soundeth his Trumpet, and very awful Events take place in the Earth.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold how the LORD's judgments rise higher and higher, in the scale of punishment! The *four* first trumpets were bringing forward very awful visitations in the earth, but those *two* of the woe trumpets, how far have they already exceeded in affliction! And who shall say what yet remains to be unfolded, before the period of the sixth trumpet is finished! Let you and I pause, as we contemplate the subject. Let us behold and look behold over the long space of so many centuries which have run out, since at the voice of the sixth trumpet sounding, the LORD CHRIST gave command, to loose the four angels at the river *Euphrates*. Contemplate what ravages have been made! what slaughters followed. And yet no reform, no repentance, no one effect of contrition produced, by the chastisement! Let us next look at home. Doth not the question arise, nationally considered, *what then are we better than they! No, in no wise*. What, though the worship of images is not by law established, and prayers to images and saints we are not commanded to do, yet, is the LORD JESUS CHRIST more honored than before? Is his GODHEAD, and his blood and righteousness, considered by all ranks of our people, as the very foundation of *the faith once delivered to the saints*? Alas! how greatly the reverse in this CHRIST-despising day and generation! And while like a flood, the awful heresy of denying his GODHEAD is running through the land, and threatens to carry all before it, there are no laws of restraint to stop the pulpit or the press, from saying or doing as their corrupt nature unsubdued by grace may tempt them, against the glorious Person and finished salvation of the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. And what may we suppose will follow such daring ungodliness. Surely, if we calculate from what is past, what is probable to follow, before the *sixth* woe trumpet hath finished his period, very desolating consequences may be looked for. The ear of

faith may hear that voice which was once heard and again and again repeated; and never more suited than now. *Shall I not visit for these things, saith the LORD, shall not my soul be avenged of such a nation as this.*

One sweet thought will comfort the LORD'S faithful ones, under all. JESUS is as the helm. All plagues, whether locusts or men, whether fire or sword, have their power from him. The Church of GOD is still the Church of GOD, and everyone is sealed by him. Oh! the precious assurance. Here then Reader, every child of GOD may safely say with the Prophet, LORD! *in the way of thy judgments have we waited for thee.*

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

John beholds in vision another mighty Angel come from Heaven, he hath a Book in his Hand. At his crying aloud, seven Thunders make their Responses. He swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that Time should be no longer. John is commanded to take the Book from him, and to eat it.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! thou Almighty Angel, whom *John* saw coming down from heaven! Give me, by faith, to behold thee with the delightful rainbow upon thine head, in token of the everlasting Covenant! LORD JESUS! whatever clouds or darkness thy divine dispensations are clothed with, still never will my faith despond, as long as JESUS appears to my view with his rainbow. Though the Church be in the fiery furnace, and clouds and darkness all around, yet while GOD my FATHER is beholding his Church through CHRIST, and in CHRIST, the bow in the cloud; and while JESUS'S face towards his people is as the sun in divine grace, and love, and favor, and the Church looking to CHRIST, and in CHRIST, and through CHRIST to GOD, all is well.

Blessed LORD! thou hast sworn, while taking possession of heaven, earth, and sea as thine, that the hour is hastening when time shall be no longer. Oh! then prepare thy Church, prepare thy people for this great day of our GOD! LORD, in thine own time, which is the

best time, finish the mystery of GOD, in breaking down all the powers of antichrist, and thereby finish the mystery of iniquity, which now so much opposed thy pure Gospel.

LORD! give me the same spirit of obedience as thy servant *John*. Make me to eat and digest thy saving truths. Let all be sweet in thee, however bitter in the world, from flesh and blood. Kings, and nations, and tongues, shall hear thy prophecies, and all thy people shall praise thee.

CHAPTER 11

SUMMARY

John, at the Command of the Angel, measureth the Temple. The LORD speaks of his two Witnesses: their Power. Their Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. The seventh Angel soundeth his Trumpet. The great Events which follow.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED LORD JESUS! thy Church finds cause to praise thee, for by gracious watching over thy people, and regarding their interests as thine own. Very sweetly didst thou manifest this love of thine, when commending *John* to measure the temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein. Surely, LORD, if *John* was thus taught to know the dimensions of thy Church and people; JESUS meant to say; that he himself, knows all that concerns them, the thought of this is; enough, in the worst of times, to comfort thy chosen. True, LORD, thy witnesses are in sackcloth in the present hour. The waters of the sanctuary run low. But *the Lord knoweth them that are his*. In the darkest seasons, JESUS hath a seed to serve him, a generation to call him blessed.

LORD! prepare thy Church for the awful time, when thy witnesses shall be slain. Oh! keep thy Church, in every individual instance of her true members, from the accommodating spirit of the present day. Oh! for grace from thee, thou glorious LORD, to bear up against the torrent running through this land, of mingling *with the heathen, and learning their works*. Carry on thy chosen, through all that remains to be accomplished, under the second woe trumpet of

thy counsels. And hasten, in thine own time, that blessed soul-reviving sound, which shall call forth great voices in heaven, and the shouts of thy redeemed upon earth. Though both the Writer, and present Reader of this feeble labor, may not be alive to hail thy coming; yet all thy faithful now in grace, do by faith take part in that glory, which shall then be revealed, when *thou shalt come to be glorified in thy saints, and admired in all them that believe. Amen.*

CHAPTER 12

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with the History of the Church, from the Beginning. Here is represented by Figure, that Church, brought forth, and immediately persecuted. A Dragon stands ready to devour. She is preserved in the Wilderness. To these follow an Account of War in Heaven, with the Consequences.

REFLECTIONS

READER! if the Church appeared as a great wonder in heaven, when beheld clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of stars, shall not you and I wonder as we behold her also? Oh! what a lovely sight is the Church, the spouse of JESUS! And what a wonder, that the SON of GOD should choose for himself such an one, when all the Angels of GOD were at his command! Yea, Reader! what a greater wonder still, if so be you and I are of CHRIST'S members, in this mystical body! A child of GOD is the wonder of heaven, the wonder of angels! and oh! how much more a wonder to himself, that while meriting hell, he should be preserved for heaven.

And, Reader! let us look also to the other wonder in heaven, and behold this great red dragon. Let us look at him without fear, while looking to, and depending upon JESUS for help. JESUS hath conquered him for us, and in us; and we know, that *the GOD of peace, will bruise Satan under our feet shortly.* Oh! what a world of wonders are we in, that the worm *Jacob* shall thresh the mountains! But, Reader! never lose sight in whose strength it is, we are made strong. The armies of heaven, overcome by the blood of the LAMB. Yes!

there can be salvation in no other. No other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!

LORD JESUS! cause the earth to help the woman, thy Church, now in the flood of heresies, the Serpent hath belched out of his month with a view to destroy her, in this present sinful and spiritual adulterous generation. And while hell in such numberless directions, is making war with the true remnant of thy seed, oh! for the LORD to give that seed to see that more is with us, than all that are against us. Remember, precious JESUS, thine own gracious words, and make them particularly sweet and refreshing to thine own, in the present day of rebuke and blasphemy: *My seed* (thou hast said), *shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They shall come and shall declare his righteousness, unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.*

CHAPTER 13

SUMMARY

This Chapter is introduced with an Account of a Beast arising from the Sea, to whom the Dragon gives his Power. Another Beast cometh also at the same Time upon the Earth. This latter causeth the Earth to worship the Image of the former, and to receive his Mark.

REFLECTIONS

IN reading this Chapter, well may the child of GOD, cry out with the Apostle, how doth the mystery of iniquity already work! What an awful account is here, of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders? And how hath the LORD, for this cause given the ungodly up, and sent them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie!

Can the imagination conceive any view of the dark and ignorant state of the human mind, as great in point of self deception, as is here stated? That men should be brought to worship the beast, and with him the devil, to hear his blasphemy, to receive his mark, and to call him by names which belong to none but GOD. And that this delusion should descend from father to son, in a regular succession; from one age to another; no man being able to deliver his soul and

say, is there not a lie in my right hand? Blessed LORD JESUS! be thou adored, and loved, and praised, and delighted, in that thou hast kept thy people, and secured them from the possibility of worshipping the beast, for thou hast marked all their names in thy book of life. Oh! the blessedness of electing, preserving, redeeming, regenerating grace! LORD! do thou keep my soul in the hour, and from the power of temptation that is coming on the earth! LORD! give me to see the sure cause of rejoicing, in that my name is written in thy book of life.

CHAPTER 14

SUMMARY

We have here a most beautiful View of CHRIST, as a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, his Church, and with him a blessed Company of his Redeemed. An Angel is seen as flying in the Midst of Heaven. Another is heard, declaring the Fall of Babylon. Here is the Harvest of the Earth, and the Vintage, and Wine Press of the Wrath of GOD.

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY

The Church, having been prepared in the preceding Chapter, by seeing her Safety in CHRIST, is in this Chapter taught concerning the Ministry of the seven Angels, with the seven last Plagues. The Song of Moses and the LAMB. The seven Angels come forth from the Temple.

REFLECTIONS

READER! we were called upon in the last Chapter, to shout with songs of holy joy, in beholding the LORD, our great and glorious Redeemer, standing with his Church, on Mount *Zion*, encircled with his army: and here we are called upon again, to shout with the Church, in beholding the people of GOD, who have gotten the

victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, standing upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, singing *the song of Moses and the LAMB!* Oh! the felicity, when from a renewed heart, regenerated by grace, we can sing the praises of Him, *who hath called us out of darkness, into his marvellous light!*

And already we contemplate the sure victory over hell, and all the awful heresies abounding, in the view of the angels going forth from the Church of GOD, with their vials of GOD'S wrath, to pour out upon them. Every false religion, every idol, and abomination, shall sink under the dreadful plague, to be poured upon them. The man of sin, that mystery of iniquity, which still doth work, shall be destroyed; and that wicked one, both of East, and West, the LORD will consume with the SPIRIT of his mouth, and destroy, with the brightness of his coming. We see the seven angels coming forth from the temple. We behold them armed with the seven golden vials, full of the wrath of GOD. And, by faith, we contemplate the glory of GOD which shall assuredly follow, when they begin their awful visitation. LORD JESUS! arm thy redeemed with grace, and strengthen them with power, to bear their testimony against the awful abominations of the day. And, oh! for grace to look on, stand still, and see the salvation of our GOD! For yet a little while, and the antichristian heresy of the West, and the false prophet of the East, shall both be no more; and the true Church of CHRIST shall behold them, with the dragon, all cast alive into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall never again harass and afflict the Church any more. Even so: Amen!

CHAPTER 16

SUMMARY

In this Chapter we behold all the Angels, one after another, pouring out their Vials. The awful Consequences which followed are related. The sudden coming of CHRIST is noticed. A Blessedness is pronounced on him that watcheth.

REFLECTIONS

Look up, and contemplate the LORD, sending forth from his Church, the seven Angels, and messengers with his seven last plagues, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to deliver his people. Then let the Reader consider, how sure, how everlastingly sure, is the LORD'S Church and people. What though for a while the enemy seems to triumph, and the redeemed of the LORD are oppressed by the mighty, *yet the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD, who is also their strength in the time of need.*

How awful are these pourings out of the vials of divine wrath? One after another, arising higher and higher in the scale of judgment. But so desperately hardened in sin, are the enemies of our GOD, and of his CHRIST, that though the sinner is scorched with fire and great heat, yet he only blasphemes the name of GOD, and repents not to give the LORD glory.

My soul! learn from hence, to trace all thy mercies to their source. It is GOD'S everlasting love, which hath chosen thee in CHRIST, and preserved thee in CHRIST, and accepted thee in CHRIST, before the foundation of the world. Hence, all thy mercies in JESUS, by which the vials of wrath, poured out upon the ungodly cannot come nigh thee. Blessed JESUS! let my soul be on the lookout for thy coming, that no midnight hour may surprise me, no blasphemies of men or devils may alarm me. And, when *Babylon* shall come into remembrance before GOD, and our GOD shall give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, thy Church may shout aloud in her destruction, and both heaven and earth praise GOD with exceeding joy.

CHAPTER 17

SUMMARY

Under the Representation of a Woman, arrayed in purple and scarlet is shown unto John, the Whore of Babylon. Her Character given. The Victory of the Lamb. The Whore's Punishment.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed and condescending Teacher of *John*! Thy Church desire to praise thee, O LORD JESUS, for causing thy servant the Apostle to be shown, and the Church through him also concerning this great spiritual whore, which sitteth upon many waters, committeth fornication with the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, and hath been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Through thy grace, LORD, instructing thy people, we cannot mistake her character. Her purple and scarlet robes, her gold and proud trappings, the blasphemy of her pretended power, and the names she assumes, her whore's forehead and the mystery she hath put there, all mark her out, as the object of horror and detestation, to thy people. And while we behold her drunken with the blood of thy saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of JESUS, we cannot but wonder, with great admiration! Oh! the awful state, to which the nature of man is brought down! Oh! the astonishing extent of the long suffering of Almighty GOD.

Dearest LORD JESUS! the souls of thy people are relieved in the pleasing prospect, that shortly thou wilt come and root out of thy kingdom, all things that offend. She, which hath intoxicated herself with the blood of thy saints, shall have her flesh eaten by those who professed to love her. She, who hated the meek and humble followers of the Lamb, shall herself be despised; yea, they shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

Oh! what a relief to my soul is it, to turn from the view of images so horrible, and to contemplate JESUS under his own rightful character, LORD of lords, and King of kings! May every knee bow before thee! And oh! what praises shall I offer to my GOD, that JESUS hath a seed that serve him, a generation that call him blessed; who *are called, and chosen, and faithful!* LORD! do thou in those awful times, make them and keep them faithful. It is thy sweet province, and sure I am, it is my LORD'S delight, *to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise GOD, our SAVIOR, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

CHAPTER 18

SUMMARY

The Fall of Babylon. GOD's People come out from her. The Kings, and great Men, and Merchants, wail for her. The Saints of GOD rejoice over her.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED be the LORD! the destruction of the whore is come! One hour, when the time all along predicted arrives, is enough, and all her traffic in hunting souls, and ruining the world, is done away for ever. Of what avail as all her pomp, and sitting as a queen among the nations!

Precious LORD JESUS give thy redeemed grace to hear thy love-calls, and to come out from among her! How many of thy dear ones are now hidden where the seat of the beast is! How many more, yet to be called, are found therein! Oh! bring them out, and house them in thy little *Zoar*; when thou makest the awful overthrow.

Methinks I would hail the Church, whoever lives to see it in the view of the blessed event. The very prospect of it is blessed. With what joy, will *the* redeemed welcome the day. Yea, heaven itself will take part in the felicity of it. The Apostles and Prophets, gone before, will rejoice over her, when GOD hath avenged his people on her. LORD! be thou eternally and everlastingly praised, in the total overthrow of thine enemies, and the salvation of thy people!

CHAPTER 19

SUMMARY

This Chapter opens with an Account of the Joy in Heaven, in the View of the LORD'S Triumphs over Antichrist upon Earth. The Church in Heaven celebrates CHRIST'S Marriage with his Church. A blessed and glorious View of CHRIST. The Beast and false Prophet cast alive into a Lake of Fire burning with Brimstone.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! the raptures, the joy, the unspeakable felicity, which will break out in heaven, when, like *John* in vision, the Church of GOD will hear in reality, that great voice, of much people, saying *Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the LORD our GOD!* The imagination of the human mind cannot conceive the triumphs of the Church, when the LORD shall bring home the redeemed of his people; and the LORD shall have avenged the blood of his servants at the hands of the great whore, who, for so many ages and generations, hath corrupted the earth with the multitude of her fornications!

Oh! ye Church of my GOD, ye followers of GOD, and the LAMB! who shall number up your mercies, or speak the endless felicity of your happy state, when safely brought home from all the exercises of sin and sorrow, and are called to the marriage supper of the LAMB! Ye servants of the LORD! see that ye are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, even the righteousness of saints, which is JESUS's robe of salvation! See that GOD, who provides it for you, puts it on. No other can gain admission to the table of the LORD, either here in grace, or hereafter in glory! Oh! for the being so clad, that all the redeemed of the LORD may exult in the language of the Church of old, and say: *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall be joyful in my GOD; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels!*

But, Oh! for grace to behold my GOD and SAVIOR as *John* saw him, riding on his white horse, in his glorious characters of faithful and true, and in righteousness judging, and making war. LORD! give me to see thee, with thy many crowns. And, oh! for that very one, which thou hast enabled me to put upon thy sacred head, when in the day thou madest me willing to be saved in thine own way, and the knee of my heart bowed before thee; and I cried out, JESUS hath redeemed me, and saved me, and washed me from all my sins, in his blood! LORD! let me daily behold thee, in thy vesture dipped in blood! let me daily read, and know thy name, the WORD of GOD. Let me, to the last moment of my life upon earth, till I fall before thy throne in glory, hail thee, my King, and my GOD yea, King of kings,

and LORD of lords! Oh! the day, the blissful, happy wedding day, when JESUS will take me home, and while the beast, and the false prophet fall to rise no more, but sink in the lake of fire; I shall, through sovereign grace, behold my GOD and SAVIOR as he is, and dwell with him for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 20

SUMMARY

The Overthrow of Satan. The Devil is seized, and bound for a thousand Years. CHRIST's Reign with his Saints. Satan for a short Time loosed. The general Judgment. The Devil cast into the Lake of Fire, where the Beast and the False Prophet are. All cast into Hell, whose Names are not found written in the Book of Life.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! the unspeakable joy, the Church, both in heaven and earth, must feel, in CHRIST's triumphs over the devil! What a glorious sight, even in contemplation, to behold CHRIST coming down from heaven, and seizing upon the monster, to cast him into the bottomless pit, where hell and horror reigns.

Praises to our All-conquering JESUS, for shutting him up, during his thousand years reign with his saints, that their joy shall have no interruption. And blessed be his holy Name, that he will raise up his saints and faithful ones, to sit on thrones with him, during this blissful age, of light, and life, and glory. Nothing of sin, nothing of sorrow, shall interrupt this blessed *Millennium*. And JESUS will have the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of JESUS, and the word of GOD, and that have not worshipped the beast, but hated the whore; to reign with him. Oh! the felicity of beholding JESUS, and the glory of his Person, and the love of his heart, to his redeemed, his people!

They are indeed blessed, and holy, who have part in the first resurrection. GOD the HOLY GHOST hath said it. And, my soul, beg the LORD to seal the everlasting remembrance of it, in thy inmost affections. On such, the second death hath no power!

And while thy Church, O LORD, are rejoicing with holy triumph, over the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet, in beholding them for ever cast into the lake of endless torment; oh! for grace, in a life of faith on the SON of GOD, to be waiting for that great day of the LORD, when JESUS will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Then will JESUS say to all his redeemed: *Come ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world. LORD!* shall this be my happy portion? Will JESUS so own me, when he cometh to make up his jewels? Oh! for the LORD to bless my soul now with grace; and sure I am, that then the LORD will give me glory.

CHAPTER 21

SUMMARY

John in Vision is led to see the New Jerusalem. He beholds CHRIST upon his Throne. A Description of the Holy City. The LORD's Presence, the everlasting Glory of the Place. None can enter into it, but they whose Names are in the Book of Life.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold with an eye of steady faith, the new heaven, and the new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth! Yea, look again and again, with rapture, at the Church coming down from GOD Out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband! Bless GOD the FATHER, in the contemplation, for his electing love, in choosing; for his giving love, in giving the Church to his dear SON; and for all the ten thousand manifestations of his love, in predestinating each, and every individual of the mystical body, to the adoption of children, by JESUS CHRIST to himself, and accepting the whole Church in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

Bless GOD the SON, for his betrothing his Church before all worlds, watching over her, in all the time-state of her sad adulterous departure from him redeeming her with his blood, washing her from her sins, clothing her with his righteousness, bringing her home, and presenting her to himself, in the marriage supper, prepared for her in his kingdom of glory.

Bless GOD the SPIRIT for his anointings in the early formation of CHRIST and his Church as one, before the foundation of the world, for his quickening and regenerating grace in time, and for all his leadings, teachings, comfortings, and renewings, when glorifying the LORD JESUS to the Church's view, and directing the heart into the love of GOD. Oh! for grace, while contemplating the Church, the LAMB's wife, to behold with yet greater rapture and joy, the LAMB himself, and bless the whole persons of the GODHEAD, for all their love and mercy to the Church in Him.

And what a state of unspeakable felicity is the Church here brought to, after all the temptations of *Satan*, the deceivings of the heart, and the opposition from the world. Precious JESUS! thou art the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all blessedness. Blessed are all thy gifts and all thy manifestations in wiping away all tears from off all faces, and putting an everlasting end to all sorrow and sin. But blessed yet more art thou for thy love. Do thou, LORD, who art the everlasting light, and the glory of heaven, be the light and glory of thy Church on earth. LORD! shine daily on my soul, until thou shalt bring me home to this blessed city, where neither sun nor moon shall any more be needful, for thou, LORD, wilt be the light of all the poor Gentiles thou hast brought into thy kingdom, *and the glory of thy people Israel.*

CHAPTER 22

SUMMARY

GOD the HOLY GHOST in this Chapter finisheth the Subject of all the Prophecies; and with it, the whole Canon of Scripture. The LORD gives the Church a further Account of the Holy City. Here is spoken of, the River of Life, and the Tree of Life; and the LORD'S Promise, of coming quickly. A gracious Invitation at the End, to all the People of GOD. A solemn Caution, not to add to, or take from, the Things written herein.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSING, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever. LORD!

upon the bended knee of thanksgiving and praise, let all thy Church praise thee, for this among all thy other unnumbered mercies, that thou hast given to thy servant *John*, this precious portion of thy sacred word, to show unto thy Church things which must shortly come to pass. Blessed be the LORD for the accomplishment of such parts, as have been already fulfilled, and of others that are now fulfilling in the earth. And do thou, LORD, give thy servants grace, to wait in full exercise of faith and hope, the accomplishment of all that remains to be fulfilled. And since thou hast caused it to be left upon record for the encouragement of the faithful, saying, *blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein*, Revelation 1:3. LORD! I beseech thee, let these blessings be my portion, that I may both read, and hear, and keep those glorious truths, by thy grace in my heart.

Let the blessed prospect of this reign of CHRIST in his Church, comfort and encourage all thy people. And while here below, let the souls of thy redeemed both drink and be satisfied with the streams of *that river, which make, glad the city of GOD*. Oh! for grace, to sit down oft by faith, till the LORD shall take my soul home to sit down for ever in full enjoyment, under *the Tree of Life*. Precious LORD JESUS! be thou my *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end* of all my spiritual joys. Thou that art *the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star*; be thou my all in all, in life, in death, in time, and to all eternity. Blessed be the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for all the fulness of blessings, and JESUS, and all his fulness in blessings, both for the life of grace that now is, and for that life of glory which is to come.

And be thou thanked with all the love and affection of a brother, faithful *John*! for thy tenderness to the Church in JESUS, and for all thy ministry and labor of love. We regard the servant while we bless the Master. And blessed be our GOD and SAVIOR, for calling thee to the ministry, highly honored Apostle of our GOD! When JESUS shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe, how will JESUS our GOD and SAVIOR shine in all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily, encircled with all his Apostles and Prophets, and Martyrs, and the redeemed out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, *who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB*. Oh! for the poorest and unworthiest of all the LORD'S redeemed ones, to be found in the throng, and to join the

hymn of salvation and praise, with all the Church of GOD for evermore.

And now, Reader, in folding up the whole of my *Poor Man's Commentary*, while I lay low in the dust before GOD, under a conscious sense of unworthiness, and my continued short comings, I desire to set up a renewed *Ebenezer* to the praise of his grace, who hath hitherto helped me, and borne with me, all the way through, in the many years since first I entered upon it, to the hour of writing with my pen the last line of it. The more I contemplate the subject, the more I stand amazed at the LORD'S goodness, and my undeservings.

I know not whether, after all my endeavours and earnest desires to exalt the adorable name of JESUS, I have succeeded so far, as that the Reader may perceive, that this is the sole object I have all along had in view. To speak of Him as He really is, I know, is impossible. Neither men nor angels are competent to this service. For, of Him it must be said, without any strain of language, THERE IS NO END OF HIS GREATNESS. But, I have only labored so far and in the best manner I have been able, to hold up, and hold forth, the LORD JESUS CHRIST as GOD'S CHRIST, and as the sole perfection of all his people. Oh! that the LORD by his grace, may so seal Him in my heart!

And now, Reader, farewell! I hope the LORD hath pardoned, and will pardon all the errors of this *Poor Man's Commentary*, and that you will pardon them also. And having said this, *I commend you to GOD, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build his whole family up, and to give them an inheritance, among all them which are sanctified.* Amen. To the one only GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, be endless praises. Amen, and Amen.

PLYMOUTH, CHARLES VICARAGE,

April 13, 1816,

Once more made memorable in being my birth day, counting Sixty-three years of the LORD'S grace, and my sins.