

The Works of Robert Hawker

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DEUTERONOMY

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

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

The Book of *Deuteronomy*, which signifies the *second law*, is probably so called, because that this is the *second* enumeration of the precepts which Moses had in commission to deliver to Israel. It is not, however, so properly a *second* law, as a *rehearsal* of the former. And the reason for this repetition is abundantly evident. All that generation was dead before whom Moses had rehearsed it on their coming out of Egypt. And as very many of the precepts had a peculiar

reference to the conduct of the people after their arrival to the promised land, it became highly proper that the laws should be rehearsed in the ears of the generation which had sprung up in the place of their fathers, and before whom they had not as yet been delivered.

As the Book of Deuteronomy contains what one of the prophets calls the *great things of God's law*, it should be recollected by the Reader, that it doth not contain much of history. Indeed the whole date of it, from beginning to end, compriseth a period only of two months. One month previous to the death of Moses, and one after. See Joshua 4:19, compared with Deuteronomy 1:3.

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

temptations, were gathered from this book. Sweet testimony of its value, endeared as it is by so precious an example!

CHAPTER 1

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

DEUTERONOMY 1:1

These *be* the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on this side Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

The sacred historian seems to be the more particular in this enumeration of *places*, in order that we may have a clear account of the divine faithfulness to his promises. Numbers 14:33-35.

DEUTERONOMY 1:2

(*There are eleven days' journey* from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.)

It is equally to be observed, the *time* specified yet remaining to be fulfilled; to show how exact the LORD is to his word, and to his promise: Reader! let you and I pause in the several

parts of our pilgrimage state; and depend upon it, we shall find also, no less, how faithful our GOD is. This is one of our GOD's precepts, and the observance of it is its own reward; to remember how the LORD hath dealt by us, that we may know the righteousness of the LORD. Micah 6:5.

DEUTERONOMY 1:3

And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;

I would beg the Reader yet further to remark, from the great particularity observed, that it is not a thing of small moment to notice, *where*, and *when*, and *how*, divine manifestations are made to us. This memorable spot, this memorable time and manner, no doubt were sweet to Israel, when Moses halted in the journey to speak to the people once more in the name of the LORD. And is it not sweet, very sweet to us, when JESUS at any time, or in any place, arrests our souls in our pilgrimage, to speak to us by the way, and to make known to us his loves? Song Of Solomon 7:12.

DEUTERONOMY 1:4-5

After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Astaroth in Edrei: (5) On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moses to declare this law, saying,

The repeating again those instances of divine mercy to Israel, in the destruction of their enemies, forms no improper preface to Moses's Sermon. When our JESUS had subdued our enemies by his victory on the cross, he came to speak peace to his

disciples; to them that were nigh, and to them that were afar off. Luke 24:36. Ephesians 2:16, 17.

DEUTERONOMY 1:6-8

The LORD our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: (7) Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates. (8) Behold, I have set the land before you: go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them.

Is there not a good deal of gospel in this opening of Moses's discourse? Was not this the *Mount Sinai*? and as such, is it not a figure of the bondage state of sin and Satan, under which GOD's people continue as long as they are looking to a covenant of works? And is not the land of Canaan, to which GOD calls him to go up and take possession, a figure of that rest which remained for the people of GOD? And is not this really and truly given in the covenant engagements of GOD in CHRIST JESUS? Reader! why should we shrink back when our GOD calls us, as he did Israel, to leave earth for heaven? Have we not dwelt long enough in this mount, which burned with fire, with sin, and sorrow, and evils in abundance? Shall our JESUS call and say, Come up hither, to the land which I have taken possession of in your name, and shall we feel reluctant, and wish to put off the merciful call? Dearest LORD! do thou quicken our drowsy, earthly affections, and raise them to thyself, that we may be looking and longing for the day of thy coming. 2 Peter 3:12.

DEUTERONOMY 1:9

And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone:

Reader, do not overlook in this, as well as in numberless other instances, how inferior every character is to JESUS. Moses was faithful in all his house, we are told by the apostle, as a *servant*, but JESUS as the LORD of his own house. He indeed is able, and he alone, to bear the burdens of the sins and the infirmities of his people. Hebrews 3:3-6.

DEUTERONOMY 1:10

The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye *are* this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

What a delightful view doth the increase of Israel afford! Compare this verse with the account of Jacob's first going down into Egypt. Genesis 46:27. But what a more glorious view doth the apostle give of the church of JESUS, the true Israel of GOD! Revelation 7:4-9.

DEUTERONOMY 1:11

(The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye *are*, and bless you, as he hath promised you!)

Observe, how the love and piety of Moses breaks out in the midst of his sermon, with a prayer to GOD. These are sweet breaks, when the soul, in the contemplation of GOD's love and mercy in CHRIST, leaves all other considerations to look up, with faith and hope, to an unseen but well-known Redeemer. Reader, do you know anything of this in your experience? 1 Peter 1:8.

DEUTERONOMY 1:12

How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?

It is sweetly, said of JESUS, in his unequalled undertaking, "that of the people there was none with him." Isaiah 63:3. Oh! thou precious bearer of the burdens of thy people! may I never lose sight of thee in this soul-strengthening character. Isaiah 53:4.

DEUTERONOMY 1:13-18

Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. (14) And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken *is* good *for us* to do. (15) So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. (16) And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear *the causes* between your brethren, and judge righteously between *every* man and his brother, and the stranger *that is* with him. (17) Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment *is* God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it. (18) And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.

All these verses refer to that period in Israel's history, in which at the advice of *Jethro*, and by the divine permission, Moses took into the administration of justice with himself, certain of the elders of Israel. See Exodus 18:13-26.

DEUTERONOMY 1:19-46

And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeshbarnea. (20) And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us. (21) Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up *and* possess *it*, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged. (22) And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will

send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come. (23) And the saying pleased me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe: (24) And they turned and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eshcol, and searched it out. (25) And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought *it* down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, *It is* a good land which the LORD our God doth give us. (26) Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God: (27) And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. (28) Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people *is* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. (29) Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. (30) The LORD your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; (31) And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. (32) Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, (33) Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents *in*, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day. (34) And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, (35) Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, (36) Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. (37) Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. (38) *But* Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. (39) Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. (40) *But as for* you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea. (41) Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the

LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill. (42) And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I *am* not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies. (43) So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill. (44) And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, *even* unto Hormah. (45) And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you. (46) So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode *there*.

I did not think it needful to stop the Reader with any observations which arise out of these verses, having already dwelt upon the subject in the Commentary on the 13th and 14th Chapters of the Book of Numbers. If the Reader will consult what is there said, he will find that what suits the one is equally applicable to the other. And he will discover, moreover, that this part of Moses's sermon is a beautiful duplicate of that history. But while I refer the Reader to what hath been already brought before him on the subject, in order to avoid swelling the Commentary to an unnecessary length, I must beg to detain him with calling to his attention two or three leading points in this discourse of Moses, which were not in the history itself, but which serve to illustrate and explain it. It appears by that history, as if the idea of sending men to search the land had originated in the LORD's appointment; whereas by comparing this Scripture with what is there said, we discover that it was the fear and unbelief of the children of Israel, and the doubt they had in God's promise, that first suggested in them the thought; and that, then, the LORD, as if in gracious accommodation to the

weakness of his people, permitted the thing to be. And had the spies been faithful and true to what they beheld of the promised land, and had brought back a good report, all might still have been well. But alas! what will not unbelief induce! Unbelief breeds fear, and fear begets sin. Reader! recollect what the apostle saith on this sin of Israel: *they could not enter in because of unbelief* Hebrews 3:19. Compare this chapter with Numbers 13 and 14. I detain the Reader only one moment longer to observe, that it appears evidently, from this part of the sermon of Moses, that the whole wandering of the people forty years in the wilderness, instead of immediately entering into Canaan when they came out of Egypt, and were so near to it, arose wholly from their distrust and disbelief of GOD's promises. So very awful a thing is it to question or doubt the divine faithfulness. Reader! I would request you to pause over this view of the subject. Observe, it was not the breach of any particular command; it was not the commission of this or that particular sin, for which the LORD sentenced his people to wander in the wilderness; but it was simply their unbelief. It was the same dreadful malignity of mind, which in the gospel is threatened with everlasting exclusion from the heavenly Canaan. For "he that believeth not the record which GOD hath given of his SON, maketh GOD a liar;" and we are awfully told, that the wrath of GOD abideth upon him." See John 3:36. Oh! for the grace of faith to give due credit to a most faithful covenant GOD in CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a most beautiful representation doth this chapter afford of a faithful, laborious minister, in the character of

Moses! Who can behold this aged servant of JEHOVAH, thus sermonizing even to the very close of life, and going over again and again in relation, all the great things the LORD had shown him and the people, without being struck with the loveliness of such a minister, and being led to admire yet more and more those holy principles which he laboured to impress upon the minds of the people.

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

CHAPTER 2

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

the recapitulation of what referred to the of Israel's war with Sihon, King of the Amorites.

DEUTERONOMY 2:1

Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days.

Many days indeed! The short distance from the Red Sea to Canaan, had the journey been direct, evidently proves, that the thirty-eight years of Israel's wilderness state, must have been at times very stationary. But, Reader, look at the history spiritually, and say, whether the wandering of the LORD'S Israel here, from their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage of sin and Satan, when they are first brought acquainted with the liberty in CHRIST JESUS, to the time they enter Canaan, is not of this kind? We occupy much the same spot; are moving up and down in much the same wilderness state; sometimes apparently nearer our homes, and sometimes further remote. Oh! how sweet is it to have the pillar of cloud, even JESUS, always going before us, and the rock, even JESUS himself, following of us through all the way.

DEUTERONOMY 2:2-6

And the LORD spake unto me, saying, (3) Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. (4) And command thou the people, saying, Ye *are* to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: (5) Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau *for* a possession. (6) Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.

It is a sweet lesson, spiritually considered, which the LORD'S people may read here. *Mount Seir* is a type of the earth, and all its carnal pursuits and pleasures. These hath the LORD given to the children of men. David saith, that the men of the world have their portion in this life, it is all they seek; and all they desire. Psalm 17:14. In the common and necessary wants of life, the people of GOD are permitted to buy of them what they need, but no more. In all other matters that precept of the apostle holds good, and the observance of it carries with it its own reward; see 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.

DEUTERONOMY 2:7

For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God *hath been* with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.

Reader, let me beg of you to read this verse again and again; and then see, whether the sweet expressions it contains can be discovered by you in your own experience. Dearest JESUS! dost thou indeed know all my walkings, and all my wanderings? and shall I strive, shall I even wish, to conceal anything from thee? No! my gracious and most compassionate GOD! I desire to fall before thee, under a deep sense that all I am, and all I have done, even my most secret sins, are in the light of thy countenance. Oh! how dear, how inconceivably dear to my, soul, under this view, is the assurance that in thee and thy covenant righteousness, is the only remedy for poor lost sinners such as I am. Reader, turn to that scripture, 1 John 1:7-9.

DEUTERONOMY 2:8

And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Eziongaber, we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab.

Was not *Esau*, Jacob's brother? saith the LORD, Malachi 1:2. Yes! he was. And doth GOD distinguish now between men that are brethren in nature, and form them without alliance in grace? Hath he done so by you, Reader? Pause over the enquiry. And while, like Moses and the people, you turn away, and pass from the borders of nature, learn to look up with increasing astonishment, wonder, and praise, every step you take at the distinguishing tokens of grace.

DEUTERONOMY 2:9

And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land *for* a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.

Evidently this precept was intended to teach the people of GOD then, and through them the people of GOD in all ages, not to love the world neither the things of the world. They who are set out for Canaan, are to have no objects to allure or lead them out of the way. Sweet is that account of the Patriarchs, Hebrews 11:13-16.

DEUTERONOMY 2:10-12

The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; (11) Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims; but the Moabites call them Emims. (12) The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the LORD gave unto them.

The *Emims*, means the terrible ones. The most profitable instruction to be gathered from these verses will be, I think, to remark how often places change their masters. Nations, like individuals, succeed one another in the events of life. Of all as well as one, it may be truly said, *here we have no continuing city*.

DEUTERONOMY 2:13-15

Now rise up, *said I*, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered. (14) And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, *was* thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD sware unto them. (15) For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed.

Reader, remark with me in how little a compass Moses comprises the events of thirty-eight years. And is it not so now from the spiritual *Kadish*, of our entering into grace, until we come over the brook *Zered*, when we go down to the chambers of the grave, how short to look back, but how numerous the events contained in the passage. Dearest JESUS! thou wentest over the brook *Kedron*, just before thy precious death. John 18:1.

DEUTERONOMY 2:16-19

So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, (17) That the LORD spake unto me, saying, (18) Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day: (19) And *when* thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon *any* possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.

The Reader should not overlook the mercies of God in providence over unawakened people, which these verses as well as the former ones in this chapter on the same subject record. Neither should he forget to remark, how the memory of the just is blessed in their children, ages after they are dead, as is here shown in the case of *Lot*. Neither should the pious Reader overlook the sweet instruction which those precepts hold forth, in Israel's being tender to Moab, though Moab wished the ruin of Israel. Numbers 22:6. What saith our dear Redeemer on this subject? See Matthew 5:44, 45.

DEUTERONOMY 2:20

(That also was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims;

Zamzummims, means designing crafty men.

DEUTERONOMY 2:21-23

A people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead: (22) As he did to the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead even unto this day: (23) And the Avims which dwelt in Hazerim, *even* unto Azzah, the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

The *Caphtorims* we have an account of, Genesis 10:14.

DEUTERONOMY 2:24-25

Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess *it*, and contend with him in battle. (25) This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations *that are* under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.

Here the LORD begins to give Israel an earnest of his promises. But what a delightful subject is this, when realized to the true believer in JESUS: when after all the skirmishes, conflicts, and trials, through the wilderness, the LORD gives his people to see that they are more than conquerors, through his grace helping them. Oh! for the earnest of the SPIRIT, which brings the believing soul, through faith, into the very suburbs of heaven! 2 Corinthians 5:5.

DEUTERONOMY 2:26-29

And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, (27) Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. (28) Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet; (29) (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the LORD our God giveth us.

Some have thought, and perhaps not improperly, that the offers and proposals made to *Sihon*, are not unsimilar to the proclamation of peace in the gospel of JESUS. When men are brought under the preached word, and see the privileges and enjoyments of the LORD'S people, are there not evidences sufficient to show the most carnal, that there must be somewhat very interesting in the joyful sound. Ezekiel 2:7.

DEUTERONOMY 2:30-31

But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as *appeareth* this day. (31) And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land.

If we consult Genesis 15:16, we shall there discover the best interpretation of this scripture.

DEUTERONOMY 2:32-37

Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. (33) And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. (34) And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain: (35) Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took. (36) From Aroer, which *is* by the brink of the river of Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us: (37) Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, *nor* unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us.

The imagination can hardly conceive the feelings of Israel on this victory. They who had so long journeyed in the wilderness in want and poverty, and surrounded with fiery flying serpents, they at once to enter into the possession of lands and houses full of goods, and to so great an extent as from Arnon to Gilead! But, Reader, while contemplating the mighty change of Israel in these things, do not stop here, but look forward, and conceive if it be possible, what a surprise will burst in upon the soul of one newly escaped, from both the wilderness of this world, and the prison of the body, when through being washed in the blood of JESUS, and regenerated by the HOLY GHOST, the believer is introduced into the immediate presence and enjoyment of GOD and the LAMB! Well might the Apostle, under the sense of it, cry out, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him. 1 Corinthians 2:9.

REFLECTIONS

MYsoul! cherish the thought (for it is a precious one) while beholding the revolutions of states and empires, recorded in this chapter, how happy the lot of those who belong to *a kingdom which cannot be moved*. What indeed can be wanting to give comfort to the heart of any man who hath a well-grounded assurance of an interest in the kingdom of GOD, and of CHRIST! Dearest King of Zion! do thou reign in my heart, in my soul, in my affections: and then am I sure thou wilt in thine own time, which is the best time, drive out before me all the *terrible ones*, and all the *crafty ones*, which now stand in my way to Canaan. Blessed LORD! let thy HOLY SPIRIT wean my desires from *every* alluring object accursed, that I may covet nothing which belongs to the carnal, but having thee for my portion, in thee I may find everything, and in everything enjoy thee.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 3:1

Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

It is said in one of the Psalms, that the LORD led the people by a *right way* to a city of habitation. And so, no doubt, it was. But the way of GOD's people is sometimes rough and full of difficulty. This path that Israel was now in, was to the southward, on the east of Jordan, Psalm 117:7.

DEUTERONOMY 3:2

And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

GOD's promises are precious things, and especially when our faith is likely to be exercised. And, Reader, do observe, the LORD not only promised to deliver his people out of their enemies hand, but to deliver the enemy into his peoples hand. Such are the sweet assurances of grace. The LORD will not only rescue his servants from the hand of him that is stronger than them, but will finally bring Satan under their feet. Romans 16:20.

DEUTERONOMY 3:3-10

So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. (4) And we took all his cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. (5) All these cities *were* fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwall'd towns a great many. (6) And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city. (7) But all the cattle, and the

spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves. (8) And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites the land that *was* on this side Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon; (9) (*Which* Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;) (10) All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Bashan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

This victory was considered so important (as no doubt it was) that we find the church celebrating it in a song of praise in one Psalm, and echoing to the same again in another. See Psalm 125:10-12, and Psalm 126:17-21.

DEUTERONOMY 3:11

For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead *was* a bedstead of iron; *is* it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits *was* the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

The extraordinary stature and size of this man deserves the Reader's attention. Supposing a *cubit* to be about half a yard, then it will follow that this giant's bedstead was four yards and a half long, and two yards in breadth; and as if wood was not sufficiently strong to support him, the whole was made of iron. But, Reader, remark how alike strength and weakness are when opposed by the arm of God. Oh! that every, poor, timid believer, would keep in remembrance at all times his Almighty strength, which is ever engaged on the side of his people, and which is not unfrequently perfected in his people's weakness. Pray read that sweet scripture, Isaiah 41:14-16, &c.

DEUTERONOMY 3:12-20

And this land, *which* we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites. (13) And

the rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; all the region of Argob, with all Bashan, which was called the land of giants. (14) Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day. (15) And I gave Gilead unto Machir. (16) And unto the Reubenites and unto the Gadites I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon half the valley, and the border even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon; (17) The plain also, and Jordan, and the coast *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, under Ashdothpishgah eastward. (18) And I commanded you at that time, saying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to possess it: ye shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all *that are* meet for the war. (19) But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (*for* I know that ye have much cattle,) shall abide in your cities which I have given you; (20) Until the LORD have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and *until* they also possess the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and *then* shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you.

All these verses, and the events recorded in them, are but a recapitulation of the history which we had before in Numbers 32. to which I refer. I shall only, therefore, detain the Reader with observing, that the conduct of the *Reubenites* and *Gadites*, which called forth the reproof of Moses upon that occasion, savored of what is but too often discoverable now among the LORD'S heritage, I mean a love of indolence and rest, while Zion is in warfare. Moses, of all men, had an undoubted right to feel hurt; for we know when he might have been adopted as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. Oh! for more of this zeal and love to the cause of JESUS, in the present declining day of the church. See Hebrews 11:24-27.

DEUTERONOMY 3:21-22

And I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, Thine eyes have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto these two kings: so shall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest. (22) Ye shall not fear them: for the LORD your God he shall fight for you.

What a delightful view is given us, in this charge of Moses to Joshua, of this man of GOD'S zeal and affection for the LORD'S cause. He appeals to Joshua's own knowledge of what had passed, to arm him for all that was to come. Reader! one of the sweetest offices of the HOLY GHOST is to act as the Remembrancer of JESUS. And when he graciously performs this office in reminding the believer how in times past the LORD hath sustained and comforted his people, doth he not take the most effectual method in giving confidence for all that is to come? John 14:26.

DEUTERONOMY 3:23-25

And I besought the LORD at that time, saying, (24) O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God *is there* in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? (25) I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that *is* beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

As this is a very interesting part in the life of Moses, and as the subject held forth to us in it is highly instructive, I would beg the Reader to pause over it, and remark with me some of the sweet considerations which arise out of it. And *first*, consider the mercy prayed for. It was to see that good land, which was *Canaan*, the glory of all lands, as the Prophet called it. Ezekiel 20:6. But it was not simply the good land of Canaan, considered in respect to its fruitfulness and excellency, but that goodly mountain and Lebanon, which Moses longed to behold. And, if I mistake, not, the reason

was this: that goodly mountain was mount *Moriah*, that memorable spot where Abraham offered up Isaac, and which was to become yet infinitely more memorable in gospel-days, when JESUS, by the one offering of himself, should forever perfect them that are sanctified. That Moses, under the divine illumination of the HOLY GHOST, had such views of salvation, and was perfectly satisfied in all the great leading points of it, no one, I think, can doubt who compares his first vision of JESUS at the bush with what the apostle relates of his faith, under which all his ministry, he expressly tells us, was conducted. It was *by faith* that he esteemed the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. It was *through faith* he kept the passover. And what faith, but faith in the promised and expected Redeemer? Hence the mercy he prayed for was to behold that memorable spot, which should be sacred in after ages to the ministry of the LORD JESUS. Hebrews 11:26, &c. But this is not all; for *secondly*, let us consider the arguments by which he pleaded for the mercy, and they were the LORD'S past blessings, which are no doubt the strongest of all possible reasons to hope in the completion and fulfillment of all that are to come. It is true, the LORD had before threatened that he should not go over. But as the LORD had not sworn to it, as he did in the case of the spies, there appeared to be room for prayer. See the cases of Hezekiah and Jonah, 2 Kings 20:1-6. Jonah 3:4.

DEUTERONOMY 3:26-29

But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. (27) Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold *it* with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. (28) But charge Joshua, and

encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see. (29) So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor.

Observe with what humility and approbation the man of God speaks of the LORD'S refusal. Oh! it is precious faith which enables the believer to lay passive in the hand of GOD, and know no will but his. Reader! do not overlook, however, the graciousness of the LORD'S answer to Moses. Although his wisdom did not see fit to comply with his request, he promised him a sight of the land, which might gratify him; and the taking him to himself, would amply awake up for the loss of Canaan. But, passing by the consideration of the *man*, what a charming subject ariseth out of it in reference to his *office*. Moses, as the law-deliverer to the church, could not be permitted to bring the people into Canaan; for the law makes nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did; and Joshua, as a type of the LORD JESUS, can only bring his church to glory. Hebrews 7:19.

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST the various improvements which the perusal of this Chapter opens to my view, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, while I behold, as in the case of the kings of Sihon and Bashan, that giants are but as dwarfs when GOD fights the battles of his people; and that, while going forth in the strength of the LORD GOD, making mention of his righteousness, even his only, I shall be more than conqueror through him that loveth me: let me desire like Moses, with an eye of faith, to see that goodly land, and yet more especially JESUS, the LORD of it, who is the greater Joshua, gone before

to take possession of it in the name of all his people. Oh! thou LORD of the country, and of the true tabernacle, which our GOD hath pitched and not man, grant, by the influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that my soul may be ever longing, until faith is realized in vision, for the view of thee, and of thy glory. May my soul contemplate now by faith all ordinances, means of grace, and every institution of service, as pointing to thy Person, and having their consummation in thee; and when thou shalt give the order for my dismissal from this region of shadows, LORD grant that I may awake up after thy likeness, to be fully satisfied with thee.

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 4:1

Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

Nothing can be more immediate, by way of application, from all that the man of GOD had said before, than the first word with which this chapter opens,—now. It is very frequently

made use of in the gospel. Now (saith Paul) is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2.

DEUTERONOMY 4:2

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

It is worthy of remark, how jealous the LORD is of his name and glory; in both Testaments of Scripture the precept of neither adding to, nor diminishing from, is strongly formed. See Revelation 22:18, 19.

DEUTERONOMY 4:3

Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.

Compare this with Numbers 25:4.

DEUTERONOMY 4:4

But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day.

Reader! if your soul be united to JESUS, must not all spiritual life be derived from this union? Oh! the inexpressible preciousness of those words of JESUS: *because I live, ye shall live also*. John 14:19.

DEUTERONOMY 4:5-8

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. (6) Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people. (7) For what nation *is there so* great, who *hath* God *so* high unto them, as the

LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for?* (8) And what nation *is there so* great, that hath statutes and judgments *so* righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

Into what an astonishing degree of nearness, are believers now brought by the blood of JESUS! Reader! pause and contemplate your vast privileges; and ask your own heart that question, Am I indeed brought nigh, by the blood of JESUS? Ephesians 2:13.

DEUTERONOMY 4:9

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

It is refreshing to see, that while both Testaments enjoin the same precept, of keeping the soul diligently, (see Jude 21.) the apostle had it in commission to tell the church, that the LORD is the keeper of his people. 1 Peter 1:5. And what is yet if possible, more endearing; JESUS committed all his people to the care of the FATHER, in the last evening of his discoursing with his disciples. John 17:11-15.

DEUTERONOMY 4:10-14

Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children. (11) And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. (12) And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only *ye heard* a voice. (13) And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone.

(14) And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.

The part of Israel's history, which Moses here referred to, hath been already commented upon. To that I refer: See Exodus 19:18. But, Reader, we never can sufficiently attend to this interesting part of Israel's history, while connecting with it its typical object. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet is it, when at any time (considering how awful it would be in our poor nature, unconnected with JESUS, to stand before the LORD in *Horeb*, to answer the demands of GOD's righteous law;) we call to mind our high privileges, in seeing our persons fully justified by the redemption in CHRIST JESUS. Oh! thou dear Redeemer! give me to sing now, however in broken and imperfect strains it may be, till I come to chaunt it, in louder sweeter notes with the church above; *Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive all glory, and honour, and thanksgiving, and praise; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me to GOD by thy blood.* Revelation 5:9.

DEUTERONOMY 4:15-18

Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day *that* the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: (16) Lest ye corrupt *yourselves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, (17) The likeness of any beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, (18) The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:

Moses lays great stress upon the prohibition to similitudes: not only condemning all *improper* resemblances, but *all* resemblances. "To what will ye liken me?" saith the LORD. Isaiah 40:18-25. How sweet is pure gospel worship. See our

LORD'S short but most expressive statement of it. John 4:23, 24.

DEUTERONOMY 4:19

And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

It is remarkable, in nations unacquainted with the gospel, how prone the natives have been found to worship the heavenly bodies. Reader! think how precious the gospel is, which hath taught us to consider all these lights of the firmament, but as the servants of our JESUS. Psalm 19:1-6.

DEUTERONOMY 4:20

But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye are* this day.

I would have the Reader observe with me, how Moses delights to harp upon that string of distinguishing mercy. The instances of it are very many, through all the parts of the history. See it repeated in this chapter, verses 32, &c. Reader! of all mercies, those which are distinguishing and personal are the highest and the best. See Deuteronomy 5:3.

DEUTERONOMY 4:21-22

Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance: (22) But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.

It is to be questioned whether anything in the annals of mankind, ever came up to the generous conduct of Moses upon this occasion; who in his love for Israel, passed by his own personal humiliation. Never perhaps was he equaled in this instance, excepting by thee, thou blessed JESUS, who though rich, yet for our sakes didst become poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9.

DEUTERONOMY 4:23-28

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. (24) For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God. (25) When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt *yourselves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger: (26) I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong *your* days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. (27) And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. (28) And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

Observe the vast earnestness of the Sacred Preacher in the arguments he adopts to interest the feelings of the people; and how he dwells, again and again, upon the same very powerful motives to induce them to obedience. But Reader! while attending to these things, think yet more particularly, how our Almighty law-giver, and law-fulfiller, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, hath secured the faithfulness of his people. See to this purport that blessed promise, founded as it is, in covenant security. Jeremiah 32:40.

DEUTERONOMY 4:29-31

But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. (30) When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (31) (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

Reader! pause over those verses, and then call to mind that, concerning the dispersed of Israel, even now in the present hour this blessed promise hath not lost its force. The promise is sure. The event must take place. *The day shall come when the deliverer shall arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* Compare Isaiah 59:20. with Romans 11:26.

DEUTERONOMY 4:32-40

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and *ask* from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing *is*, or hath been heard like it? (33) Did *ever* people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? (34) Or hath God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? (35) Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him. (36) Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. (37) And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; (38) To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou *art*, to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. (39) Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven

above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else. (40) Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

If we read these verses with an enlightened understanding, and paraphrase them in gospel terms, as they really ought to be read by every awakened and regenerated soul, how precious do the evidences of distinguishing grace manifest themselves under every one of them, to the believer's own experience. Reader! suffer me, for example's sake, only to suppose that *you* are the happy partaker of the covenant mercies of GOD in CHRIST; and may I not then say to you, as Moses did to Israel; Ask now of the days that are past, or of the thousands of the unawakened around you: did any of them ever hear the sweet voice of the HOLY GHOST in his word? Hath your GOD taken you out of the midst of a sinful world, in which you dwelt at ease, while in your unregeneracy, like Israel in Egypt: and hath he caused you to hear his voice and endeared all his covenant mercies to your heart? Hath he undertaken to drive out all the enemies of your salvation before you, and give you an inheritance, among them that are sanctified? Oh! how precious is it to remark distinguishing mercies; and how powerfully do the arguments, like those of Moses to Israel, constrain the true believer in JESUS! Compare those two last verses, with that sweet one of the Apostles. 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

DEUTERONOMY 4:41-43

Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan toward the sunrising; (42) That the slayer might flee thither, which should kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times past; and that fleeing unto one of these cities he might live: (43) *Namely,*

Bezer in the wilderness, in the plain country, of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead, of the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites.

GOD hath given commandment concerning those cities of refuge: Numbers 35:9-34. But of such importance was the thing itself, that Moses in the very opening as it were, of his sermon, breaks off to follow up the LORD'S precept concerning this thing. But is there not a gospel sense in it, and that of a very interesting nature? I think there is. Are not those cities of refuge all typical of JESUS? Is not every one a manslayer, that slays his own soul by sin? And if the avenger of blood, which is death, overtake the sinner (and death is hourly pursuing him) before the poor soul-murderer hath found refuge in the blood, and righteousness of JESUS; is not his ruin inevitable? Reader! do not overlook the sweet mercy read to us in these verses, in that the city of refuge was open every way. Yes! JESUS is the way for every poor sinner to find refuge in; and he is open to both the Israelite and the stranger, from all parts of the earth: they shall come (our JESUS saith) from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Precious salvation!

I do not insist upon the names Moses gave to those cities: yet considered with an eye to JESUS, and as the Man of GOD hath particularized them with names, which in their original acceptation are peculiarly apposite to some of the distinguishing characters of JESUS; I do not think it would be right wholly to pass them by unnoticed. Observe that *Bezer*, in the original, signifies a strong hold. And is not JESUS a shelter and strong hold from the storm, and a refuge from the tempest? Isaiah 32:2. *Rameth*, signifies what is high or

exalted. And to what an height of excellence and of glory, is the LORD JESUS in his redemption work exalted? Philippians 2:6-11. *Golan* intimates great joy and glory. And is it not said that in JESUS shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory? Isaiah 45:25.

DEUTERONOMY 4:44-49

And this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: (45) These *are* the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt, (46) On this side Jordan, in the valley over against Bethpeor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they were come forth out of Egypt: (47) And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, which *were* on this side Jordan toward the sunrising; (48) From Aroer, which *is* by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which *is* Hermon, (49) And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pishgah.

The Man of GOD is particular in marking down the very spot, where he rehearsed and performed these things for Israel: because the place was truly memorable; for Israel now possessed, as it were, the earnest of the promised land. And there is somewhat striking also in the observation, that it was over against *Beth-peor*; that is, the idol temple of the GOD of the Moabites. And where so proper to show GOD's people their mercies, as in the very face of the ungodly world? Oh! how ought the people of GOD to enumerate their mercies, and to mark down the several tokens of distinguishing grace, when they are in the very moment beholding that the LORD hath called them out from among the carnal, and manifested himself to them otherwise than he doth to the world. That is a precious Scripture of Paul's to this purpose, 1 Corinthians 4:7.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

In this Chapter, Moses reassumes the subject of his Sermon. He brings to the remembrance of Israel that great event, of the giving of the law at Horeb, when Moses acted as a Mediator between GOD and Israel. He repeats the ten commandments, and subjoins his observations upon them;

reminds them of what they had said at that time, and takes occasion, once more, to enforce the great duty of obedience.

DEUTERONOMY 5:1

And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.

The chapter opens with the man of God calling the assembly of the people, and demanding audience to his words. Reader! it is sweet to mark our privileges in the gospel church. You and I have learnt, I hope, that the calling of assemblies, and the privilege of ordinances, however valuable in themselves, are nothing without the SPIRIT'S gracious presence and influence. GOD'S ministers may, indeed, like Moses, command attention, but unless the LORD himself give the hearing ear, we shall not hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches. Revelation 2:11. 29.

DEUTERONOMY 5:2

The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

I wish the Reader to have a clear conception of the nature and design of this covenant here spoken of. It is not the Covenant of grace: for this was made in the council of peace between the Persons of the GODHEAD, and founded wholly on the divine fulfillment by CHRIST JESUS. I have given him (saith the FATHER, speaking of the Person of the SON,) for a Covenant to the people. Isaiah 42:6. Zechariah 6:13. But this covenant is explained to us by the apostle, when he expressly tells us that it was intermediate, and preparatory to the coining of gospel times; and that it was intended only to act as a schoolmaster, to bring us unto CHRIST. It would swell the

Commentary to an unnecessary length, and in some measure defeat the intention of this humble work, which is designed to lead the Reader from one Scripture to another, to quote all that the apostle, acting under the HOLY GHOST, hath said upon this subject. I refer the Reader therefore to the passage itself, and cannot but earnestly request that he will not dismiss this chapter of Moses before he hath consulted the writings of the apostle on the subject. See Galatians 3:15-25.

DEUTERONOMY 5:3

The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even us, who are all of us here alive this day.*

It is a very interesting remark of Moses, in this verse, that the covenant here spoken of was not confined to the days of Abraham, or the Fathers; but that the law, to which Moses referred, was all subsequent to the covenant made, or rather revealed, to Abraham. A plain proof, *as Paul in his comment upon it hath observed*, that the proclamation of GOD's covenant of grace, made known to Abraham concerning Redemption by the LORD JESUS, and which the rite of circumcision was appointed as a sign and seal of for the confirmation of the faith, could not be rendered void, or become conditional, by the law given on Horeb, which was four hundred and thirty years after. A delightful consideration to the believer, who would tremble at mount Sinai but for this, and now rejoices that he is come to Mount Zion. Hebrews 12:1 8-24.

DEUTERONOMY 5:4

The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,

What is here said of face to face, the Chaldee paraphrase more agreeably to the analogy of faith, renders *word to word*.

DEUTERONOMY 5:5

(I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

Who doth not see, in this view of Moses, a lively type of the LORD JESUS, the only Mediator between GOD and man. Yes! blessed Jesus! thou art indeed the only *day's-man*, capable of standing between a justly offended GOD, and perishing dying sinners. It was thou only, (then, and now, and forever), couldst perform this gracious, merciful office! LORD, be thou my Mediator still; and while holding forth the spotless law of GOD, enable me to behold thy spotless righteousness, as having fulfilled the law for me, that I may have a clear apprehension, and as clear a faith, that thou art the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Romans 10:4.

DEUTERONOMY 5:6-21

I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. (7) Thou shalt have none other gods before me. (8) Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or* any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth: (9) Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me, (10) And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. (11) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (12) Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. (13) Six days thou shalt labour, and

do all thy work: (14) But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. (15) And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. (16) Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (17) Thou shalt not kill. (18) Neither shalt thou commit adultery. (19) Neither shalt thou steal. (20) Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. (21) Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour's.

I hardly think it necessary to comment upon these commandments afresh, after what was offered on this subject in the Commentary for the 20th Chapter of Exodus. I would only beg to point out to the Reader, that there is somewhat of a variation in this new edition of the Commandments, to what was first given in the Book of Exodus. It is a variation only of words however, not of meaning. Perhaps the HOLY GHOST intended by this to teach the LORD'S people, that when at any time from their strength of memory, they Endeavour to comfort themselves, or be useful to others, in rehearsing any of the words of GOD, that they should not alarm themselves with unnecessary fears, it in their quotation they adhere to the sense of the passage, though they may not express the very words of the writer. We have a great number of instances of this kind in the Scriptures. Thus for example; Paul's address before Agrippa, and the relation of the history itself

to which that address refers, is not in words exactly the same; but the fact itself is. See Acts 9 with 26. So again, the LORD's prayer hath a variation; but yet the sum and substance is the same. Compare Matthew 6 with Luke 11.

DEUTERONOMY 5:22

These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

What a lively representation is here given, *in* this verse, of the terrors of the law! Oh! how sweet and precious is it to a soul, truly distressed, under the terrors of a broken law, to hear the mild and soul-reviving language of the *gospel*. Reader! have you ever entered, by faith in a dear Redeemer, into the full meaning and enjoyment of what the apostle saith, *Ye are not come to the mount that burned with fire*. Hebrews 12:18.

DEUTERONOMY 5:23-27

And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, *even* all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; (24) And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. (25) Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. (26) For who *is there* of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived? (27) Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.

How much of gospel is in these verses! And how in these early ages was the great doctrine of a Mediator shadowed

forth, even in the dispensation of the law! Reader! pause over the perusal of the fears and consternations which are so natural in a guilty mind. Depend upon it, in all ages, they have been, and ever must be, the same. Think then, in this view, what a precious and invaluable thing it must be, in the hour of GOD'S tremendous judgments, to have an advocate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the righteous; and to know him, and to rest in him, as the sure propitiation for our sins. 1 John 2:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 5:28-30

And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. (29) O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! (30) Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.

What a delightful view is here afforded us of the love and mercy of GOD our father! With what affection he speaks of his people; and with what earnestness he desires their salvation. My soul! ever keep in remembrance the everlasting love of him who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And pray for continual grace to preserve alive in thy mind the recollection, that the united love of the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, are the joint causes of thy salvation.

DEUTERONOMY 5:31

But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to possess it.

Beholding Moses, in this instance, as he really was, the type and figure of JESUS; and what a refreshing thought is it to the mind of the believer! Yes, Reader! there ever was, and is, and ever will be, One With the FATHER whom he heareth alway. Give him my soul thy cause, and fear not the final issue.

DEUTERONOMY 5:32-33

Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. (33) Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and *that it may be well with you*, and *that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess*.

How very suitable is the conclusion which the man of God makes of his solemn address. And hedged in, and surrounded as we are, in the gospel dispensation, think Reader how impossible it will be in any of us to escape, if we neglect so great salvation. Hebrews 2:3.

REFLECTIONS

OH! thou great law-giver, and law-fulfiller, of a better dispensation, founded upon better promises! May I behold thee in all thy precious offices and characters, while reading in this chapter thy servant Moses commanding the attention of the people. In the name of JEHOVAH thou camest personally once in the days of thy flesh; and now thou comest spiritually in the day of thy power, commanding all thy people to hear the gospel offer of thy blood and righteousness! Oh! give me grace, to receive thy precious word, and cry out, with the affection of one of old, Oh! how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day! Blessed JESUS! may it be my portion to receive the law of faith, which is obeyed, not by works of

righteousness, which I have done, or can do, but by thine own perfect obedience, in a law-fulfilling, and law-satisfying righteousness. And grant, gracious GOD, that while I see myself justified by thy blood and righteousness from all things by which I never could be justified by the law of Moses, may I be enabled, by the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, so to live a life of faith, on thee and thy complete salvation, that though dead to the law, as a covenant of works, I may not be without law unto GOD, but under the law to CHRIST.

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 6:1

Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it:

As the religion of the LORD JESUS distinguisheth his followers from all others that are in the earth, so will it follow that his people are distinguished by their life and conversation from all others. It is a charming feature of character which the Jewish council, in the first age of the gospel, gave of the apostles, when it is said of them, they took knowledge of them, that they had been with JESUS. Acts 4:13.

DEUTERONOMY 6:2-3

That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. (3) Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

Reader! do examine in your own heart for that which is among the first evidences of a renewed life, *the fear of the LORD*; for the sacred writer had it in commission to say, that it is the beginning of wisdom. And if you possess this filial, child-like fear, as distinguished from the fear of bondage, learn to give the LORD the glory of it. See Jeremiah 32:40. compared with Romans 8:15. Moses adds a sweet note to the end of this verse, in taking in the consideration of the children, and the children's children. Yes! the promise of the covenant in CHRIST JESUS, is to be a GOD in CHRIST to our offspring: See that precious promise to this effect, Isaiah 44:3. 59:21.

DEUTERONOMY 6:4

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

What a blessed verse is this, which folds within its short, but mighty contents, the foundation of all our faith. Our GOD, though existing in a manner totally distinct from all his creatures in a threefold character of Person, is but one and the same JEHOVAH. For, as the apostle beautifully represents it, There are Three that bear record in heaven; the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST; yet these three are but one. I would beg the Reader to remark with me, that though the verse be but short, yet no less than three times is the glorious name of JEHOVAH repeated in it. May we not suppose, that the

very design of this was to convey the glorious truth of a threefold character of Persons in the divine unity? Happy the soul who hath an evidence in his own breast of the truth of this; in being enabled there to trace the tokens of the FATHER's love, and the Redeemer's grace, and the SPIRIT's fellowship. I detain the Reader only to make a short observation more upon this precious Verse, and to ask him, whether the manner in which Moses calls upon Israel to attend to this leading truth, that our GOD is but one LORD, doth not carry with it a testimony, that as the people had been accustomed to receive tokens of a plurality of persons in the GODHEAD, they were not to lose sight, at the same time, of the unity of the divine essence. 1 John 5:7.

DEUTERONOMY 6:5

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Reader! do you know anything of this precept in your own experience? If so, bless the HOLY GHOST for shedding abroad this love in your heart: for he is the author of it. 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

DEUTERONOMY 6:6-8

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: (7) And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (8) And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

What can the imagination form of more loveliness, than that of beholding a pious parent encircled by his little family, to whom he is recounting the LORD'S gracious dealings with his

soul. Reader! only picture to yourself a father, or a master, thus engaged, and then ask, whether the blessing of the LORD must not rest upon such households! And observe moreover, the care that is taken, by the Jewish law-giver, acting in his high character under GOD, to enforce religion as a *personal* thing, as well as a *national* concern. The words of GOD were to be bound for a sign, to the man himself, and to *all* with whom he, had to do; sweetly intimating thereby, that the whole life and conversation were to carry a suitable correspondence to the profession. Neither was this all, the posts of the house were to have the same inscription, that the stranger, and every one passing by, might know that the LORD'S servant dwelt there. Reader! do not overlook the provision of the gospel, on these grand points. Our whole conversation is to be such as becometh the gospel of CHRIST. And whatsoever we do, in word, or deed, all is to be done to GOD'S glory. Not merely on our doors, but in our hearts, CHRIST is to be formed, and dwell there. LORD! grant both Writer and Reader these decisive evidences that we are thine, Philippians 1:27.

DEUTERONOMY 6:9-12

And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (10) And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, (11) And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; (12) *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Observe, how the man of GOD speaks with confidence of the people's possessing Canaan, as if it were already in possession. Reader! do not overlook the sweet property of faith. And why should not true believers in JESUS speak with the same confidence of their heavenly inheritance, since he is gone before to take possession of it in their name John 14:1, 2. Observe also what stress Moses lays, upon the attention to a change of circumstances, when from, a wilderness state they are brought into the full enjoyment of every earthly felicity. *Then* beware; as if, (and no doubt it is) this were the critical time—then, when in prosperity, the heart is lifted up, we are in most danger of forgetting GOD. Reader! look into the state of your own mind concerning this! Wise was the prayer of *Agur*, Proverbs 30:7-9.

DEUTERONOMY 6:13-19

Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. (14) Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you; (15) (For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. (16) Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah. (17) Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. (18) And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, (19) To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.

These are so many, beautiful repetitions of the same important precepts; and all leading to the same point, to intimate the jealousy of the LORD over his people. Reader! only pause and consider what evidences of divine love the life

of every truly regenerated disciple of the blessed JESUS is marked with, in the original, free, and unpurchased mercy of the FATHER; the tender and expensive testimonies of the SON, and the gracious tokens of the HOLY GHOST; and then ask yourself whether such unequalled love hath not a just cause for jealousy; and especially, when you and I sometimes, and not unfrequently, allow even the slightest and most trifling things to carry away our mind and affection from the LORD GOD of all our happiness.

DEUTERONOMY 6:20-25

And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What *mean* the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? (21) Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: (22) And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: (23) And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers. (24) And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day. (25) And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

What a most delightful subject seems to be opened to us in these verses. The Jewish children are naturally supposed to enquire into the peculiarities of their fathers faith. And the fathers are supposed as naturally to be earnest in gratifying their infant minds in the information of the truth. Oh! that all christian parents, and masters of families, were but alive to this most interesting business! Reader! do turn to the gospel, and take a view of the children in the temple, when, under the divine teaching of the HOLY GHOST, they were saluting the

blessed Redeemer with Hosannas. This will afford somewhat of an idea of the loveliness of early piety. Matthew 21:9. 16. Psalm 8:2. I only detain the Reader, just to observe, what Moses saith of the conduct of Israel, that it shall be *their* righteousness, (an imputed righteousness implied,) meaning, no doubt, that all their acceptance would be in GOD their Savior, and in his complete righteousness; for the apostle tells us, that CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Reader! do not fail to consult the apostle upon this important subject. Romans 10:3.

REFLECTIONS

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

Oh! that all who in the present hour are tempted to question, whether the LORD JEHOVAH existeth in a plurality of persons or not, would read those numberless passages, where the word LORD which is *singular* and means the one glorious JEHOVAH is joined with the word GOD in the *plural*: as if forever to silence the blasphemy of infidels and to strengthen and confirm the faith of believers. And oh! that all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh would consult their own scriptures on

this glorious truth, that when they discover the sacred name of, Jacob's GOD joined with words that are *plural*, they might no longer doubt whether a plurality of persons exist in Him who is the glorious GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! Hasten thou great deliverer, and arise out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

LORD! I beseech thee give me grace, that the vital religion of my adored Redeemer, may be with me a family religion, a personal religion, A religion manifested to all the world. May it be my glory, and delight, to let everyone know whose I am, and whom I love, and desire to serve in the gospel of GOD's dear SON. Yes! thou blessed Redeemer, be thou my portion, my joy, my happiness, my delight; and be thou my LORD my righteousness, that I may speak of it every day, and all the day, and wear thy holy and dear name as a seal upon mine heart, and upon mine arm; and as frontlets between mine eyes. And do thou, dearest LORD, own me for thine, both now and when thou comest to make up thy jewels.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 7:1

When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before

thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

There is somewhat wonderfully striking, in the distinguishing favor manifested to Israel. GOD not only chose Israel in preference to other nations, but to seven nations, the greatest and mightiest monarchies of the then known world. And what is the gospel state now? Not many mighty, not many noble, (says the apostle) are called. See Paul's observation upon it, compared with our dear LORD'S precious conclusion: and then ask your own heart, What are your views of this distinguishing grace, as it respects yourself. 1 Corinthians 1:26, 27. Matthew 11:25, 26.

DEUTERONOMY 7:2

And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, *and* utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

If we consider this sweet chapter as it ought to be considered, *spiritually* then will it follow, that as the enemies which opposed our fathers, in their possession of Canaan, were all typical of the spiritual foes which war against the LORD'S Israel now, in their pursuit of an heavenly Canaan, we can do nothing less than vow an everlasting war against all the enemies of our salvation. Reader! what are the seven nations which come out against you, but those swarms of vain thoughts, worldly cares, lustful affections, the unbelief of the heart, the rebellion of the mind, and Satan and the world; all in colleague against the poor sinner at once? And who would make peace with those deadly foes, who had his own eternal welfare in prospect before him? I fear that the want of

attention to this hath been the means of leading *some* Readers into a false conclusion, as if those precepts, which express the command of GOD to a total destruction of the enemies of the LORD'S Israel, are very harsh. Seen in this point of view, it must immediately strike every sincere mind, that there can be no mercy shown to those lusts of ours, and those enemies of our GOD, which would rob us of our crown, and the LORD GOD of his glory. See, with this explanation, that passage, 2 Samuel 12:31.

DEUTERONOMY 7:3-4

Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. (4) For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

I pause over these verses to remark, how awfully these truths of GOD are sometimes verified, in the carnal alliances which believers unhappily make with the ungodly. Be not unequally yoked, saith the Apostle, with unbelievers. And yet, some there are who, in direct defiance both to the precepts of GOD in this chapter, and to his servant's earnest advice, in following up his LORD'S command, presume to do the reverse; pretending the hope, that though the LORD hath forbidden it, they may be the instruments of converting them, when the LORD hath declared they will rather be seduced and corrupted themselves. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

DEUTERONOMY 7:5

But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

Read the pious zeal of *Josiah*, upon this occasion, 2 Chronicles 34:3, 4.

DEUTERONOMY 7:6

For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

Who can read this without crying out with Moses, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the LORD?" And who but must wish to be of the number of Israel! Deuteronomy 33:29.

DEUTERONOMY 7:7-8

The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: (8) But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

I hardly know a passage in the Old Testament more sweetly expressive of the freeness and sovereignty of grace; and more encouraging at the same time to the mind of every poor enquiring sinner. Dear JESUS! and are all the numberless proofs of thy mercy towards thy people, the sole result of the FATHER'S everlasting love, thine own most free and unmerited grace, and the blessed SPIRIT'S fellowship? LORD! help me ever to keep these gracious testimonies in view, to comfort my soul in a dark and trying hour. 1 John 4:19.

DEUTERONOMY 7:9

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

Precious character indeed, the faithful GOD! on whom I rest all my certain assurances of mercy and salvation in JESUS. Sweet consideration! our GOD abideth faithful; even, saith the apostle, though we believe not, he cannot deny himself. Reader, cherish the blessed expression! Did not the apostle intend to express, that however poor and wretched our belief is, yet the FATHER must be faithful to his Son JESUS in all his covenant promises, which are all yea and amen in him. See 2 Timothy 2:13. 2 Corinthians 1:20.

DEUTERONOMY 7:10

And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

How awful are the expressions we sometimes meet with in scripture, in the midst of mercies. And is not that very gospel, which to some is the savor of life unto life, to others the savor of death unto death? 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.

DEUTERONOMY 7:11-16

Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. (12) Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: (13) And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. (14) Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. (15) And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee. (16) And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity

upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that *will be* a snare unto thee.

All these are so many beautiful recapitulations of the same important precepts and promises blended. Upon so grand and infinitely momentous a concern, we need line upon line, and precept upon precept.

DEUTERONOMY 7:17-20

If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations *are* more than I; how can I dispossess them? (18) Thou shalt not be afraid of them: *but* shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; (19) The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: so shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid. (20) Moreover the LORD thy God will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed.

Here again, as before, Israel is reminded of GOD's former mercies, as the surest encouragement to the expectation of future favors. Reader! I pray you mark it down in the history of your own life—the mercy I need tomorrow is best ensured in the mercy I received yesterday. Remember what was before said: "Know, therefore, that the LORD thy GOD he is GOD, the faithful GOD. He is, he will be, faithful." And nothing so sweet, as to look back and trace proofs of it, as we have come along the path of grace. The HOLY GHOST acts in one of his dearest offices, when as the Remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS, he takes of the things of JESUS in his loving kindnesses which are past, and showeth them to the people. John 14:26.

DEUTERONOMY 7:21

Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible.

Do not overlook the frequency of the expression, neither the vast and infinite importance of it; for it is the foundation of every other comfort, wherein JEHOVAH calls himself by that distinguishing character, the LORD thy GOD. In this glorious covenant relationship, the LORD makes over, as it were, himself, with all his perfections, as engaged for the salvation of his people. All are pledged for the assurance of the faithful. And it should seem, if one might be allowed to say so, from the many other collateral testimonies of scripture, as if in nothing was the LORD more jealous of his honour, than when men question, or even doubt, his word and truth in this particular. He that believeth not GOD, hath made him a liar. 1 John 5:10.

DEUTERONOMY 7:22-26

And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. (23) But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. (24) And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. (25) The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God. (26) Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it *is* a cursed thing.

The gracious promise of GOD to put out Israel's enemies, by little and little, merits the very particular consideration of all GOD'S Israel now; for the battle is the same; and both the victory and glory are the LORD'S. It is truly refreshing to remark, how intimate the correspondence is between the

ancient church of GOD, in the wilderness state, and the church now. Did JEHOVAH JESUS, in his covenant capacity, go before his people then; and doth he not do it now? Is it not he that drives out all your enemies before you; and is he not doing it by little and little! Do you not know what it is to get, at times, an help from this great Captain of your salvation; and do you not equally know, at others, what it is to be compelled to cry to him, because you feel the enemy too powerful for your own strength? Oh! the *sad experiences* of the true believer's soul, when his several foes, like the seven nations of Canaan, all break in, upon him, and make him go heavily under the remains of indwelling sin, the powers of darkness, and the world of wickedness on every side. And, Oh! the *sweet experiences* the believer can refer to of JESUS'S love, when, though faint, he is yet pursuing; and, though humbled, he is yet rejoicing, in hope of the glory of GOD; when, in the strength of his glorious Captain, he is going on conquering and to conquer; and is convinced, that nothing shall separate him from the love of CHRIST. Oh! thou precious JESUS! do thou help thy people on; go on, dear LORD, before them, and put our enemies out, according to thy promise, by little and little, until they are all subdued. Oh! for faith to believe, what the LORD hath promised! See that sweet assurance, Isaiah 43:1-3.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! pause over the review which thou hast made in this chapter, both of the enemies of Israel, and Israel's God driving them out before him. Bring home to thine own heart the circumstances of their spiritual state, and examine thy case by Israel's. Have you discovered that the same foes are

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

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

throne, as thou hast overcome, and art sat down with thy FATHER on his throne. Even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 8:1

All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

Nothing can be more important to consider, both in a legal and in a gospel sense, than what Moses here mentions; that *all* God's commands are alike to be regarded, and not with a partial attention. The apostle hath settled the vast consequence of this in a single verse, when he says, Whoever keepeth the whole law, but yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all. James 2:10.

DEUTERONOMY 8:2

And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Sweet precept! Oh! that the blessed Remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, may graciously do this precious office, both in the Writer's and the Reader's heart,

and bring continually to our forgetful minds the tokens of divine love, which have been manifested towards us through all our wilderness state!

DEUTERONOMY 8:3

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Reader! search and see whether these marks are in your experience. Are you indeed humbled under a sense of your own need and JESUS' fullness? Hath the LORD caused you to hunger *spiritually* (for this is the sweet sense of the passage interpreted upon gospel terms) and hath a gracious GOD indeed fed *you* with that blessed food which neither you, nor your fathers after the flesh, nor any of the sons of Adam, ever knew naturally; even JESUS the living bread, which, as he himself hath explained it, is the real manna which our FATHER, and not Moses, gave his people in the wilderness? And have you been sensibly and fully brought to this conclusion, that the life of the soul is JESUS? See John 6:32.

DEUTERONOMY 8:4

Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

Was not this a standing miracle, that the garments of the Israelites should not wear out during forty years? There were no shops for supply in the wilderness. The people brought with them indeed what clothes they had; but these could not have remained, had not GOD so miraculously made them last. Exodus 12:34. But will not the Reader call to mind, in this

place, JESUS' care for his people, when he sent them out without purse, or scrip, or shoes, and they lacked nothing? Luke 22:35.

DEUTERONOMY 8:5-6

Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, *so* the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. (6) Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

Reader! I charge it upon you, as one of the most blessed improvements in our adoption character, that we esteem correction an evidence of fatherly relationship and love; and the want of it as a sign of bastardy. See those Scriptures, Hebrews 12:5-10. Revelation 3:1 9.

DEUTERONOMY 8:7-9

For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; (8) A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; (9) A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

There was a striking contrast to Israel, considered only in a natural sense, between the land of Canaan and the wilderness. But take it in a gospel sense, and how is the description heightened! The law was a shadow of good things to come: And therefore the goodly land, to which JESUS brings his people, is a land not simply of brooks of water, but there is a river proceeding out of the throne of GOD and the LAMB, the streams thereof make glad the city of our GOD. It is watered with the *gifts* and graces of the SPIRIT. It hath the bread of life, which is JESUS. And it hath all the fruits of JESUS'S

righteousness, which the delicious pomegranates and other fruits of Canaan represented. And all the ordinances of the gospel church, like the bowels of the earth, bring forth what is far more precious than gold that perisheth.

DEUTERONOMY 8:10-20

When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. (11) Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: (12) Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*; (13) And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; (14) Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; (15) Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein were* fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; (16) Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; (17) And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth. (18) But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day. (19) And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. (20) As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

I bring the whole of these verses into one point of view for shortness sake, and, because the doctrine of the whole is one and the same; namely, that the LORD'S grace ought never to be made the occasion of ingratitude. But, in a gospel sense, the precept riseth to an infinitely higher strain. Whoever

would ascribe to human merit what divine mercy alone hath wrought, is literally robbing GOD. And is not every one doing this who joins anything to the finished salvation of the LORD JESUS, arising from his own supposed attainments? See Paul's pious and humble resolution, Philippians 3:8, 9.

REFLECTIONS

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

Very gracious hast thou been to me, O LORD! Thou hast indeed humbled me, and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart, and given me in part to see what still remains there of sin and unbelief. Thou hast fed me, as thou didst Israel of old, with the manna of salvation, and with the bread of life. All the chastisements of thy grace have been as the chastisements of a kind and wise father: and thou hast brought me into a fulness of mercies, and the riches of redemption, in CHRIST JESUS.

LORD, keep me by thy grace from all spiritual pride and self-confidence. Never, dearest LORD, never may I be prompted to say, or think, that anything in me hath in the least contributed to the obtaining so great salvation; that neither my might, nor my hand, hath wrought it; but may I be ever ready to ascribe

the whole to the sovereignty and freedom of thy grace. Like one of old may the uniform language of my lips correspond to the feelings of my heart, and may his sentiments be mine; not by works of righteousness which I have done, but according to thy mercy, LORD, thou hast saved me, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed on me abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST my Savior. And therefore not unto me, O LORD, not unto me, but to thy holy name be all the praise.

CHAPTER 9

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 9:1

Hear, O Israel: Thou *art* to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven,

Whether this chapter is the beginning of a new sermon is not so clear. Our dear LORD, in the course of his preaching, sometimes did, as Moses in this place, call up the renewed attention of the audience in a similar manner. He that hath ears to hear, let him ear. And we find similar attention

demanded concerning the HOLY GHOST speaking to the church. See Matthew 11:15. Revelation 2:29.

DEUTERONOMY 9:2

A people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and *of whom* thou hast heard *say*, Who can stand before the children of Anak!

It is worthy observation, that Moses follows up the report of what the spies had said, concerning the *Anakims*, when they went up to the promised land: but with very different views. They did it through fear, and to discourage the people. Moses did it through faith, and to animate Israel. Great, and mighty, and formidable, as Israel's enemies might be, the LORD of Hosts was mightier. And the more powerful their foes, the more evident would be their victory, in proof that the LORD was their GOD.

DEUTERONOMY 9:3

Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee; *as* a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee.

Sweet thought! Reader, if you are truly spiritual do not lose sight of it. He that is a consuming fire to thine enemies to destroy them, is a wall of fire to thy soul to preserve thee. And observe, the sacred historian doth not say, the LORD thy GOD will enable thee to consume them; but the LORD himself will destroy them, and bring them down before thee. Yes, blessed JESUS! It is thine own arm which bringeth salvation. Oh! may I never lose sight of this, but be ever ready to say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength. Isaiah 45:24.

DEUTERONOMY 9:4-6

Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. (5) Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (6) Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou *art* a stiffnecked people.

It is a precious consideration, in the view of distinguishing grace, that it originates in covenant mercy in JESUS. No one cause but the real cause, the sovereign will and pleasure of GOD, can be assigned. JESUS sweetly expresses the whole of it when he saith, Even so, FATHER, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Matthew 11:26.

DEUTERONOMY 9:7

Remember, *and* forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.

This is one of the most precious offices of the HOLY GHOST, when he graciously brings to our remembrance the things of JESUS, in reminding us of our need of him, by reason of our sin. And I would very earnestly desire the Reader to remark with me, how Israel of old carried with him the same feature of character as Israel now. Israel was rebellious from the hour of his deliverance from Egypt. Reader! it is not merely from a state of nature, that your rebellion and my rebellion hath been shown; but, after the LORD has brought us out of

spiritual Egypt. It is an humbling, but truly profitable thought, because it tends to endear JESUS to the heart, that after the work of regeneration is wrought sin still works, and frequently manifests how much it reigns in the affections. "I knew (saith GOD) that thou wouldst be a transgressor from the womb." Isaiah 48:8.

DEUTERONOMY 9:8

Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.

Here the man of GOD particulariseth the instances of Israel's rebellion. *Horeb*, of all places, should have called forth obedience. For there the LORD confirmed the authority of his holy law, by the awful demonstration of the mount burning with fire. But alas!, neither the mount burning with fire, nor all the threatenings of everlasting burning, can deter from the commission of sin, unless Almighty grace restrain. Reader! do you know this? do you really believe, it? If not, may He who alone can convince of sin, be your teacher. John 16:8.

DEUTERONOMY 9:9-11

When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water: (10) And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. (11) And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, *even* the tables of the covenant.

These are so many beautiful repetitions of what was mentioned before, Exodus 19:16-21.

DEUTERONOMY 9:12

And the LORD said unto me, Arise, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*; they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.

Observe, how the LORD, as if to call forth the tenderness of Moses, denominates the people as Moses's people. Was not this typical of JESUS? Are we not his people, and the sheep of his pasture? Psalm 115:7.

DEUTERONOMY 9:13-17

Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it *is* a stiffnecked people: (14) Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they. (15) So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant *were* in my two hands. (16) And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, *and* had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you. (17) And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

Moses seems to dwell upon this most interesting passage in Israel's history, as if to remind the people of sovereign grace. And is it not a very striking feature, typically considered, of JESUS'S intercession for his people?

DEUTERONOMY 9:18

And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

It is not so clearly proved as to leave the point unquestionable, whether Moses means a *second* continuance and abstinence of forty days and nights in the mount as before. The particular manner of wording the expression, that he *fell down before the* LORD, in the same way as he did when he was forty days and forty nights in the mount with the LORD; this seems as if he meant to say, that his intercession was similar in manner not in time. Moreover, if Moses really was a *second* time forty days and forty nights in the mount, there is no mention made of his employment the second time like the first. See Exodus 24:18. And as Moses was eminently a type of the ever-blessed JESUS, we see a *manifest* propriety in the *first* forty days; but, considered as a type of JESUS in his fasting, the *second* would lessen its effect on this account. I do not, however, venture to speak decidedly upon the subject; but leave the Reader to his own judgment under the SPIRIT'S teaching. See Matthew 4:2.

DEUTERONOMY 9:19-21

For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also. (20) And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time. (21) And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, *and ground it* very small, *even* until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

See Commentary on Exodus 32:7-35.

DEUTERONOMY 9:22

And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

Taberah, means *burning*. *Massah*, the *temptation*. *Kibroth-hataavah*, the graves of lust.

DEUTERONOMY 9:23-24

Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice. (24) Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

I would again remind the Reader, in this place, of that sweet office of the HOLY GHOST as the LORD'S Remembrancer. Moses was acting in this instance as his instrument. And when at any time our sins and rebellions are brought to our remembrance, whatever is the *instrument*, may we have grace to consider in it the HOLY SPIRIT'S work. This will open a blessed source of improvement.

DEUTERONOMY 9:25-29

Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you. (26) I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. (27) Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin: (28) Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. (29) Yet they *are* thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm.

What a beautiful strain of earnestness in prayer is here read to us, of Moses's pleading with GOD in his covenant relation and character. Would the Reader see another yet more

beautiful example of the same kind, let him turn to the 17th chapter of John's Gospel.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

In the continuation of Moses's Sermon, the man of GOD, in this chapter, makes a beautiful digression from complaining, as in the former chapter, of Israel's rebellion, to remark in this

the unmerited examples of the LORD'S mercy. He points out some evidences of it in restoring the tables; continuing the priesthood; separating the tribe of Levi; and regarding Moses' intercession for them. He takes occasion, from all these things, in the close of the chapter to exhort them to obedience.

DEUTERONOMY 10:1

At that time the LORD said unto me, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.

At what time did Moses mean? I conceive, at that very time when by Israel's daring rebellion, the people had most reason to expect GOD'S judgments; then it was the LORD gave renewed tokens of his mercy. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Well might the prophet, in the view of divine mercy, exclaim, Who is a God like unto thee? Micah 7:18.

DEUTERONOMY 10:2

And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark.

Reader! how hath the LORD undertaken to enforce the observance of his precepts now. Consult the promise of GOD by the prophet, and then look into your own heart, and see whether that *you* yourself are an instance of its truth: for this is the great object of enquiry after all: hath the LORD indeed, by his HOLY SPIRIT, written his law in *your* heart? Jeremiah 31:31-34, compared with the apostles comment upon the passage, Hebrews 8:8-12.

DEUTERONOMY 10:3

And I made an ark *of* shittim wood, and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.

No doubt Moses obeyed the command, and hewed the tables. It is not a strained idea to observe, that *hewing* the stone might have a figurative reference to the conviction of the SPIRIT on the heart of stone; and putting them into the ark, might be symbolical of bringing a soul, under the effects of a broken and contrite spirit to JESUS. Dearest JESUS! it is in thee, and in thy person, poor sinners find a refuge from every storm, and a covert from every tempest.

DEUTERONOMY 10:4

And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

It is GOD's writing, and that is the best authority. The same as was before, for nothing can be added to it, or taken from it: and when the Son of GOD came, he made no alteration in it. He fulfilled indeed the whole in his righteous person: but suffered not a jot, or tittle of the law to fail. Matthew 5:17, 18.

DEUTERONOMY 10:5

And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

May it not be said both of the law and of the gospel, *there it is*. And as a fulfilled law, in the person of JESUS, was pointed at in this: may not believers say, when looking unto JESUS, *there it is*, in his sacred person, ratified and confirmed. There

stands the sinner's surety: the law-satisfying, the law-answering sponsor of his people. And the prophet had it in commission to describe him as having finished transgression, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Daniel 9:24.

DEUTERONOMY 10:6-7

And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead. (7) From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.

This is an historical part, introduced in the midst of Moses's sermon. On what account is not said: but it forms an interesting part, to intimate the progress of Israel's history. See Numbers 33:31-33. For an interesting account of Aaron's death, see Numbers 20:23-29.

DEUTERONOMY 10:8-9

At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day. (9) Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

In the gospel church all true believers are set apart, and are made kings and priests unto GOD and the FATHER. Revelation 1:6. Reader! is the LORD your inheritance? Can you say as David, Psalm 16:5?

DEUTERONOMY 10:10

And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, *and* the LORD would not destroy thee.

Moses dwells much upon this circumstance of his intercession and his success. Is it not intended by the HOLY GHOST, to remind the Reader, again and again, of the intercession of JESUS? Hebrews 7:25.

DEUTERONOMY 10:11

And the LORD said unto me, Arise, take *thy* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give unto them.

It is beautiful to observe in how many instances Moses was a type of CHRIST. Here he is represented as going before his people. Exodus 23:23.

DEUTERONOMY 10:12-13

And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, (13) To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

Nothing can be more persuasive than the address which Moses makes from what he had said before, to prevail upon Israel to the love of GOD. It is a highly finished exhortation and truly pathetic. Observe, the man of GOD makes the whole sum and substance of our duty to GOD, to consist in fearing the LORD, walking in his ways, loving him, serving him, and keeping his commandments. But who is sufficient for these things? Alas! in ourselves we have not power of ourselves to help ourselves, and all our sufficiency is of GOD. But is not the precept designed to act as our schoolmaster to bring us unto CHRIST? Here again, adored Redeemer, as in all other cases, so in this, thou art our strength, and our sufficiency. United to thee, in thy righteousness we are accepted; and in thy fear

and love we shall live, go up and down in thy name, and walk humbly with our GOD. Micah 6:8.

DEUTERONOMY 10:14-15

Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD'S thy God, the earth *also*, with all that therein *is*. (15) Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, *even* you above all people, as *it is* this day.

It is very precious to trace all mercies to their source. The infinite greatness of GOD, and the infinite littleness of man, are in these verses most suitably brought together, by way of demonstrating, to the full, the wonderful properties of distinguishing grace. Nothing but distinguishing grace can be the cause assigned for GOD's mercy. The love of GOD is the source, the first, the predisposing, the original, and only cause. The blood of JESUS, the price given for the purchase; and the HOLY SPIRIT, the whole cause of application. Reader! dwell upon that very sweet expression *only*; the LORD'S delight, his pleasure, his will, is the cause of my happiness. This will be to give GOD the glory, and bring heartfelt comfort to the soul.

DEUTERONOMY 10:16

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

Paul explains the gospel circumcision, to which the Jewish rite all along had a reference, see Romans 2:29. Colossians 2:11. Galatians 6:15.

DEUTERONOMY 10:17

For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

What a sublime representation is here given, in the compass of a short verse, of the greatness of JEHOVAH. And what a sweet relief is it to the mind of the faithful, when at anytime they are overpowered with the greatness of the GODHEAD, to call to mind that we are not only permitted to look up, but to draw near, through him who is our way, and truth, and life. Blessed JESUS! thou day's-man of thy people! may I through thee draw near at all times, to a gracious GOD and FATHER in JESUS. Ephesians 2:18.

DEUTERONOMY 10:18-19

He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. (19) Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

This is a most charming precept, and comes home to the heart of every poor Gentile who was once afar off, and indeed a stranger to GOD and CHRIST; but is now no more a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of GOD. Ephesians 2:19, 20.

DEUTERONOMY 10:20-21

Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. (21) He *is* thy praise, and he *is* thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

What is cleaving to the LORD, in New Testament language, but being joined to the LORD in one spirit? 1 Corinthians 6:17.

DEUTERONOMY 10:22

Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Jacob's whole house and family were no more: Exodus 1:5. See how GOD's promise was fulfilled, Genesis 15:5, compared with Numbers 1:46.

REFLECTIONS

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

Blessed SPIRIT! do thou circumcise my heart, and cause me to be no more stiff-necked. Unless purified by thee, and preserved by thy sin-subduing influence, what am I but a mass of corruption, and still remaining in the uncircumcision of carnal nature? Oh! for thy purifying, preserving, and renewing influences, that being called out of the state of a stranger in Egypt, as all my fathers were, I may be found among the number of the children of GOD, and my lot may be among the saints!

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 11:1

Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.

The charge to Israel was special and distinguishing. Israel was set apart, and distinguished, from all other nations of the earth. No people knew the LORD by signs and wonders, by holy worship and ordinances, as Israel did. What nation (as Moses told them) had the LORD so nigh as Israel? Deuteronomy 4:7. Reader! I charge it upon your mind, in the view of this subject, to consider how infinitely this argument is heightened since the SON of GOD, in substance of our flesh, came and tabernacled among us. Oh! what nearness are believers now brought to, in the blood and righteousness of JESUS! How beautifully the apostle dwells upon this, 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

DEUTERONOMY 11:2-7

And know ye this day: for *I speak* not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, (3) And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; (4) And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their

horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and *how* the LORD hath destroyed them unto this day; (5) And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came into this place; (6) And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that *was* in their possession, in the midst of all Israel: (7) But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did.

This is a charming line of distinction which the man of GOD hath drawn between the ignorance and unconsciousness of children, and the experience of men. In recapitulating those mighty acts of GOD, he appeals to facts which their eyes had seen, and which their knowledge of allowed no debate concerning, in proof of mercy shown them: what the LORD did *for* them against their enemies; and what the LORD did *to* them in numberless providences during their wilderness state: Hence therefore, it is as if he had said, I appeal to your own judgments; is not this a most gracious GOD, and justly entitled to all the love, and reverence, and obedience of a people so highly favoured. But Reader! when you have paid all possible attention to this view of Israel of old, pause over the subject, and consider how increased is the argument, as it may be applied to Israel now. If the Reader himself be an object of divine grace, may I not say, in the language of Moses, Know you this day, for I speak not to the unconscious, unawakened state of childhood, who have never experienced the grace of GOD in JESUS, but it is to you I speak, whose eyes have seen, and whose hands have handed, the word of life. What spiritual foes hath the LORD your GOD driven out, and consumed before you, and what great acts of grace in quickening mercy, converting mercy, and renewing mercy,

hath the LORD manifested to you otherwise than he doth to the world? Oh! what a volume is opened to every man's view, in the history of his own heart, who reads GOD'S love to Israel of old with the New Testament explanation, as the truth is in JESUS.

DEUTERONOMY 11:8-9

Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it; (9) And that ye may prolong *your* days in the land, which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Let not the Reader overlook the expression in those verses that Israel was to go in to possess the land. Not as if they were to fight for it, but as if it was already conquered. The reason was, the LORD their GOD had promised Canaan to his people. He undertook to drive out the present possessors, and to bring them in. And therefore so promised, the thing itself was as good as accomplished. But, considered as this really was, a type of the heavenly Canaan, the subject riseth higher to our view, and becomes abundantly more interesting, Jesus hath in reality already conquered for his people. He hath purchased their redemption by his blood. He is gone before to take possession of the promised land in their name, and will come again, and bring them into the possession of it, with himself; that where he is, there they may be also. See his sweet promise to this effect, John 14:3.

DEUTERONOMY 11:10-12

For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, *is* not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst *it* with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: (11)

But the land, whither ye go to possess it, *is* a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven: (12) A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

These verses afford a delightful view, even considered as an history of the promised land. It is beautiful to remark the several characters here drawn by the pencil of Moses, under the direction of the HOLY GHOST. Canaan was not as Egypt, even beheld as to its situation by nature. Egypt owed its fruitfulness to great labour and art: but Canaan was watered by the rain of heaven. The river *Nile* did not overflow its banks to water Egypt but once in the year, and all the rest of the year the country of Egypt became a dry soil. The Prophet gives an account of this, that Egypt had no rain, Zechariah 14:18. No doubt, as Israel had been long in bondage, the Fathers well recollected their labour and toil in the gardens of their masters, and how they had been compelled to sow the seed, and water it with their feet; meaning, perhaps, to fetch water from the *Nile*. Sweetly therefore the man of GOD draws the contrast to this servitude, in the spontaneous fruitfulness of Canaan, which had the eye of the LORD their GOD upon it from one end of the year to the other. Canaan had no river excepting the sacred stream of Jordan, in which, in after ages, the SON of GOD was baptized. So that, as the Prophet elegantly described it, there was no navigable channel for a galley with oars, or gallant ship, to pass by. No enemy could approach by water. But, saith the Prophet, there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams. His presence made up all deficiencies. See Isaiah 33:20-23. But we lose still greater beauties in this passage if we stop here.

Canaan, considered as a type of heaven, is yet more delightful to contemplate. Of the *heavenly* Canaan it may be truly said, it is not like the *earthly* Egypt of our fallen state. The land which the believer is going to possess hath not only the eye, but the presence of the LORD GOD upon it forever. JESUS is there, His person, his love, his redemption, his relations, offices, character; all are the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And if the Reader will pursue this train of reasoning through all the various parts in which it is capable of being traced, he will discover a most pleasing subject opening to his meditation. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

DEUTERONOMY 11:13-15

And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, (14) That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. (15) And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

GOD'S promises, even in a temporal sense, with respect to earthly blessings, serve to show the wonderful superintendance of the LORD over his people. But we are certainly authorized to accept Israel's history, as forming from beginning to end a subject truly spiritual. And here we find the promise of rain to be sweetly descriptive of the effusion of the SPIRIT. Isaiah 44:3, 4. Ezekiel 34:26.

DEUTERONOMY 11:16-17

Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; (17) And *then* the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit;

and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

GOD's withholding the influences of his SPIRIT, is here figuratively set forth. See a proof of this: Amos 4:7, 8.

DEUTERONOMY 11:18-21

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. (19) And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. (20) And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: (21) That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

I have often admired the LORD's affectionate regard to the happiness of Israel, as set forth in these precepts, and have figured to myself the Jewish family following up the command of the LORD, in forming around them their little circle, to speak to their children and little ones of the LORD's gracious dealings. And what can afford a sight more lovely or more engaging, than to behold the father of a family recounting to his children and household around him, what the LORD hath done for his soul. That is a sweet comment of David upon this scripture: Psalm 34:11.

DEUTERONOMY 11:22-25

For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; (23) Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. (24) Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even

unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. (25) There shall no man be able to stand before you: *for* the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you.

The extent of Israel's country, great as it was, was nothing compared to the extent of GOD's love for them. The boundaries here mentioned, if spiritually considered, have a delightful reference to what the apostle observes of the boundless love of GOD in CHRIST. Ephesians 3:18, 19.

DEUTERONOMY 11:26-32

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; (27) A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: (28) And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. (29) And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal. (30) *Are* they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh? (31) For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein. (32) And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

It is truly refreshing to attend to the practical exhortation which Moses makes, from what he had before said on this interesting subject, if interpreted upon gospel principles. There is indeed a blessing and a curse set before us in the gospel of JESUS. And if any man like the Jews of old, is at a loss to discover on whom the whole blessing rests, and the curse of rejecting; and would ask as they did of JESUS, What shall we do that we might work the works of GOD: the

Redeemer hath himself answered it; "This is the work of God that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." John 6:28, 29.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

And do thou, HOLY SPIRIT, whose grace and influence alone can effectually direct and incline my heart to a right judgment in all things, do thou sweetly constrain my soul into the love of GOD and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST; that while thy servant is here setting before me, the blessing and the curse, life and death, and good and evil: JESUS himself who is the sum and substance of all blessings, all mercies, all good, may be my choice and my Portion forever.

CHAPTER 12

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

DEUTERONOMY 12:1

These *are* the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

Sweet thought arising out of this verse, that our religion founded in JESUS the chief corner stone, is of daily obligation and of never ceasing importance. If JESUS be the statute of my soul this day, so is he tomorrow, and so will he be forever. Hebrews 13:8.

DEUTERONOMY 12:2-3

Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree: (3) And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

He that is at peace with GOD in CHRIST, is at war with all the enemies of GOD and CHRIST. Reader! if your body be really a temple of the HOLY GHOST, all idol worship is your abhorrence. See 2 Corinthians 6:16, 17.

DEUTERONOMY 12:4

Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

Nothing can be truly reared to GOD's honor but what hath GOD's glory in view. Sweet was that precept given with this view. An altar *to* GOD must be *of* GOD. If man lifts anything of his own upon it he hath polluted it. Exodus 20:24. John 4:24.

DEUTERONOMY 12:5

But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

Was not this precept of being expressly particular to have but one spot to serve GOD in, intended to show the unity of the GODHEAD in the Trinity of the persons; and at the same time to indicate that there is but one way to GOD in the righteousness of the Saviour? John 14:6.

DEUTERONOMY 12:6-7

And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: (7) And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

It is to JESUS the believer must bring all his offerings. He alone sanctifies both the gift and the giver. In his name he rejoiceth all the day. Matthew 23:19. Psalm 89:16.

DEUTERONOMY 12:8-11

Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes. (9) For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. (10) But *when* ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; (11) Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:

Is not this typical of the striking distinction between a state of nature and a state of grace? Before a sinner hath found rest to his soul, he is doing after the things which appear right in his own eyes. But when he hath found him who is the Rest, wherewith he causeth the weary to rest, then he is freed from the apprehension of his enemies triumphing over him, and all his views of strength and rest in JESUS, are found in him and presented in him. Isaiah 28:12. Matthew 11:28, 29.

DEUTERONOMY 12:12

And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

They that can rejoice *in* CHRIST, will always find cause to rejoice *before* CHRIST. 2 Corinthians 2:14.

DEUTERONOMY 12:13-14

Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: (14) But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.

So important a thing was it to have an eye to this one spot for offerings, that it is here repeated again. And what could this refer to but JESUS? Reader! do not overlook this, unless JESUS be in every presentation of our persons or services, our offering is too polluted and our nature too defiled to find acceptance before GOD. Dear LORD! be thou the all in all, in every prayer of mine, whether morning, noon, mid-day, or evening oblation! Colossians 3:11.

DEUTERONOMY 12:15-16

Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart. (16) Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.

Was not this prohibition of blood evidently intended to point to the infinitely preciousness of the blood of JESUS? All along from the very first of creation, had the HOLY GHOST an eye to this, in his sacred word! Genesis 9:4.

DEUTERONOMY 12:17-18

Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: (18) But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

It is worthy observation, what attention is shown, in the appointment of every religious rite, to the place of offering. And the reason is plain. It is JESUS, as the sum and substance

of all which is referred to. *In* him every service had its fulfillment, *to* him all pointed, and *from* him the whole efficacy was derived. Blessed Redeemer! may I never lose sight of thee in all places, in all thy churches, in all thine ordinances, in all thy ways and works! And do thou dearest LORD be in my heart and the heart of all thy people, the hope and only hope of glory! Colossians 1:27.

DEUTERONOMY 12:19

Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.

I admire the tenderness of our God to his Levites. Was not Jesus the first of the order of Levites? Was not he indeed a stranger, when he came to seek and save that which was lost? Oh! LORD, give *me* grace to recognize thee in every stranger, and for thy sake to forget not the stranger, conscious that as thyself, so thy people, they are all strangers in the land of Egypt. Deuteronomy 10:19.

DEUTERONOMY 12:20-28

When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. (21) If the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after. (22) Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten, so thou shalt eat them: the unclean and the clean shall eat *of* them alike. (23) Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh. (24) Thou shalt not eat it; thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water. (25) Thou shalt not eat it; that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou shalt do *that which is* right in the sight of the LORD. (26) Only thy holy

things which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD shall choose: (27) And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou shalt eat the flesh. (28) Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.

The same observation meets us here as before, only with this addition, that as from its importance it is again repeated, our attention and regard to it should be but the more increased. If from the renewal of it the LORD JESUS becomes more dear, sweet is the exhortation how often soever repeated, which under GOD'S grace induceth this effect.

DEUTERONOMY 12:29-32

When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; (30) Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. (31) Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. (32) What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

I take occasion from this precept to remark, how needful it must be for the heart to be established in grace, that we may not be carried about with diverse and strange doctrines. Alas! if our religion be not of the heart, there can be no stability, no dependence in our faith. But if I love the LORD JESUS because I

really and truly know him: this is life eternal. LORD! confirm me in this faith. John 17:3.

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

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

rest, to thy JESUS, O my soul, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee!

CHAPTER 13

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

DEUTERONOMY 13:1

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

To those who know not the deceitfulness of the human heart, or the melancholy state of blindness and ignorance to which we are fallen, the precept in this verse may appear strange. But Reader! danger of deception concerning true and false prophets was not peculiar to the Israelites. Observe what Paul saith of the last times concerning apostacy, and then pause over the subject, and pray for grace to resist every temptation of this kind. See 1 Timothy 4:1.

DEUTERONOMY 13:2-3

And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; (3) Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

But is it not yet more strange, that the LORD should permit the prediction of false teachers to come to pass? The answer is at hand. GOD hath given the reason: It is to prove the believer. And what is the believers security but the SPIRIT'S work in the heart? if, my brother, you are taught of GOD the HOLY GHOST who and what JESUS is, there will never be any danger of going after other gods. That precious promise which GOD held forth for his glory in the last days is then fulfilled in your experience, and you need not ask your neighbor to teach you to know the LORD. Sweet and blessed testimony this of GOD the HOLY GHOST, and abundantly needful now more than ever, in the present period of the church. Jeremiah 31:31-34. Compared with Hebrews 8:8-11.

DEUTERONOMY 13:4

Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

Precious thought to cleave unto the LORD. Reader! pause over it and examine whether this be your case. Deuteronomy 10:20.

DEUTERONOMY 13:5

And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Here is a line drawn to testify our faithfulness to GOD. To wink at the daring attempt of anyone that strives to seduce us from our attachment to JESUS is the greatest of crimes, and is

in fact taking part with it. What a beautiful picture hath the HOLY GHOST given us of the zeal of *Phinehas* on a similar occasion, and what a blessed commendation follows it: Numbers 25:7. 13. But Reader, when you have looked at the zeal of *Phinehas*, call to mind what is said of Him whom *Phinehas* typified. Isaiah 59:17, 18. John 2:17.

DEUTERONOMY 13:6-10

If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; (7) *Namely*, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth; (8) Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: (9) But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. (10) And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

I include these verses within one general observation, to preserve the thread of the narration unbroken. I beg the Reader to observe with me, the striking expression made use of in this precept; after, all the tender relations and charities of life are enumerated, the man of GOD, adds, the friend, which is as a man's own soul; intimating what our dear LORD taught, that even our own flesh, the eye, or the right hand; the one must be plucked out and the other cut off, if either come in competition with our attachment to our covenant GOD in CHRIST. For who is so near or so dear as he that is a Brother born for adversity, or the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother? Reader! is JESUS indeed thus precious to you?

If so, no secret or open temptations will be sufficient to rob you of your happiness, or your GOD of his glory. See those Scriptures, Proverbs 17:17. 18:24. Matthew 5:29, 30. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

DEUTERONOMY 13:11

And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.

How often this promise is fulfilled and fulfilling in the sad examples around, who shall number?

DEUTERONOMY 13:12-18

If thou shalt hear *say* in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, (13) *Certain* men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; (14) Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, *if it be* truth, *and* the thing certain, *that* such abomination is wrought among you; (15) Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that *is* therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. (16) And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again. (17) And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers; (18) When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day, to do *that which is* right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.

The sacred writer rises by a gradation from the sin of individuals to that of a whole city, and here in this instance, like as in the case of Sodom, GOD is so jealous of his honor,

that rather than his glory shall be tarnished, all shall be swept away with the besom of destruction. Reader, pause over this solemn account, call to remembrance your own apostacy, unbelief, denials of GOD and the like, and then look up to JESUS, as the only means whereby thou art preserved to this day, amidst all the idols which you have set up at various times in the heart. Oh, how precious is it to behold that LAMB of GOD, which hath taken away the sins of his people. John 1:29.

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MY soul! behold to what temptations thou art exposed, not only from false prophets and false teachers, but also from false friends and relations. How hath the GOD of this word blinded the minds of men and brought them over to his interests! How doth that prince of the power of the air, as he is called by the apostle, still work in the children of disobedience! And how doth he govern them, direct them, and influence them, by his secret insinuations, to dishonour GOD themselves, and prompt others by their counsel and example! Are not evil spirits and evil men of every description and character his ministers? And what are all those acts of men which we behold going on in life, in drunken clubs, riotous pastimes, revels, banquetings, interpreters of dreams, fortune-telling, and the like, but so many sabbaths of his, and festivals to draw souls aside from the LORD GOD of their fathers. "My Soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor be not thou united." But dearest LORD! arm me with thy grace, and the power of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that I may flee from idolatry, and be found among the number of

the faithful, in cleaving to thee, O LORD, with full purpose of heart.

CHAPTER 14

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

DEUTERONOMY 14:1-2

Ye *are* the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead. (2) For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

There is a vast deal of gospel in this, and if read under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST; with an eye to the covenant mercies of GOD in CHRIST, it will not fail to bring sweet comfort to the soul. My brother! let me ask you or rather beg you to ask your own heart, are you of the children of the LORD your GOD? Are you distinguished from the ungodly world in being set apart for GOD's glory, the purchase of JESUS's blood, the subject of the HOLY GHOST's work? If you say *yes* to these and the like questions, will you not say also, I am distinguished no less by his grace from all the ungodly customs of a world professedly at enmity with God. Oh! for that sweet evidence which JESUS points at: John 15:18, 19. If I were to detain the

Reader any longer upon those two verses, it would be just to remark to him, that the HOLY GHOST hath graciously drawn the line of distinction between believers and unbelievers, at the loss of friends. While they sorrow as those that have no hope, because if they lose their earthly father they know nothing of an heavenly one; true believers in CHRIST JESUS know, that if all earthly connections cease, their FATHER, their Saviour, their sanctifier, ever liveth, who is the father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow. Compare Jeremiah 2:27, with 49:11. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

DEUTERONOMY 14:3-8

Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. (4) These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, (5) The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois. (6) And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, *and* cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat. (7) Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; *as* the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; *therefore they are* unclean unto you. (8) And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it *is* unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.

Concerning these precepts we had them before in Leviticus 11:2. to the Commentary on which I refer, and shall only just observe upon the repetition of them here; that though since the coming of the LORD JESUS nothing is unclean in itself which GOD hath cleansed; and, as the apostle saith, every creature of GOD is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, when it is sanctified by the word of GOD and prayer; yet, though JESUS'S followers are called unto liberty, they dare not, they cannot indeed, neither do they desire to use that liberty for an occasion to the flesh. Reader!

is JESUS your portion? Do you know what it is to eat spiritually of his flesh, and to drink spiritually of his blood? If so, you are but little concerned what perishing food your perishing body is sustained with. 1 Timothy 4:3-5. Galatians 5:13. Romans 14:2, 3. 17. 21.

DEUTERONOMY 14:9-21

These ye shall eat of all that *are* in the waters: all that have fins and scales shall ye eat: (10) And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it *is* unclean unto you. (11) *Of* all clean birds ye shall eat. (12) But these *are they* of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, (13) And the gledge, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind, (14) And every raven after his kind, (15) And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, (16) The little owl, and the great owl, and the swan, (17) And the pelican, and the gier eagle, and the cormorant, (18) And the stork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat. (19) And every creeping thing that flieth *is* unclean unto you: they shall not be eaten. (20) *But of* all clean fowls ye may eat. (21) Ye shall not eat *of* any thing that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that *is* in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

The same observations will meet us here concerning the food of fish and of birds, as under the foregoing of beasts. Spiritually considered, and with an eye to the gospel dispensation, the whole are of importance, meaning that all uncleanness is forbidden: and these things are not only commanded to be abstained from in the deed, but even in the very word: and not once to be named among the LORD's heritage, as becometh saints. Ephesians 5:3.

DEUTERONOMY 14:22-26

Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. (23) And thou shalt eat before the

LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. (24) And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; *or* if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: (25) Then shalt thou turn *it* into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: (26) And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

It is delightful to remark what provision God hath made for his ministers, for his poor, for those who are by his providence brought into straits and difficulties. That is an universal precept and as fully to be observed now, as when it was at first given. Deuteronomy 15:11.

DEUTERONOMY 14:27

And the Levite that *is* within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

It is pleasing to observe the care God hath for the Levite. Was not this with an eye to JESUS?

DEUTERONOMY 14:28-29

At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay *it* up within thy gates: (29) And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which *are* within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

GOD is a bountiful master. He giveth liberally and well may his people. Reader? I have found the truth of that saying; Proverbs 11:24.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 15

CONTENTS

We have in this Chapter a continuation of Moses's discourse. Here are contained, the order for the release of debtors every seventh year: cautions to the people not to withhold lending to their needy brethren, on account of the year of release

being at hand: some particularities respecting the Hebrew servant, and concerning the offering of the firstlings of their cattle to GOD.

DEUTERONOMY 15:1-2

At the end of *every* seven years thou shalt make a release. (2)
And this *is* the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbour shall release *it*; he shall not exact *it* of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release.

I call upon the Reader in a very particular manner in the opening of this chapter, to remember the motto which I have so often endeavored to bring to his recollection, that *Moses wrote of CHRIST*; for here JESUS is evidently preached; and if the HOLY GHOST shall be mercifully pleased to reveal him to the Reader's view, he may and will discover, so much of the LORD CHRIST in this chapter, as will prove to him, that the law is our schoolmaster unto CHRIST. Let the Reader observe, in the account of this year of release, that it is called *the LORD'S release*. And what is the release of poor insolvent debtors to the laws of GOD, when by sin they are rendered totally incapable of paying what they owe both to the law and justice of GOD, and they are through the infinite mercy of GOD'S covenant love in JESUS, justified from all things, and though bond sinners, are set at happy liberty in CHRIST JESUS; what is such a deliverance and freedom, but the LORD'S release—GOD'S acceptable year of salvation? Oh! thou dear and precious Redeemer! who doth not, or who will not see thee in thy gracious character, when thou didst declare that the year of thy redeemed was come, when thou camest to set at liberty them that were bruised, and to let the oppressed go free? Luke 4:18, 19.

DEUTERONOMY 15:3

Of a foreigner thou mayest exact *it again*: but *that* which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release;

What is a foreigner? Paul hath told us, Ephesians 2:12. Reader! do you not see from hence, that covenant blessings, and covenant mercies, are peculiar blessings and mercies. LORD! give me grace to be very earnest in searching for the tokens of being interested in the covenant; and then, grace to prize them in proportion to their infinite importance,. Reader! examine yourself by that mark, Romans 8:14. Read also with it, Romans 9:4-8.

DEUTERONOMY 15:4-5

Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to possess it: (5) Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day.

Spiritually considered, what a mercy would this be, when that scripture shall be fulfilled, in which it is said, GOD's people shall all be righteous; Isaiah 60:21. In JESUS the very poorest are so. But it should seem to refer to the latter day glory. Who doth not join in that prayer of the Psalmist, Psalm 53:6?

DEUTERONOMY 15:6

For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.

Is not this strictly true, in gospel days, when the servants of JESUS impart of their golden treasure, the word of GOD, to the darkened nations of the earth? What loan is like this? And

what power over men is equal to that which, under GOD's teaching, brings them into captivity to the law of CHRIST? 2 Corinthians 9:12-14.

DEUTERONOMY 15:7-8

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: (8) But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth.

Reader! dwell particularly on that endearing word, *thy brother*, while reading this precept. Then, turn thy thoughts to JESUS, *a brother born for adversity*; and call to mind, in every instance of a real brother in JESUS who is in distress, that he is his image, and representative. Read that scripture with this; and may GOD the HOLY GHOST give energy to it, both in your mind and mine. Few have ever entered into the full meaning of it. Matthew 25:40.

DEUTERONOMY 15:9-10

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. (10) Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

What a gracious provision hath the LORD of our salvation made, in guarding against evil! The heart is wicked, and David saith of himself that it was the transgression of the wicked which spake within his own heart, that showed him the fear of GOD was not before him. Psalm 36:1. And Paul

confesseth for himself, that until the law came, in all its spirituality and power, as extending to the thoughts of the heart, he did not know sin, Romans 7:7. Reader! what are your views of this subject?

DEUTERONOMY 15:11

For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

Reader! look around thee, and behold this day how GOD'S word is verified. Blessed JESUS! give me grace to keep in view thine unequalled poverty, and to consider the path of honest humble poverty as dignified by thy bright example. 2 Corinthians 8:9.

DEUTERONOMY 15:12

And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

Observe, it is a *brother* that is here spoken of: one included in the covenant promises. To every one of this character there is a year of release, whether male or female. Colossians 3:11.

DEUTERONOMY 15:13-14

And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: (14) Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: *of that* wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.

And doth not JESUS when he sends forth his brethren in the freedom of his salvation, send them forth enriched with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS? Ephesians 1:3.

DEUTERONOMY 15:15

And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

Sweet remembrance! LORD give me grace ever to keep in view the wormwood and the gall, that the honey and the honeycomb of the gospel, even JESUS himself, may be the more precious to my soul. Song Of Solomon 1:4.

DEUTERONOMY 15:16-18

And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; (17) Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust *it* through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. (18) It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant *to thee*, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.

Do I not see JESUS in this scripture? Was it not him who though LORD of all, and equal with the FATHER, yet made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant? And was it not JESUS whose ear was thrust through to be the servant of JEHOVAH in redemption work forever, until all his people are brought home to glory. Dearest LORD! oh! communicate to my soul unceasing grace, unremitting knowledge, to contemplate thee as cheerfully engaging in the service of thy FATHER, when accomplishing the great ends of salvation. Oh! do thou give to me a portion of the same humble spirit, that I may cry out with one of old, 'Truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds.' Psalm 116: 16.

DEUTERONOMY 15:19-22

All the firstling males that come of thy herd and of thy flock thou shalt sanctify unto the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep. (20) Thou shalt eat *it* before the LORD thy God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, thou and thy household. (21) And if there be *any* blemish therein, *as if it be* lame, or blind, *or have* any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God. (22) Thou shalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean *person shall eat it* alike, as the roebuck, and as the hart.

Here is a repetition of the law concerning the redemption of the firstlings of the flock. See Exodus 13:2. 15. But let not the Reader overlook the grand object intended from it. JESUS is the first-born among many brethren. He was devoted to the LORD'S service from the womb. And how highly expedient was it that his holiness and immaculate purity should be represented by an unblemished offering. Reader! GOD the HOLY GHOST give you and me grace, that our poor offerings may all be brought with an eye to JESUS! Malachi 1:13, 14.

DEUTERONOMY 15:23

Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 16

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

DEUTERONOMY 16:1-8

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. (2) Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there. (3) Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life. (4) And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coast seven days; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning. (5) Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee: (6) But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. (7) And thou shalt roast and eat *it* in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. (8) Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day *shall be* a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work *therein*.

The HOLY GHOST hath evidently shown his divine approbation of the observance of the typical representation of JESUS's sufferings and death, as our Paschal Lamb, by the frequent mention of it. This was largely set forth, Exodus 12. but here it is again repeated. It is sweet to the believer to reflect, that in ages so remote, and at so long a period before the coming of JESUS, the representation of our deliverance by him should be shadowed out in the church. Reader! do you really and truly believe what the apostle saith, that CHRIST is our Passover, and that he was sacrificed for us? Oh! then let us keep the feast, and let us eat with holy joy the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth! 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

DEUTERONOMY 16:9-12

Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest *to put* the sickle to the corn. (10) And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: (11) And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there. (12) And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

Reader! is it not a subject of heartfelt satisfaction, and demanding a most grateful acknowledgment to our GOD, that as the observance of the Passover happened at the very time JESUS our Passover was offered upon the cross; so the feast of weeks, which represented the outpouring of the HOLY GHOST, happened at the very time when the blessed SPIRIT came down at first in an open display at the day of Pentecost, upon the minds of the Apostles and first followers of the LORD? Could anything more decidedly point out the wisdom of GOD in this ordination? See Luke 22:1, compared with Acts 2:1.

DEUTERONOMY 16:13-15

Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: (14) And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* within thy gates. (15) Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

Moses doth not repeat in this place what sacrifices were to be observed in keeping this feast of tabernacles. These were particularly appointed. Numbers 29:12.

DEUTERONOMY 16:16-17

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: (17) Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

Here the whole three feasts are brought within one precept for their observance. And who is there but must, in a gospel sense, desire to honour JEHOVAH in the observance of ordinances and means of grace, which keep in view the sacrifice of JESUS, the effusion of the HOLY GHOST, and that GOD hath tabernacled among us in substance of our flesh? These things are indeed great joy to all people. Luke 2:10.

DEUTERONOMY 16:18-20

Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. (19) Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. (20) That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Though it seems that these appointments, were of a civil and political kind, and therefore make a digression from what went before, yet they serve to show the gracious attention of GOD toward his people. Romans 13:1.

DEUTERONOMY 16:21-22

Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee. (22) Neither shalt thou set thee up *any* image; which the LORD thy God hateth.

Is it not astonishing that a people so highly favored of God should need such precepts as these to keep them from idolatry? But alas! even in gospel days, and under a better dispensation, established upon better promises, what a tendency there is to set up the idol under one form or other, in the human heart.

REFLECTIONS

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

others with the same comforts wherewith I myself am comforted of God.

CHAPTER 17

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

DEUTERONOMY 17:1

Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God *any* bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, *or* any evilfavouredness: for that *is* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

I hope the Reader will not overlook, in the frequent notice which he must have made in the several parts of Moses's writings, concerning the unblemished state of the animals to be offered in sacrifice, how exceedingly concerned the HOLY GHOST was, to direct the view of Israel to JESUS, the Lamb without blemish and without spot. For as all the sacrifices of the Jews were types of him, nothing can be more pointed than this one feature. Oh my soul, may it be never thy lot, to offer the blind and the lame in sacrifice! Malachi 1:8.

DEUTERONOMY 17:2-7

If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, (3) And hath gone and served other gods, and

worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; (4) And it be told thee, and thou hast heard *of it*, and enquired diligently, and, behold, *it be true, and the thing certain, that* such abomination is wrought in Israel: (5) Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. (6) At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. (7) The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

Observe, how tenacious the LORD GOD was of his people's faithfulness, and how exemplary the punishment of idolatry. Oh! that many in the present hour, who are tempting the Israel of GOD by apostacy, would lay this to heart. 2 Timothy 3:6.

DEUTERONOMY 17:8-13

If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; (9) And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: (10) And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: (11) According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, *to* the right hand, nor *to* the left. (12) And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the

evil from Israel. (13) And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

The apostle Paul from the case of the presumptuous man here noticed, takes occasion to draw a very striking inference in his Epistle to the Hebrews, in those who tread underfoot the SON of GOD, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and are guilty of doing despite to the SPIRIT of grace. When the law is thus spiritualized and explained by the gospel, and the apostle's authority in this instance certainly justifies its being done, it is very sweet and delightful. See Hebrews 10:28, 29.

DEUTERONOMY 17:14

When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me;

GOD foreseeing what Israel would do, makes a provision for their conduct. But as GOD was their king, the very idea of desiring another was rebellious. See 1 Samuel 12:1-19. Hosea 8:4.

DEUTERONOMY 17:15

Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother.

Reader! is there not somewhat here which hath an eye to JESUS? Is he not of our brethren? Is he not indeed our king? Zechariah 9:9.

DEUTERONOMY 17:16

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

JESUS chose the humblest of animals when he rode triumphant to the temple. Matthew 21:5.

DEUTERONOMY 17:17

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

Solomon's transgression of this precept cost him very dear. 1 Kings 11:1-3.

DEUTERONOMY 17:18-20

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites: (19) And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: (20) That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left: to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

Observe, it was not enough to have it written *for* him, he must do it with his own hand: and the highest honour he could arrive at, was the sacred employment here enjoined him. But this was not all. Writing it was not enough, he was to meditate therein. Reader! in how many families is the word of GOD a reproach, when the Bible is made to rest upon their shelves unused from day to day. Will not God's word be a swift witness against such in the day of judgment? Blessed

JESUS! may thy word dwell in my heart richly in all wisdom, and may it be my meditation all the day.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 18

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

DEUTERONOMY 18:1-2

The priests the Levites, *and* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. (2) Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD *is* their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

The separation of the priests and Levites, evidently shows in what light GOD views his servants who minister in holy things. How much is it to be wished, that all such were indeed set apart, both by the divine appointment and ordination of the LORD, and from the necessity of worldly commerce with man, for these things bring a snare. This precept and the LORD'S provision for his priests and Levites we have before: Numbers 18:9-11.

DEUTERONOMY 18:3

And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether *it be* ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.

This sacrifice was a peace offering. See Chap. 12:6.

DEUTERONOMY 18:4-5

The firstfruit *also* of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. (5) For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

The apostle Paul gives the best comment upon this passage, and indeed the subject in general: He that waiteth at the altar should be partaker of the altar. 1 Corinthians 9:1-14. I would only observe upon it, that as the LORD himself hath undertaken by this precept to provide for his servants, bad must be the mind that refuseth to comply: and, on the other hand, most unworthy must be that servant, who takes advantage of this, to exact from his brethren more than what is just and right.

DEUTERONOMY 18:6-8

And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the LORD shall choose; (7) Then he shall minister in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites *do*, which stand there before the LORD. (8) They shall have like portions to eat, beside that which cometh of the sale of his patrimony.

There is a great tenderness manifested of the LORD'S attention in this precept, in the provision for the free-will service of the LORD'S ministers. Oh! do thou blessed SPIRIT, who hath the hearts of thy people at thy command, incline many such in our day to be instant in the work, to win souls to JESUS. 2 Timothy 4:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14

When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. (10) There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that

useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, (11) Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. (12) For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. (13) Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. (14) For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so *to do*.

It is wonderful to observe, how much Moses was led to speak to the people against the idolatry of the neighboring nations around them. As if the LORD meant to convey by the frequency of his precepts on this subject, the extreme jealousy he had for his honour. I cannot help adding, from the view here given of GOD's displeasure, at the pretended diviners of what is to come, how cautious our children should be made of listening to the pretended prognostications of modern fortune-tellers. Alas! that such ignorance should have remained in the world to the present period! What Paul saith of the ignorance of preceding ages in general, may, by a parity of reasoning, be peculiarly applied to this part of the science in the present. "The times of such ignorance GOD hath winked at, but now hath commanded all men everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30.

DEUTERONOMY 18:15

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;

Of all the striking prophecies in GOD's word, directly and plainly pointing to the LORD JESUS, this seems to be among the highest. And so interesting is it, that we find it spoken of in quotations frequently. It is quoted by *Peter*, Acts 3:22. *by*

Stephen: Acts 7:37. and by the people at large, after the miracle JESUS manifested, in multiplying the bread: John 6:14. But while I beg the Reader not to lose sight of this, because it certainly is among the strongest if not the very clearest prophecy concerning the LORD JESUS, which is in the whole law of GOD: I do beg of him also, not to overlook two or three most striking distinctions of character, by which this prophecy pointed him out. As for example: he was to be raised up by GOD, not of himself, for no man taketh this honour unto himself but he that was called of GOD, as was Aaron. Hebrews 5:4, 5. He was to be raised up of his brethren. Dearest JESUS! though thou wast "GOD over all, blessed for ever," yet didst thou condescend to take upon thee our nature, and to be made like unto thy brethren, that thou mightest be a merciful and faithful high priest, Hebrews 2:16-18. And he was to be like Moses; that is, in the greatness and authority in which he came, only with this striking distinction which the apostle hath drawn; Moses was the servant, but JESUS the LORD himself. Hebrews 3:2, 3.

DEUTERONOMY 18:16-17

According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. (17) And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken.

We have an awful account of this: Exodus 20:18, 19.

DEUTERONOMY 18:18

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

Are not all the sweet words which we hear of GOD spoken to us by our LORD JESUS CHRIST? Doth not that verse decide this great and precious truth? John 1:18.

DEUTERONOMY 18:19

And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require *it* of him.

The best comment upon this passage, is the great question Paul asketh the Church of the Hebrews, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Hebrews 2:2, 3.

DEUTERONOMY 18:20-22

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. (21) And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? (22) When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

And what is the distinguishing mark to the church now? See those two sweet scriptures: Isaiah 8:20. Romans 8:14. To which I add a third: "It is the spirit that beareth witness, because the SPIRIT is truth." 1 John 5:6.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD pass by numberless other passages, how interesting soever they may be in themselves, to attend to this most engaging one, which contains the FATHER's promise of raising up a prophet to his people, whom they should hear; because his blessed SPIRIT is pledged and engaged to make such

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

CHAPTER 19

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Our ever adored Redeemer told the Pharisees in the days of his flesh, that on the two great commandments, of the love of GOD and the love of our neighbor, hung all the laws and the

prophets; and accordingly, Moses having in the foregoing chapters largely pointed out the first of these, proceeds now, in this chapter, to enforce the duties of the second table of the commandments.

DEUTERONOMY 19:1-2

When the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; (2) Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

This is a very sweet chapter if read under the HOLY GHOST'S teaching, and spiritually considered as leading to JESUS. And I take occasion here again in the opening of it to remind the reader once more, that it was of JESUS Moses wrote. If the reader will consult Exodus 21:13. he will there find, GOD'S gracious promise concerning his merciful provision for sins of inadvertency in unintentional murder. And if he will then refer to Deuteronomy 4:41, 42. he will observe this promise fulfilled. I beg the Reader to consult the Commentary on the passages. But when the Reader hath made his observation on these passages, I would call upon him to remark, that the provision here made for the like occasions hath a reference to the state of Israel, *after* that Israel should become settled in Canaan. Yes! in Canaan as well as in the wilderness, it is JESUS alone who is the city of refuge to his people. Reader! do you not know that even in heaven itself JESUS will be the everlasting covering of his people, their house, their habitation, their joy, their all in all to all eternity! Sweetly and securely from their union with his person, their interest in his righteousness, and their acceptance in his blood, are their

souls brought into the everlasting city of refuge, and guarded from every trouble and from every possibility of evil.

DEUTERONOMY 19:3

Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither.

It is said that the Jewish magistrates were very particular respecting the observance of this law, and that once in a year a day was set apart to examine whether the ways which led to the cities of refuge were in good repair, and free from all obstructions; and that the poor fugitive which was fleeing from the avenger, might not be at a loss to know the path, a post of direction was placed at the corner of the road leading to those cities, with the word *Miklat*, that is *refuge*, engraven in great letters upon it. Whether this be literally true I presume not to say; but one thing I know, ministers of the gospel ought to be very diligent to see, not only one day in a year, but every day and all the day, that no stumbling block be placed in the way of a poor sinner, who is fleeing to JESUS for his life. Oh, thou dear Redeemer! how gracious is it that our coasts are so divided in our land, that every way there is an opening to thee in thy blood and righteousness! Blessed be the LORD! his word is nigh unto us, and his invitation forever sounding in our ears. Oh!, for grace to flee unto thee, thou LAMB of GOD which takest away the sin of thy people. Romans 10:8. John 1:29.

DEUTERONOMY 19:4-7

And this *is* the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past; (5) As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the

axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live: (6) Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he *was* not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past. (7) Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.

It is beautiful to remark the rich provision of gospel mercies, not only for sins of notorious perverseness, but of ignorance. Alas! who can tell how oft he offendeth! But in JESUS; whom those cities of refuge represented, there is alone security for all. 1 John 1:7.

DEUTERONOMY 19:8-10

And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coast, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers; (9) If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three: (10) That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and *so* blood be upon thee.

It is worthy remark, that this precept of forming three cities more, in case of the enlargement of Israel's borders, was never fulfilled as it respected Israel only. But, had it not an eye to the enlargement of the church, when both Jew and Gentile were brought into one? See Isaiah 54:2, 3. And in this sense was not the precept intended to show, that the cities of refuge were as many to the Gentiles as to the Jews, and all typically referred to one and the same blessed object? Colossians 1:20.

DEUTERONOMY 19:11-13

But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: (12) Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. (13) Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away *the guilt of innocent blood* from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

To explain those verses upon gospel principles, we must have recourse to what was originally said concerning murder: Genesis 9:6. There should seem from hence, to be an open and daring attack upon the majesty of GOD himself in every instance of premeditated murder. Blood must therefore answer for blood. But this extends only to the punishment of the present state. In relation to the privileges of salvation by JESUS, we know that there is redemption in his blood for all manner of sin; and even some among the crucifiers of the LORD JESUS, were called by the apostle to the participation of this rich mercy on the day of Pentecost. Acts. 2:23, 38, 39.

DEUTERONOMY 19:14

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

This precept is again repeated and a curse annexed to it: Deuteronomy 27:17.

DEUTERONOMY 19:15-20

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. (16) If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him *that which is wrong*; (17) Then both the men, between whom the controversy *is*, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; (18) And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, *if*

the witness *be* a false witness, *and* hath testified falsely against his brother; (19) Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. (20) And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

The wisdom of those laws is too obvious to need a comment; they have been already noticed: Numbers 35:30. But what a sweet thought is it to the believer's experience, that in divine things there are the Holy Three which bear record in heaven, and there is the evidence of three which carry a corresponding testimony to his heart; namely, the HOLY GHOST as the *first* great witness in the spirits of his people; his sacred word as the *second*; and the believer's heart as the *third*, in which the evidence is given; and all these three agree in one, in their united testimony to the truth as it is in JESUS. 2 Corinthians 13:1.

DEUTERONOMY 19:21

And thine eye shall not pity; *but* life *shall go* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Was not the suretyship of JESUS pointed out in this law? Did not JESUS when redeeming his people, give an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth? Was not this literally indeed the case, when he who knew no sin became sin for us, and was made a curse for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him?

REFLECTIONS

HERE let me gaze on thee again and again, thou dearest JESUS, who art indeed the only City of refuge for all thy people, and who art placed in every avenue and way by which

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

CHAPTER 20

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This chapter relates to the military government of Israel among those who were more immediately appointed to fight the LORD'S battles. Here are directions for their conduct, inspiring them with courage and making provision for those whose hearts failed them. While this chapter may be read with much profit, if considered with an eye to our spiritual

foes in the cause of GOD, soldiers, and those whose profession in arms calls them to warfare, may derive under the HOLY GHOST'S teaching, much to animate them in their conflicts, while fighting under the captain of their salvation, CHRIST JESUS.

DEUTERONOMY 20:1

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, *and* a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Observe the two great arguments made use of in this verse to give confidence to the people, the presence of their GOD and the past experience the people had had of his power, exercised towards them in their deliverance from Egypt. Let the Reader consider this in a spiritual sense, and beg for grace to make use of it in all the circumstances of his warfare. If I have JESUS with me that's all I need, and if I can look back and behold his deliverance in past extremities, that becomes a sure pledge for all future occasions. See that sweet scripture: Isaiah 33:20-22 .

DEUTERONOMY 20:2-4

And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, (3) And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; (4) For the LORD your God *is* he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

There appears a great propriety in the appointment of GOD's priests to encourage GOD's people. They who are supposed to be most frequent at a throne of grace may be supposed to

know most of the mind of the LORD. And are not ministers peculiarly called upon amidst the spiritual army of the LORD JESUS, to be always forward in animating the faithful soldiers of JESUS, to be strong in the LORD and in the power of his might. Reader! do you not look beyond both ministers and people to contemplate JESUS in all this, as the great High Priest of our profession, going on before, conquering and to conquer, and calling upon his holy army to follow him to glory? Hebrews 12:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 20:5-9

And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man *is there* that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. (6) And what man *is he* that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not *yet* eaten of it? let him *also* go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. (7) And what man *is there* that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. (8) And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man *is there that is* fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart. (9) And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

The cases here stated of exception, to disqualify from war, seem to have been intended in great mercy, that men of timid minds might find excuse from war, and yet not incur the reproach of their brethren. But is there not a spiritual sense veiled under it? We cannot follow JESUS in the regeneration to the holy war, unless we deny self in every point of view, and take up his cross. See that Scripture of the LORD'S own words upon this subject: Luke 14:25-27.

DEUTERONOMY 20:10-12

When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. (11) And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, *that* all the people *that is* found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. (12) And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

Observe the grace of GOD beautifully set forth in the proclamation made to sinners, in the gospel of salvation. If sinners will throw down their arms and receive the LORD JESUS all shall be well. It is only the incorrigible and contumacious on whom ruin will fall. How ought the ministers of JESUS to be unceasingly employed as his ambassadors, in beseeching sinners to be reconciled, and to be at peace with GOD? 2 Corinthians 5:20.

DEUTERONOMY 20:13-15

And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: (14) But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, *even* all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. (15) Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities *which are* very far off from thee, which *are* not of the cities of these nations.

Is not this total destruction of the enemies of the church, a lively emblem of the everlasting overthrow of the ungodly in the day of GOD's vengeance? 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

DEUTERONOMY 20:16-18

But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth: (17) But thou shalt utterly destroy them; *namely*, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded

thee: (18) That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

The nations here excepted from mercy, are evidently types of the open and determined foes of the church of JESUS. There can be no coalition, no agreement between CHRIST and Belial. The seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent have an everlasting war. LORD! grant that under the supposed idea of mercy, I may never fancy myself more charitable than my GOD, and thus be found cherishing in my bosom the sworn foes to GOD and his CHRIST. Reader! is there not another instruction of a spiritual nature to be gathered from this passage? Instead of looking wholly *without* to the enemies of JESUS for the destruction of the Canaanites, may not you and I look *within*, and behold in the lusts of our nature both the foes of GOD and of our own souls also? And shall you and I give quarter to these deadly enemies of our peace, and which have nailed JESUS to the cross? Shall we wish to save any alive of this kind that breatheth? Oh my GOD! root them out and utterly destroy them, and do then reign alone in my heart, the LORD of every passion.

DEUTERONOMY 20:19-20

When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field *is* man's *life*) to employ *them* in the siege: (20) Only the trees which thou knowest that they *be* not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

There seems much mercy in this precept, and it is not confined we may suppose to trees only, but of a general

tendency, in war to preserve all that can be consistently done, that there may be no waste of any of the good things of GOD'S providence. It is one of the distinguishing characters of the gospel church, that neither violence nor destruction shall be heard within her borders: Isaiah 60:18.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 21

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

DEUTERONOMY 21:1-4

If *one* be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, *and* it be not known who hath slain him: (2) Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which *are* round about him that is slain: (3) And it shall be, *that* the city *which is* next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take an heifer, which hath not been wrought with, *and* which hath not drawn in the yoke; (4) And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley:

I pause at these verses to remark the particularity of feature in the beast, which was doomed as a victim on this occasion; that it must be one which hath not been wrought with. Is not this typical of him who was doomed to have his blood shed as expiatory, to do away human offences, both those that are known and those that are secret? Did not the SON of GOD, with whom nothing had been wrought of labour or of sin, come down to the valley of this our world, and was he not

taken by the elders and rulers of the people, and crucified and slain?

DEUTERONOMY 21:5-9

And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them the LORD thy God hath chosen to minister unto him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be *tried*: (6) And all the elders of that city, *that are* next unto the slain *man*, shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: (7) And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen *it*. (8) Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. (9) So shalt thou put away the *guilt of* innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do *that which is* right in the sight of the LORD.

Was not this washing over the head of the beast; in allusion to the same thing as the high priest on the day of atonement? And in the address to GOD, in which the distinguishing feature of character, as the Redeemer of his people, is expressly kept in view; was it not, as all the expressions of the law, intimating that without shedding of blood there was no remission? And if so, doth not the Reader behold in all this JESUS doing away all our murderous sins, by which we have destroyed ourselves, (though from our blindness like the one slain in the land, and it be not known by whom), we long remain unconscious of it. See Leviticus 16:29. and with the apostle's commentary upon it, Hebrews 9:7-12.

DEUTERONOMY 21:10-14

When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, (11) And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; (12) Then thou shalt bring her home to thine

house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; (13) And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. (14) And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

I pass over the natural history of the things here mentioned, to attend to the spiritual doctrine which seems to be veiled under it. And here, methinks, I see the LORD JESUS gathering from the Gentile world a bride for himself, to form one with the Jewish. Surely we are his right by lawful captivity, for we were enemies to GOD by wicked works, and if he hath brought us home to his house, we desire grace to renounce all our former idolatry, by the marks of paring the nails and shaving the head, and putting off the old man of our captivity which is corrupt, and putting on the new man, which after GOD, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Dearest JESUS! do thou betroth me to thyself in faithfulness, in loving-kindness, in judgment, and in mercy! And let me remain in thine house forever, for thou hatest putting away: so shall the king desire the beauty of his spouse, for he is thy LORD, (I would say) and may my soul worship him! Psalm 45:11.

DEUTERONOMY 21:15-17

If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, *both* the beloved and the hated; and *if* the firstborn son be hers that was hated: (16) Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit *that* which he hath, *that* he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, *which is indeed* the firstborn: (17) But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his.

There is somewhat beside the moral sense of this passage, of a spiritual signification connected with it to be understood. As in the case of the great Father of the Israelites, the LORD himself was pleased to determine even before the children were born, that the elder should serve the younger, lest Israel should be led by caprice to do that which the LORD in wisdom was only competent to determine, the LORD passeth it into a law to prevent all abuses on this ground. But the Reader will not forget to observe the extent of the precept in this instance, it reached only to *temporal* possessions. LORD, let that be my portion which Paul speaks of: Ephesians 1:3.

DEUTERONOMY 21:18-21

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: (19) Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; (20) And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. (21) And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

It is very worthy observation; how exceedingly jealous the LORD hath manifested himself for the honor of his law. The ties of nature were all to give way when the honour of God stood in competition. See Zechariah 13:3.

DEUTERONOMY 21:22-23

And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: (23) His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

Whether the former observations in this chapter, which I ventured to make concerning the ever blessed JESUS, be well founded or not, yet here I presume to speak with more confidence; for the HOLY GHOST hath graciously taught the church by the ministry of his servant the apostle, that CHRIST was made a curse for us, and in him this law had its grand completion. Precious JESUS! didst thou indeed hang on the accursed tree, at once a spectacle to heaven and earth, as if undeserving the notice or regard of either, when in thy spotless soul thou hadst done no sin, and no guile was found in thy mouth, and this on purpose that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee! Oh matchless love! Oh unequalled condescension! LORD! enable me to carry about with me in my body the dying of the LORD JESUS, and may thy life, O JESUS, be manifested in my mortal flesh. Galatians 3:13. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

REFLECTIONS

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

But chiefly, Reader, in the perusal of this Chapter, may you and I derive grace from the great glorifier of JESUS, to behold him shadowed forth in those services of the law. Blessed spirit

of truth! do thou guide our souls into all truth. Say, Holy LORD! is it not JESUS whose blood shed in the valley of this world, opens a source for the discovery of all our soul-murdering transgressions, by which we destroy ourselves? And is he not our peace in making peace, for us with our GOD, with our consciences, with our neighbours, with the world, with all things? Is he not the holy Warrior which hath conquered sin and death, and brought home our souls as captives to his salvation? Is it not he, who, for the love he hath to our persons, hath betrothed us to himself forever and ever? And was he not content to be made a curse for us when he hung on the tree and sustained the whole pressure of our sins, that in his righteousness we might be blessed! Hail, holy, blessed, dearest JESUS! be thou my strength and song, for thou art become my salvation; my soul doth magnify the LORD, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my Saviour!

CHAPTER 22

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

DEUTERONOMY 22:1-4

Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. (2) And if thy brother *be* not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and

thou shalt restore it to him again. (3) In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. (4) Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift *them* up again.

The law given by Moses carries with it in every precept the most decisive evidences of its coming from God, for the whole speaks in a language not to be mistaken. But while I beg the Reader to notice this, I would beg of him also to remark with me, how JESUS in his commentary on the law of his servant Moses, carries up the precept to the gospel standard, in his unequalled manner. *Here Moses* is enjoined to point out the mercy to the brethren of Israel and their cattle. *There*, the LORD JESUS points out the mercy he would have shown to our enemies. See Matthew 5:43-48.

DEUTERONOMY 22:5

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Probably this precept was meant to distinguish God's people from their idolatrous neighbours, among whom, and probably for the gratification of their lusts, the distinction of the sex in their dress was not preserved. And it is possible, it might have a further object of a religious and spiritual nature. The apostle seems to have the same idea in view, when he speaks of the different dresses of the sexes in his Epistle to the Corinthians. 1 Corinthians 11:12, 13.

DEUTERONOMY 22:6-7

If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be* young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young: (7) *But* thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and *that* thou mayest prolong *thy* days.

All I would desire the Reader to remark with me upon this precept is this, that if a gracious GOD judged it proper, to give such a demonstration of his mercy, over all his works, so as to issue a precept to his people to be merciful; what an argument is this for believers in JESUS to repose themselves with full confidence on a GOD so gracious and merciful. Doth GOD take care for oxen? saith the apostle: or to use an higher authority; If GOD so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more shall he not clothe you, O ye of little faith! Matthew 6:30.

DEUTERONOMY 22:8

When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.

So sacred in the sight of GOD was the shedding of blood. No doubt, in all these precepts, the grand object was, to keep in view the blood of atonement by the LORD JESUS.

DEUTERONOMY 22:9-12

Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. (10) Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. (11) Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, *as* of woollen and linen together. (12) Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest *thyself*.

Similar commands we meet with in Leviticus 19:19. Certainly there must have been somewhat of a spiritual meaning couched under these things; and what more likely to be intended by it, than that the heart should not be sown with diverse doctrine's: that the man who plows spiritually, should not mingle anything idolatrous with the true worship of the GOD of Israel: and put not on the woollen garment of his own poor righteousness, with the linen robe of GOD's righteousness. Precious JESUS! do I not see in this, a clear reference that the Souls of thy people, may never mingle ought of their own, with the perfect and complete robe of thy salvation; which, like the garment that covered thy sacred body in the days of thy flesh, was without seam, wove from the top throughout. John 19:23. And LORD, far be it from me, to make fringes to thy vesture, or fancy my poor offerings can add to thy complete glory, in the great work of salvation! 1 Corinthians 3:11-13.

DEUTERONOMY 22:13-21

If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, (14) And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: (15) Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth *the tokens of* the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: (16) And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; (17) And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech *against her*, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these *are the tokens of* my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. (18) And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; (19) And they shall amerce him in an hundred *shekels* of silver, and give *them* unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. (20) But if this thing be true, *and the tokens of* virginity be not

found for the damsel: (21) Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.

It is interesting to behold, how great provision the LORD was pleased to make, in order that the Israel of GOD, should be as distinguished among the unclean nations around them, as the LORD had distinguished them from others by his grace. And if we consider the perpetual tenderness which the LORD manifested towards them, to keep them from spiritual fornication, we shall only be led to honour yet more the jealousy of God over his people. Hosea 3:3.

DEUTERONOMY 22:22-30

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (23) If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; (24) Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. (25) But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: (26) But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; *there is* in the damsel no sin *worthy* of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so *is* this matter: (27) For he found her in the field, *and* the betrothed damsel cried, and *there was* none to save her. (28) If a man find a damsel *that is* a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; (29) Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days. (30) A man shall not take his father's wife, nor discover his father's skirt.

Some of the laws in this book of Leviticus, were before given: Leviticus 20:10. The repetition in this place, only serves to intimate their importance. And it is a very solemn consideration, equally important to be regarded under the New Testament as under the Old, that while marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge. Hebrews 13:4.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 23

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

DEUTERONOMY 23:1-6

He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD. (2) A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. (3) An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: (4) Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. (5) Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. (6) Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

The disqualification to the privileges of God's people, is expressed by these marks, which imply defect. Who shall say, except the great searcher of hearts, what are the causes of prevention, to unite souls really and spiritually to the congregation of the LORD. And, perhaps, as the prospect of the holy seed in the person of the Messiah, was the great object unto which all Israel looked forward, with the hope that it might be in their household and family; the LORD was pleased, by this precept, to manifest how important a matter it was, that there should be no intercourse by marriages with the idolatrous neighbours around them. In after ages we find

the breach of this precept deeply lamented by the fathers; see Nehemiah 13:1-3, 23-25.

DEUTERONOMY 23:7-8

Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he *is* thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. (8) The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

It is remarkable from the first, in the instances of the fathers of both houses, Jacob as the head of Israel, and his brother Esau as the head of Edom, how the LORD drew the line of separation: see Malachi 1:2-4.

DEUTERONOMY 23:9

When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

The precept here is comprehensive, and includes all; it is from every wicked thing.

DEUTERONOMY 23:10-14

If there be among you any man, that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp: (11) But it shall be, when evening cometh on, he shall wash *himself* with water: and when the sun is down, he shall come into the camp *again*. (12) Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad: (13) And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: (14) For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

The precept becomes more particular. But it hath a reference to uncleanness of every kind. The sanctity of the camp evidently arose from the divine presence. The apostle makes a very beautiful observation upon it, when describing the absolute necessity of our LORD'S sanctifying the people, when he says, that he suffered without the gate. Hebrews 13:11-13.

DEUTERONOMY 23:15-16

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: (16) He shall dwell with thee, *even* among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him.

Wherefore was this merciful precept introduced here, but to show us, that as the land of Israel was like a city of refuge, none who took shelter in it, should be dragged thence. And is not this spiritual? If you and I have taken shelter from the service of the hard masters we once served, Sin and Satan, and are come to JESUS and the promised land; We must not be given up to our former captivity. If the SON of GOD hath made us free, we shall be free indeed. John 8:36.

DEUTERONOMY 23:17

There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

Is not the same said with respect to spiritual Israel now? Revelation 22:15. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

DEUTERONOMY 23:18

Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD. Proverbs 15:8. And the LORD declares, that he hates robbery for burnt-offering. Isaiah 61:8.

DEUTERONOMY 23:19

Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:

As an Israelite received his inheritance from GOD it was not alienable. Herein we have a type of the promised inheritance in JESUS. Blessed be GOD! this is not forfeitable. I may be poor; I may be in want; I may be compelled to borrow; but my new birth-right in the Redeemer is not mine to sell.

DEUTERONOMY 23:20

Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

The stranger is here introduced in similar circumstances, to show the line of distinguishing grace.

DEUTERONOMY 23:21-23

When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. (22) But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. (23) That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; *even* a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

The LORD'S people were not obliged to vows; but they were obliged, when they had at anytime made them, to their faithful observance. Ecclesiastes 5:2. 4.

DEUTERONOMY 23:24-25

When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put *any* in thy vessel. (25) When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn.

Did not the LORD, by these precepts of freedom, and liberty to partake of the fruits of the vine and of the field one among another, not only teach the brotherly love and affection, by which his people should be known and distinguished: but was it not intended also, to show that our blessings are common blessings, for all freely to partake in the LORD JESUS? The disciples were not reprov'd in the days of our LORD'S flesh, for eating of the ears of corn, as they walked through the fields, but because it was done on the LORD'S day. Matthew 12:2.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! While thou beholdest the many disqualifications, by which men are kept off from the congregation of the LORD'S people, think of thy privileges, and bless GOD that thou art neither an Ammonite nor an Edomite, though a Gentile, and not of the original stock of Israel; and yet permitted to come into the congregation by the new and living way, opened for sinners in the blood and righteousness of JESUS. LORD! give me grace that I may not associate with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them; and may I be always found cleansed from all my pollutions in the blood of JESUS. Dear LORD! I thank thee, that when by thy HOLY SPIRIT, I was enabled to flee to thee, from the rigorous and hard service of Satan; thou hast not given me back again into his power, but

hast graciously promised that sin shall not have dominion over me, for I am no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace. May I not hope, blessed JESUS, that as sin hath reigned unto death, so shall grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD?

CHAPTER 24

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The Chapter before us is a continuation of certain laws, appointed to be observed in certain cases. Here are directions concerning divorces; of the permission, for the newly married to refrain from war; concerning pledges; men-stealers; leprosy; hire of wages; of justice, and of charity.

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. (2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. (3) And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; (4) Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

Our blessed LORD'S comment upon this law throws a full light upon the subject of divorces in general. The permission of such acts, carries with it the evidence of the hardness of the human heart. Matthew 19:8. But what a precious thought is it

to the true believer in JESUS, that his union with him admits of no divorce. No, not even our backsliding, for he saith himself, I have betrothed thee to me forever. And though thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the LORD, Jeremiah 3:1. Hosea 2:19.

DEUTERONOMY 24:5

When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

This precept very properly follows the one respecting divorces. Absence from the object we love begets coolness; and it would be well to be considered by the married, whether much of the infidelity we hear of in common life, doth not begin in this. But whether this be so or not; well I know that the absence of my affections, from the LORD my husband, and the earthly concerns, which so much carry away my soul from frequent communion with JESUS, are the sad causes why my unworthy and unfaithful heart, is living so far from him. Oh! for more constant enjoyment of thy presence, dearest Redeemer!

DEUTERONOMY 24:6

No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh *a man's* life to pledge.

This precept had much of mercy in it, because the nether, or upper mill-stone, was daily needed to grind the borrower's food. But, do I not see here a fence thrown up, to secure to a believer, his inheritance both in the upper and the nether springs of all our mercies in JESUS? Reader, depend upon it, if JESUS be your portion, or as this verse expresseth it, your *life*,

you cannot pledge him, neither can any take him from you. Sweet thought! in all our wants, in all our poverty, borrowings, and distresses, though the creditor be come to take our two sources of comfort from us, in the upper and the nether springs of JESUS'S love; the vessels of grace shall be filled, and we shall have enough and to spare. See that sweet scripture, and read the spiritual illustration of it in proof, 2 Kings 4:1-7.

DEUTERONOMY 24:7

If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.

Beside the cruelty to the body, in selling a child or youth from his friends, there was yet greater cruelty to the soul, in causing an Israelite to be sent out of his land, whereby he was in danger of going after other gods. This was what David so much condemned in Saul's conduct towards him: See 1 Samuel 26:19.

DEUTERONOMY 24:8-9

Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. (9) Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

Leprosy was disease of so singular a nature, and to be treated so differently from all others, that we cannot hesitate to conclude, what both Jewish and Christian writers indeed have all agreed in; that it had a reference to somewhat of a spiritual allusion. The priest, and not the physician, was to be consulted upon it. All the laws concerning it, were of a

religious kind. Seen therefore with an allusion to the sin of the soul, how apt a representation were all the appointments concerning it, which pointed to the atonement by blood, as the only cure. 1 John 1:7. The case of *Miriam* is very striking in point. See Numbers 12:10.

DEUTERONOMY 24:10-13

When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. (11) Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. (12) And if the man *be* poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: (13) In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.

These directions concerning poor debtors, show the mercy of the LORD. Without going into all the minute circumstances of the case, respecting our insolvency towards GOD, I would ask the Reader; whether he doth not discern some very interesting points, which show us our mercies in JESUS. Yes! Reader, however poor, however insolvent, however obliged to give our pledge by day, all the people of JESUS sleep in the sure covering of the LORD's righteousness. It may serve to teach us also, how much these creditors resemble the great and Almighty Creditor, who are blessed in their kind and compassionate remembrance of their poorer brethren. 1 John 3:14.

DEUTERONOMY 24:14-15

Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant *that is* poor and needy, *whether he be* of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that *are* in thy land within thy gates: (15) At his day thou shalt give *him* his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he *is* poor, and setteth

his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.

The justice, to say nothing of the mercy, of this precept, is too obvious. The LORD grant, that no cry of my poor brother, or of a stranger, may ever go up to my GOD against me. Reader! think only what a discordant thing it would be, if while you are sending up a prayer for mercy, another should be sending up a prayer for justice upon your head. Read that scripture: James 5:4.

DEUTERONOMY 24:16

The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

The LORD hath reserved to himself This privilege, of punishing the sin of the fathers upon the children, but he hath no where given this authority to others. Exodus 20:5.

DEUTERONOMY 24:17-18

Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, *nor* of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge: (18) But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

The consciousness of our past ruined state, when in the awakened condition of a poor sinner, a stranger to GOD and to CHRIST, is the best of all possible arguments, to induce compassion to the souls of the unawakened. Oh! that the Reader, if the LORD hath in mercy called him out of darkness and the shadow of death, may feel somewhat of the Psalmist's spirit: Psalm 66:16.

DEUTERONOMY 24:19-22

When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. (20) When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. (21) When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. (22) And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

All these are additional arguments, to manifest the tender mercies of the LORD. We have a beautiful example, of obedience to these precepts in the instance of *Boaz*. And, as in that instance, we have a lively type of the ever-blessed JESUS, I hope the Reader will not fail to consult it in this place and meditate upon it. Ruth 2:15, 16. And are we not strangers, when we glean in the scriptures of JESUS? LORD, do thou command thy servants to let fall handfuls purposely for us, and give us to glean even among the sheaves.

REFLECTIONS

I BESEECH my GOD and Saviour, that he will enlighten the eyes of my understanding, that in reading those precepts of his holy law, I may be led to view somewhat either leading to JESUS, or pointing to him, in every one. If, dearest LORD, thou hast betrothed me to thyself, thou wilt not give me a writing of divorcement, though I am altogether unworthy of thy love, for thou hatest putting away, and thou hast said I shall be thine forever. LORD, give me grace to imitate thy tenderness, and in all my concerns with my poorer brother, forget not that

thou hast condescended to call me thy brother; and even to strangers, may I never forget, that when in the bondage of sin and corruption, thou didst seek me out and free me, I was a stranger in the land of Egypt. Oh! for grace to manifest my love to thee, in the remembrance of all thine afflicted, tried, and distressed family. The LORD JESUS help me by his sweet constraining love, to do by others as he hath done by me; and to put on, as the elect of GOD, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering: that it may be manifest to my own heart, and to all with whom I have to do, that the same mind is in me, which was also in CHRIST JESUS.

CHAPTER 25

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

DEUTERONOMY 25:1-3

If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that *the judges* may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. (2) And it shall be, if the wicked man *be* worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. (3) Forty stripes he may give him, *and* not exceed: lest, *if* he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

No doubt in all instances, strict examination took place before punishment. The limitation of the number of stripes prevented the effects of rigour. The Jews have a tradition, that while the stripes were laying on, the judge of the court read those words of scripture; Deuteronomy 28:58, 59, and Deuteronomy 29:9. And in after ages, Psalm 78:38. The apostle Paul tells us, that he suffered this punishment to the extreme point five times. 2 Corinthians 11:24. But what saith another apostle on the subject; 1 Peter 4:13, 14.

DEUTERONOMY 25:4

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the corn*.

Paul hath given the best comment upon this passage. 1 Corinthians 9:9, 10.

DEUTERONOMY 25:5-10

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. (6) And it shall be, *that* the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother *which is* dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. (7) And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. (8) Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and *if* he stand *to it*, and say, I like not to take her; (9) Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. (10) And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

I venture to think that this precept had in it somewhat more, than merely what is contained in the obvious letter of it. If it be remembered, that the promise of the woman's seed, bruising the serpent's head, had not in those early ages been so clearly and fully revealed, in what stock or tribe the promised seed should spring, this will serve to show, why it was that the whole nation of the Jews were so very anxious to have children. And, therefore, the preserving the name in Israel was principally with this view. But if we turn to the example of *Boaz*, in the case of Ruth, where this precept was fully carried into effect, and read what the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to record concerning this thing: and if we do not forget, at the same time, that Boaz after the flesh, was a progenitor of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; the subject will then open to our view in all its glory. See Ruth 3:9, to the end, and chap. 4 throughout. Blessed JESUS! thou art indeed our near kinsman, our GOD-Redeemer! and thou hast not only married our nature, but hast redeemed our mortgaged inheritance, when all other brethren were incompetent to do it.

DEUTERONOMY 25:11-12

When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets: (12) Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity *her*.

For the honor of women, we should hope this precept was seldom violated, or the punishment made necessary.

DEUTERONOMY 25:13-16

Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. (14) Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. (15) *But* thou shalt have a perfect and just

weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (16) For all that do such things, *and* all that do unrighteously, *are* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

It were much to be wished that these precepts were kept in view by all persons concerned in trade.

DEUTERONOMY 25:17-19

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; (18) How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, *even* all *that were* feeble behind thee, when thou *wast* faint and weary; and he feared not God. (19) Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to possess it, *that* thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget *it*.

This short account of Amalek, and the punishment of that people, comes in very properly upon the close of the foregoing precepts; for it was both a just weight and just measure, that Israel should requite Amalek, for his conduct towards them on their first coming out of Egypt. Exodus 17:14-16. It is worthy remark, how Saul offended the LORD, at least four hundred years after this appointment, in not fully following up the precept: see 1 Samuel 15:2-9. But, I would have the Reader look a little further, than to the mere history of Amalek, and view in it somewhat typical of GOD's people, in their conflicts with the enemies of their salvation, in all ages. Amalek, represents all those foes of our souls, which oppose us as Amalek did Israel, the moment GOD is bringing us out of *spiritual* Egypt. Hence Reader! behold the propriety of utterly destroying them from under heaven. LORD! I would say, enable me to slay all my lusts, all the corruptions both within

and without; all the powers of darkness, and of the world, which oppose my way to thee, thou blessed JESUS!

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 26

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

DEUTERONOMY 26:1-2

And it shall be, when thou *art* come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein; (2) That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put *it* in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.

There seems to have been a double design in this precept. In presenting the first of everything to the LORD, we not only acknowledge the right of his sovereignty, but we deny ourselves. The prophet Micah saith, "My soul desired the first ripe fruit." Micah 7:1. The giving that to GOD, which the heart seems most itself to desire, is therefore a blessed proof of self-denial. But beside these things, is there not an eye to JESUS in this appointment? Is he not expressly called the first fruits by the apostle? 1 Corinthians 15:20. And it is remarkable, that the day the first fruits of barley were to be offered, corresponded to the day when JESUS arose from the grave. And so again, on the day in which the first fruits of the wheat-harvest were presented to the LORD, corresponded to the day when JESUS sent down the first fruits of the HOLY GHOST. Compare Deuteronomy 16. with the Evangelists on the resurrection, and Acts 2:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 26:3

And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us.

Nothing could be more proper, than that every Israelite with his own mouth, should confess that the LORD had fulfilled his promise, in bringing him to the land he had said. Reader! and

will not every true Israelite of the spiritual seed of JESUS say this, when he cometh to that rest, which remaineth for the people of GOD? Hebrews 4:9.

DEUTERONOMY 26:4

And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

JESUS is both our priest, and altar, and offering. It is he which sanctifieth all the gifts of his people.

DEUTERONOMY 26:5

And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish *was* my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:

Jacob was in fact a Syrian, for he lived many years in Padan-aram. And Laban, his father-in-law, was a Syrian, consequently his daughters sprung from thence. It is good to remind the spiritual Israel of the hole of the pit, whence they were digged. Isaiah 51:2.

DEUTERONOMY 26:6-11

And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: (7) And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression: (8) And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: (9) And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey. (10) And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God: (11) And thou shalt rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD

thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that *is* among you.

I hope the Reader will not fail to read these verses with profit, if while he beholds the trainment of Israel, and remembers their history, he looks back and connects with it his own. Do you know my brother, what the spiritual oppressions of Egyptian bondage under Sin and Satan mean? Do you remember the wormwood and the gall? Can you recollect the time, the place, the memorable spot, and the LORD'S answers to prayer, when from the depth of sin, you cried to the depth of divine mercy, and found JESUS who brought you out of darkness, and brought you into his marvellous light? If you can enter into an apprehension of these things, you will not fail, under divine teaching, to enter into a real enjoyment and participation of the Israelite's thankful approach to GOD, with the first fruits of his land. Oh! the sweetness of that scripture when the heart of a believer can fully adopt it for his own. Psalm 107. throughout.

DEUTERONOMY 26:12

When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and hast given *it* unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

This law was pointed out before: Deuteronomy 14:28, 29.

DEUTERONOMY 26:13-15

Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of *mine* house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten *them*: (14) I have not

eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away *ought* thereof for *any* unclean *use*, nor given *ought* thereof for the dead: *but* I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, *and* have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. (15) Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

The Jews have a tradition, that these words were spoken with a low voice, in token of humility. And, indeed, if we read with an eye to the pure gospel of JESUS, there is a great propriety in so doing. Remember what JESUS saith: Luke 17:10. The blessing implored for all Israel at the close of the prayer, is very sweet. So should the faithful in CHRIST JESUS, constantly pray for the whole church of JESUS. That is a delightful resolution of the prophet, and worthy of universal imitation: Isaiah 62:1. And that is a positive precept of the LORD, particularly to his priests and ministers: Isaiah 62:6, 7.

DEUTERONOMY 26:16-19

This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. (17) Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: (18) And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that *thou* shouldest keep all his commandments; (19) And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

I would have the Reader attend to the expressions in these verses, with an eye to the original covenant of grace, and he will then enter into a proper apprehension of them. That original covenant was, that in the seed of Abraham, should all

the nations of the earth be blessed. "He saith not (saith the apostle Paid) and to *seeds*, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is CHRIST." Galatians 3:16. When GOD, therefore, is here said to avouch himself to be the LORD GOD of Israel, it is that in CHRIST, GOD promiseth to bless his people, and to accept them in him. And his people avouch GOD to be their GOD in CHRIST; depending upon the fulfillment of all his promised covenanted mercies in him. Those expressions of making Israel high, in name, in honour, and in praise; and an holy people above all nations, are all very striking characters of the Israel of GOD. And who is, or ought to be, so holy, so high, so honourable, in their birth, their state; their life, their conversation, as those who have fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST? Who so peculiar as those, whom the LORD GOD of heaven and earth hath made his *Segullah*, that is, his chosen ones, his peculiar people. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, to do as Israel did, avouch GOD to be our GOD, and may he avouch us to be his people.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 27

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As Moses had now nearly concluded everything relating to the precepts; he enjoins the people in this chapter to adopt a means of keeping alive in their remembrance the great things of God's law, by writing it upon stones. And the chapter is concluded in aiming to impress the whole still more upon their

minds, by causing the Levites to pronounce curses upon all that disobeyed the divine commands.

DEUTERONOMY 27:1-4

And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. (2) And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: (3) And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. (4) Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, *that* ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister.

If the Reader will recollect, similar methods of perpetuating the law of GOD, were observed after the delivery on Mount Sinai. Exodus 24:4.

DEUTERONOMY 27:5-6

And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up *any* iron *tool* upon them. (6) Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God:

I beg the Reader not to overlook the plainness to be observed in the building of this altar: nothing of human art or labour was to be joined with it, nor any human tool to pollute it. And as CHRIST is our altar, was not this manifestly teaching that his purity would be sullied, if we bring to it anything of our own to mingle with it? He is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands: Daniel 2:34.

DEUTERONOMY 27:7

And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

The feast of peace-offerings, carried with it a token of the peace and amity between GOD and his people. The feast of the LORD'S Supper in the Gospel Church is to the same amount, for it is a feast upon a sacrifice, in token that JESUS hath made our peace in the blood of his cross: he is our passover, sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast. 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8.

DEUTERONOMY 27:8-10

And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly. (9) And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Take heed, and hearken, O Israel; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God. (10) Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

The repeated charges and cautions given, imply the vast importance of the thing itself. Deuteronomy 30:11-15.

DEUTERONOMY 27:11-13

And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, (12) These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: (13) And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

The Mount Ebal, and the Mount Gerizzim, stood near each other, a valley being between them. It is worthy remark, that in the Gospel state, when JESUS went up into the mountain, it was only to *bless* his people. The tribes were divided in six to each, for blessing the people, and for pronouncing the curses. Perhaps *they* both had an allusion to the Gospel state, for the

law is our schoolmaster unto CHRIST: and ministers are by the terrors of the law to persuade men. 2 Corinthians 5:11.

DEUTERONOMY 27:14

And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

Probably from the number of Israel, many Levites was engaged in this service.

DEUTERONOMY 27:15-26

Cursed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth *it* in a secret *place*. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. (16) Cursed *be* he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. (17) Cursed *be* he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. (18) Cursed *be* he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. (19) Cursed *be* he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. (20) Cursed *be* he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. (21) Cursed *be* he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. (22) Cursed *be* he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. (23) Cursed *be* he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. (24) Cursed *be* he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. (25) Cursed *be* he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. (26) Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

I detain not the Reader with observations concerning the several curses here pronounced, or entering into the particulars of them. It is enough to remark, that they express their several sentences of condemnation to the several

breaches of the law: and as the law pronounceth a curse upon every one that continueth not in *all things* that are written in the book of the law, to do them; it is evident that, as all men have sinned, and come short of GOD's glory, so all men come under the sentence of condemnation. But what a precious thought is it to the true believers in CHRIST, that though condemned in ourselves by reason of sin, we are freed from the curse by virtue of the righteousness and obedience of JESUS! CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 28

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

DEUTERONOMY 28:1-14

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: (2) And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. (3) Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field. (4) Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. (5) Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store. (6) Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out. (7) The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. (8) The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (9) The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. (10) And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. (11) And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. (12) The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou

shalt not borrow. (13) And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*: (14) And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Though I propose to make but a short observation on the whole of these blessings, for the sake of being brief, and that I may not increase the bulk of the present Commentary too much; yet I do beg the Reader to remark with me, the greatness and extensiveness of the blessings here promised. They relate to almost all the circumstances of life, and if read with a view to spiritual, as well as temporal mercies, they are enough to animate every true believer's heart; because, all the promises in CHRIST JESUS are yea, and Amen; and he himself, is the one, great, and comprehensive mercy of the whole covenant. Blessings are promised to the true seed of Israel, in all their outward concerns, in their persons, in their households, in the city, and in the field; whether at home or abroad, whether in trade or in labour, whether in their journeys, or in their stated resting places, both in lying down, and rising up. And is not JESUS all this, and infinitely more to his people? Oh! how precious is it to found all our mercies *in* him, and to see him, and enjoy him in every one. Psalm 72:17. But while I beg the Reader to remark with me, the gospel application of these mercies, I would beg of him not to overlook their temporal application in the history of the Jewish nation. Through a series of ages, Israel was blessed, and distinguished with the divine favor, during the reigns of their successive Kings from the time of Joshua to the Babylonish

captivity. See Joshua, the books of Samuel, the books of the Kings, and the books of the Chronicles.

DEUTERONOMY 28:15-19

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: (16) Cursed *shalt thou be* in the city, and cursed *shalt thou be* in the field. (17) Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store. (18) Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. (19) Cursed *shalt thou be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt thou be* when thou goest out.

Very awful are these denunciations. Wherever the sinner goes, however he is circumstanced, however employed in the midst of the greatest temporal possessions, the basket may be full, the wine presses running over with new wine; yet, if the curse of GOD be upon the whole, they are of no value; misery is in all, Reader! pause over this account; and them look into life. Doth not this explain to us, why we see so many miserable in the midst of affluence? "To the pure," saith the apostle, "all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure." Titus 1:15. The original curse upon the ground, being not taken off to the unregenerate heart, still remains to bring forth thorns and thistles; and these cannot but produce an everlasting source of disquietude; for the curse of GOD is in the house of the wicked. Proverbs 3:33. Reader! if you are sitting down to the enjoyment of covenant mercies, do not fail to eye JESUS in every one. Even in the contrast of the carnal man's misery we view our privilege. Oh! what a relish doth the conscious love and favor, and good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, give to

our mercies. Even our afflictions with him are like the spiced wine of the pomegranate. Song Of Solomon 8:2.

DEUTERONOMY 28:20-44

The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. (21) The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. (22) The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. (23) And thy heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee *shall be* iron. (24) The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. (25) The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. (26) And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray *them* away. (27) The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. (28) The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: (29) And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*. (30) Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. (31) Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue *them*. (32) Thy sons and thy daughters *shall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail *with longing* for them all the day long: and *there shall be* no might in thine hand. (33) The fruit of thy land, and all

thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: (34) So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. (35) The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head. (36) The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. (37) And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee. (38) Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather *but* little in; for the locust shall consume it. (39) Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress *them*, but shalt neither drink *of* the wine, nor gather *the grapes*; for the worms shall eat them. (40) Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint *thyself* with the oil; for thine olive shall cast *his fruit*. (41) Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. (42) All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. (43) The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. (44) He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

The picture of misery is drawn more horrible in these verses, from describing the particular features of the curses, the LORD threatens to send after the sinner. If the Reader will attend to them minutely, he will find, that they extend to almost every possible state to which our poor nature can be exposed. To sickness, to famine, to the destruction of the sword, to captivity in the enemies country, to the loss of children; in short, to every personal evil. In the book of Ezekiel, the LORD speaks of his four sore judgments, but here they are four-fold, Ezekiel 14:21. But Reader! if we read them spiritually, how do those distresses rise in magnitude to our view. If our miseries are ever so great, yet if they are bounded within the limits of the life of man on earth, in the grave the weary are

at rest. But if souls are cursed with an everlasting curse, and when they lie down in the grave, sin is their grave-fellow, and follows them to eternity, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Oh! the wretched, wretched state of the ungodly! when that wrath of God shall light on the sinner, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Romans 1:18.

DEUTERONOMY 28:45-68

Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: (46) And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. (47) Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*; (48) Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. (49) The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; (50) A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: (51) And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which *also* shall not leave thee *either* corn, wine, or oil, *or* the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. (52) And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. (53) And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: (54) *So that* the man *that is* tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: (55) So that he will not give to any of them of the

flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. (56) The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, (57) And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all *things* secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. (58) If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; (59) Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, *even* great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. (60) Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. (61) Also every sickness, and every plague, which *is* not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. (62) And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God. (63) And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. (64) And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and stone. (65) And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: (66) And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: (67) In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. (68) And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold

unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy *you*.

I desired the Reader to remark with me in the opening of this Chapter, that there should seem to be somewhat prophetic in its contents. And if he compares what is here said, with the history of the Jewish nation, in their Babylonish captivity, he will discover strong leading particulars in proof of that idea. And if he carries on his enquiries to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, after the return of the LORD JESUS to glory, and to the dispersion of the Jews, even to the present hour; he will not perhaps be much in error in the application of great part of the threatenings in this Chapter, to events so very striking and memorable. But while we view the desolations of GOD'S anger in the history of our elder brethren the Jews, and bend to the lowest possible humiliation, in acknowledging that we are no better than they, are we not encouraged by the HOLY GHOST, to hope that blindness in part hath happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in? Are we not prompted very earnestly, and frequently, to be looking up to a faithful covenant GOD in CHRIST, that that precious promise shall be fulfilled when the deliverer shall arise out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob? Hasten LORD, I would say, thy coming. Come, LORD JESUS, come quickly! do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Oh! that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion; when GOD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad. Psalm 51:18. Psalm 53:6

REFLECTIONS

OH, my soul! let the awful review of the calamities here held forth to disobedient Israel, endear, with increasing love and affection, the person of thy ever-adored Redeemer; and his great salvation to thee; and may the perusal of this Chapter under the HOLY GHOST's teaching, constrain thee into his love, and to cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, for he is thy life. Oh! precious, precious JESUS, what eternal praises are thy due! Oh! what unspeakable mercies do I behold in that one view of JESUS, a GOD in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. I see, I feel, I stand convinced, that to this one cause, every blessing in time, and to all eternity is owing. LORD! keep me, hold me, establish me in this most precious assurance, and may I never dare to taste a single joy until I see JESUS in it. If thou, dearest LORD, will give it me, it will be sanctified. But without thee, the best of creature comforts will prove a snare.

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

CHAPTER 29

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

DEUTERONOMY 29:1-3

These *are* the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. (2) And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; (3) The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles:

It must have been a very interesting moment this, when Moses, acting as the minister of JEHOVAH, made this appeal to the people. There is nothing we need more, than to be reminded of past mercies. And hence, one of the most precious offices of the HOLY GHOST is, when he mercifully acts as our Remembrancer, to bring to our recollection the tender manifestations of JESUS'S love. John 14:26. Reader! hath the HOLY SPIRIT indeed brought to your remembrance, all that the LORD your GOD hath done for you in Egypt? Do you call to mind the great temptations, and signs, and miracles of grace Oh! how delightful the subject, thus to look back, and behold

the way the LORD our GOD hath been bringing his people out of this wilderness. Deuteronomy 8:2-5.

DEUTERONOMY 29:4

Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

We shall do well, Reader, to ask our hearts whether this be our case. Oh! gracious GOD, above all blessings give me JESUS and his HOLY SPIRIT, that I may perceive what my mercies are, and enjoy his, and all things in him. "From all blindness, hardness of heart, and ignorance of thy word and commandment, good LORD deliver me!"

DEUTERONOMY 29:5-6

And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot. (6) Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I *am* the LORD your God.

What less than a standing miracle was this, that Israel was fed, clothed, and strengthened, through forty years, when their garments waxed not old, and the very sandals, with which they came out of Egypt, did not wear out amidst the rugged road of the wilderness. And what is it now, but the continuation of the same miraculous power, which is displayed in sustaining the spiritual Israel through all their wilderness state, by which their souls are fed with the bread of life, and the garments of salvation by JESUS remain unsullied, through a world of sin and corruption both within and without them.

DEUTERONOMY 29:7-9

And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them: (8) And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh. (9) Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

Israel is reminded of what hath been already done on this side Jordan, by way of confirming the faith of the people, in what the LORD will do on the other side. Reader! depend upon it, the earnest of the SPIRIT in the heart, is a sure pledge of salvation. If my GOD accepts me in JESUS *now*; he will not condemn me *then*, when, rising from the bed of death, I shall stand before his throne. 2 Corinthians 5:1 Romans 8:1.

DEUTERONOMY 29:10-11

Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, *with* all the men of Israel, (11) Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that *is* in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water:

It was the same feature of the old church as it is of the new, (for they are both one and the same church in JESUS) that there was no distinction of person, age, or character. None too great not to need salvation; none too humble to be excluded from it. Paul sweetly includes all when he saith, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but CHRIST is all and in all. Colossians 3:11.

DEUTERONOMY 29:12-15

That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: (13) That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and *that* he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said

unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. (14) Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; (15) But with *him* that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and also with *him* that *is* not here with us this day:

It is a delightful thought, that in the gospel church, as in the Jewish, the absent soul is as much included as the one that is present. If absent in body, yet present in spirit. JESUS, the great head of his people, with whom the covenant is made, is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Hence he saith himself, "that I should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me." All are beheld in him from the beginning. See those precious scriptures, John 17:2. John 6:37. Isaiah 8:18.

DEUTERONOMY 29:16-21

(For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt; and how we came through the nations which ye passed by; (17) And ye have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them:) (18) Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; (19) And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: (20) The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. (21) And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:

What a very awful scripture is contained in these verses! Observe how the sinner is described: he turns away from GOD: he grows confident in sin: he bids defiance to danger:

and is ripe for ruin. Observe the awfulness of the divine judgments upon him. As he turns from the LORD, and doth not like to retain GOD in his knowledge, GOD gives him up to a reprobate mind, to work all uncleanness with greediness. Romans 1:28. Reader! if the LORD gives up the sinner it is all over. "Let Ephraim alone, he is joined to his idols," is one of the most awful sentences in scripture. If GOD ceases to correct, depend upon it judgment is at hand. Hosea 4:17. Ezekiel 16:42.

DEUTERONOMY 29:22-28

So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the LORD hath laid upon it; (23) *And that* the whole land thereof *is* brimstone, and salt, *and* burning, *that* it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath: (24) Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what *meaneth* the heat of this great anger? (25) Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: (26) For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and *whom* he had not given unto them: (27) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: (28) And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.

The judgments upon Israel, must excite the astonishment and enquiry of all nations; Wherefore hath the LORD dealt so by his people? How is it that the glory of all lands, and the distinguished people of all nations, are thus dealt with? See GOD's tender expostulation: Hosea 11:8. Reader! do not

overlook the spiritual instruction in this chapter. The horrible consequences of GOD's broken law are set forth in this striking manner, to demonstrate our ruin by sin, in order to demonstrate as fully the riches of that grace which brings salvation by CHRIST: and, all leads to this conclusion, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Romans 5:21. Well may every believer, in the review of this subject, cry out with the apostle, "Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!" Romans 11:33.

DEUTERONOMY 29:29

The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

This seems to be the opening of a new subject in these words, unless we explain them as in answer to the further enquiry of the inquisitive mind, who from beholding the desolations of Israel stands amazed, that after such a profusion of miracles as the LORD had manifested towards Israel, on bringing them out of Egypt, he should now cast them off, and cause them to be wanderers through the earth. If thoughts such as these should arise in any mind, the HOLY GHOST hath given a most satisfactory answer to it, not only in this last verse of this chapter, but also in his servant the apostle's writings, to which I refer the Reader, Romans 9. throughout.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST JESUS! it is thou that art the covenant of thy people, for *with* thee, as their great head, the covenant is made; *in* thee it is fulfilled; *by* thee it is completed; and *from* thee, the full assurance of the blessings of it must come. Thou art given as a covenant to the people by the FATHER: and thou art the everything belonging to it . Oh! may I behold in thee, how all thy people stand complete in thy righteousness. For it is not confined to the captains of the tribes, nor the elders, nor the officers: but our little ones and our wives, the stranger that is in our camp, and the hewer of wood, and the drawer of water, are all equally interested in the fulness and preciousness of thy salvation.

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

CHAPTER 30

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This is a very interesting chapter. It contains much solemn exhortation: but it is full of divine mercies, as if the LORD intended to manifest to Israel, after what had been delivered

of threatenings in the two preceding chapters, that it is in mercy the LORD delighteth. Here is a provision made for the penitent sinner to return, and life and death are set before him.

DEUTERONOMY 30:1-5

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, (2) And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; (3) That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. (4) If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: (5) And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

It is a sweet feature of the old church, and which the Reader should never overlook, that it had an eye all along to the dispersion of Israel, and to their gathering again. See Leviticus 26:44, 45.

DEUTERONOMY 30:6

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

It is not enough to deliver from wrath, and to save from punishment; but in order to make a poor shiner happy, he must be qualified to enjoy. The circumcision of the heart, is the precious and blessed work of GOD the HOLY GHOST, who only can accomplish this. Hence the apostle tells us, that

CHRIST is made of GOD to us, not only wisdom to enlighten, but righteousness to justify, sanctification to purify, and redemption to secure from every evil. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

DEUTERONOMY 30:7

And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee.

The line is here drawn, as it is in many other parts of the word of GOD, between the righteous and the wicked. Isaiah 65:13-15.

DEUTERONOMY 30:8-10

And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. (9) And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: (10) If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

These are all so many beautiful repetitions of GOD's mercy and love to his people. I would beg the Reader in this place to remark with me, how the HOLY GHOST, by his servant Moses, hath altered the phrase concerning JEHOVAH. In the former chapters, while the LORD is holding forth his denunciations against Israel's rebellion, he is proclaimed in his great and incommunicable character of JEHOVAH. But in this chapter, when Moses is commanded to proclaim him in his covenant relationship, as a GOD of grace, he is called, no less than twelve times, JEHOVAH ALEHIM; that is the LORD thy GOD. How

delightful is it to behold GOD under this precious title, and to know our interest in him.

DEUTERONOMY 30:11

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off.

If we read those words with an eye to that blessed dispensation, to which the law ministered, for the law is our school-master unto CHRIST, we shall find that there is much gospel in them. It is indeed in the gospel, that we are brought nigh by the blood of CHRIST. Ephesians 2:13.

DEUTERONOMY 30:12-14

It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? (13) Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? (14) But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

We cannot err in the application of these things to the LORD JESUS and his Gospel; because the HOLY GHOST hath directly done so by the ministry of his servant the apostle. He calls it the righteousness which is by faith. I pray the Reader to compare the two passages together: Romans 10 from the 4th verse to the 10th. When he hath done this, I would recommend him to pause over both, and see whether Moses did not in this place very plainly preach CHRIST. Since the SON of GOD came down from heaven, we need not say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, to bring GOD's will to us? And since the SON of GOD, after redemption-work was finished by him, returned to glory, we need not say, Who shall go up from the deep. JESUS hath opened the communication between the two

worlds; and JESUS himself is the word, both the written and the uncreated word, which is nigh unto his people in the mouth, and in the heart, *the hope of glory*. Oh! precious salvation! may I esteem this holy word more than my necessary food. Job. 23:12. And yet more, JESUS the uncreated word, John 1:1.

DEUTERONOMY 30:15-19

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; (16) In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. (17) But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; (18) I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.* (19) I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:*

Reader! while you and I attend to the close of Moses's Sermon, and hear the solemn appeal which the animated preacher makes to heaven, that he had executed his commission, and fully discharged his duty in referring the people to their choice: let us learn to bless GOD, that we are not only taught these things, but that we have the promise of grace, to enable us to perform them. Blessed be GOD! JESUS is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises. The law made no provision for defect or inability. The law made nothing perfect. But the bringing in this better hope, hath done it in JESUS, by the which we draw nigh unto GOD. Hebrews 7:19.

DEUTERONOMY 30:20

That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

I beg the Reader to take particular notice of what is included in the parenthesis, that he is thy life and the length of thy days. Is not this clearly referring to the LORD JESUS? Who is the life of his people, but he that hath said, I am the way, and the truth, and the life?—No man cometh unto the FATHER but by me? Dearest LORD! be thou my life and my portion for ever. John 14:6.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! my soul, the earnestness with which Moses, the man of GOD follows up his Sermon, in the warm and impassioned manner he adopts in the close of it, so as to persuade the Israelites to duty and obedience. But, alas! what persuasion can operate until grace pleads in the soul? When thou hast fully viewed the solemn picture, and art become as fully satisfied from thine own feelings, that nothing less than sovereign grace, can be competent to restrain the corrupt passions of man's fallen nature; then, my soul, from Moses turn thy view to contemplate the LORD JESUS CHRIST: and behold in him the only possible source to enable sinners both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Oh! thou ever-blessed JESUS, that art the first cause and final end of all the hopes, the strength, the ability, the holy desires of thy people. In thee we behold an adequate relief for all our wants. It is thou and thou alone, which by the influence of thine HOLY SPIRIT in

the minds of thy people, dost first awaken eternal life; and as thou begettest, so thou alone canst maintain, support, preserve, and carry it on from day to day in the soul. Oh! enable me to cleave unto thee, for thou art my life, and the length of my days; thou art my hope, and my portion forever. Do thou, by the sweet constraining influence of thine HOLY SPIRIT, keep me close to thyself, that I may live upon thy fulness, have the lively actings of faith upon thy person, and live to thy praise here, until thou shalt bring me home, to rejoice in thy glory forever.

CHAPTER 31

CONTENTS

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

DEUTERONOMY 31:1

And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.

There is somewhat very interesting in this view of Moses, and in the subject of his long sermon. The law, as a prelude to the gospel, is always interesting; for by the law, saith an apostle, is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20. And certain it is, that

the law is the truest schoolmaster unto CHRIST. Galatians 3:24.

DEUTERONOMY 31:2

And he said unto them, I *am* an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the LORD hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

The age of Moses is twice recorded by him; once in this place, and again, chap. 34:7. And it is very remarkable, that as this period of 120 years, if divided into three parts, makes 40 each: so at every one of these portions, he was placed by the LORD in a different situation. The *first* forty years of his life he lived in the court of Pharaoh; the *second* as a shepherd, when sojourning with his father-in-law the priest of Midian; and the *third* in the wilderness, as a leader of the LORD'S people. How strange and mixed are the events in the life, even of the most eminent of GOD'S servants! Who would have thought, that the poor child Pharaoh's daughter took up and nursed for her own, and who was apparently exposed to immediate danger, should have been in the very same moment, all along designed by the LORD for the deliverance of his people. But Reader! turn your thoughts from hence to an infinitely higher character than Moses, even Moses's LORD; and in the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST behold, from equally slender appearances, the foundation of the sinner's hope. Who that beheld the SON of GOD, in the days of his appearing, when brought into the temple in substance of our flesh, would have conceived that this was He who was appointed of GOD, to deliver his people from sin and death by an everlasting salvation? None but those to whom, like Holy Simeon, the HOLY GHOST made him known, could have conceived such

mighty things were hid under the humblest appearance. Luke 2:26-29.

DEUTERONOMY 31:3

The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, *and* he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: *and* Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the LORD hath said.

Observe, how Moses dwells upon the sweet title of the LORD thy GOD: Not JEHOVAH alone, but JEHOVAH in covenant with Israel. Oh! it is precious to connect these things. And is there not somewhat referring to the LORD JESUS, in what is said here of Joshua? Not only the LORD thy GOD shall go over before thee, but it is said, that *Joshua* shall go over before the people. Is not this typical of JESUS our Joshua?

DEUTERONOMY 31:4-6

And the LORD shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed. (5) And the LORD shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. (6) Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Faith in the LORD'S promise, and faith in the LORD'S person, are the tokens, on the part of his people, of the LORD'S being with them, by his HOLY SPIRIT enabling them to believe, and to depend upon him.

DEUTERONOMY 31:7-8

And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their

fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. (8)
And the LORD, he *it is* that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

The inability of Moses to go over Jordan, and the ability of Joshua, should be well noticed by the Reader. As Moses' natural strength was not diminished, certain it is, his want of strength was not the cause; neither was the personal power of Joshua the reason of these things. But if we look at Moses as typical of the law, and Joshua as typical of JESUS and his gospel: then we see how impossible it was for the law to bring souls to GOD, and how suited alone that Almighty Joshua is, to plant his people in his holy mountain. For the law made nothing perfect; but a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto GOD. Hebrews 7:19.

DEUTERONOMY 31:9

And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.

Moses is the writer of those five books which bear his name; but it should seem, that over and above the sacred volume of these five books, he wrote the law to deposit in the ark separately: laying it up in the ark, not only for its security, and to imply its sacredness, but it carried with it this also, that in JESUS, which that ark typified, the whole law is kept and completed. He saith himself; by his type David, thy law is within my heart; or as it might have been read, in the midst of *my bowels*, meaning part of himself. Psalm 40:8.

DEUTERONOMY 31:10-13

And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, (11) When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. (12) Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that *is* within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: (13) And *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

The law was read, no doubt, by the Israelites in their *houses*, among their children and families. Deuteronomy 11:18-20. And we know, that Moses was read in the *synagogue* every Sabbath-day. Acts 15:21. But this reading once in every seventh year, which was the year of release, it was to be in the *whole assembly of Israel*, in a more express and public manner. But Reader! is there not somewhat typical here? Yes! and very sweet it is. The year of release pointed to the year of release in JESUS. In this release by the LORD JESUS from sin and destruction, from the breaches of the law, and all its condemning power; JESUS, who is the sum and substance of the law, having fulfilled it in his own person for his people, is constantly read and constantly made over to them, in all his offices, relations, and character; and hence his gospel is expressly called, the acceptable year of the LORD. Luke 4:18, 19. And it is worthy observation, that not only the males were required, as in the three great feast days of the year, to go up to Jerusalem, but in this year of release, the women, and children, and strangers were to be present. Teaching as expressly as possible, that neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female, are separately interested, but all are one in CHRIST JESUS. Galatians 3:28. Reader! pray observe the

sweetness and tenderness of that part of the precept, that the children which have not known anything: Any thing of what? Apply it to the year of release in JESUS, and what is its gracious contents, but that our little ones, who receive from us in our fallen state, the seeds of sin, may be very early made acquainted, both with their ruined state by nature, and the only way of recovery by grace, in that merciful scheme of salvation, which is alone in the LORD JESUS. Oh! for grace to all parents, to record a memorial of this among their offspring!

DEUTERONOMY 31:14

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Moses is again admonished of his death. Reader! it is a blessed thing, to be as the Apostle, who died daily. Is it your case? How stands your heart affected to death! If in JESUS, surely you know somewhat of this spirit. 1 Corinthians 15:31.

DEUTERONOMY 31:15

And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

This must have been a very refreshing season, to the servants of the LORD: of that glorious appearing of the *Shechinah* latterly, we do not read so much, as when the people came first out of Egypt. Reader! you and I have no cause to envy our fathers of the church in the wilderness, on account of those manifestations. JESUS hath since that period tabernacled among us in substance of our flesh, Oh! that you and I may,

by faith, be enabled to say, *and we have seen his glory*. John 1:14.

DEUTERONOMY 31:16-18

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go *to be* among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. (17) Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God *is* not among us? (18) And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

How gracious is GOD, even in his judgments. Though he foresaw Israel's backsliding, and in consequence gives Moses a commission to forewarn them of it, yet he provides means also for their recovery. But Reader, let not you and I stop here. Though our GOD foresaw our rebellion and unworthiness, and though he knew we should be backsliders from the womb, yet this did not stop the spring of mercy in JESUS, he sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10.

DEUTERONOMY 31:19-22

Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. (20) For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. (21) And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their

seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear. (22) Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.

The LORD'S mercy is again magnified, in causing all the grand leading points of Israel's history to be incorporated in this song; the particulars of which are all of a gospel tendency, and will meet us in the following chapter. What is here said serves to show us, that though it is called Moses' Song, the work is, in fact, of the HOLY GHOST.

DEUTERONOMY 31:23-26

And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee. (24) And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, (25) That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, (26) Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

We should compare this passage, in order to see the gospel sense of it, with that memorable one in the New Testament. Revelation 11:19.

DEUTERONOMY 31:27-30

For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death? (28) Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. (29) For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt *yourselves*, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands. (30) And Moses spake in the ears of all the

congregation of Israel the words of this song, until they were ended.

The melancholy prediction of the man of GOD, which we have lived to see fulfilled, so long and so awful as it is, in the dispersion of the Jews, would be enough to overpower the mind of every serious and truly awakened soul, were we not comforted with the assurance the HOLY GHOST hath given concerning their recovery. It is the cry of every faithful believer, Oh! that the deliverer may arise, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob! LORD! call home thy banished ones. Romans 11:26.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this Chapter, and behold in Moses the dying circumstances of all mankind. Both saints and sinners, ministers and people, even Moses, the highly favoured servant of the LORD, must go down to the grave, though as to the circumstances attending his death, he was peculiarly favoured in going up to the mount, to give forth his soul, as some have thought, upon the very mouth of GOD. Here again, dearest JESUS, let my soul, from the view of the universal condition of mankind, turn my thoughts to thee, who by thy precious death hast overcome death, and by thy triumph over death and the grave, hast opened to thy people everlasting life. Sweet and refreshing is the thought, amidst the humbling prospect, of dissolution, that JESUS ever liveth; and though all our circumstances around are perishing, and we ourselves involved in the same, yet the hour is hastening, when death shall be swallowed up in victory!

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

CHAPTER 32

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

DEUTERONOMY 32:1

Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

There is great elegance, as well as piety, in the whole of this song. The calling upon things inanimate to hear, when, perhaps, the intelligence of man disregards, is uncommonly striking. And will not both heaven and earth be witness against us, if we neglect so great salvation? The heaven shall declare GOD's righteousness. Psalm 50:6.

DEUTERONOMY 32:2

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

Apply this to the gospel, and observe how suited the figure is. The gospel is from heaven, so is the rain. The gospel is a blessing wheresoever it comes: so is the rain. The gospel acts sweetly and unperceived in the mind of him that receives the truth in the love of it; so doth the dew and the rain. Believers are born from above: so doth the rain come down from above. The people of GOD are numerous, though comparatively a little flock: so are the dew drops of the morning. See those sweet scriptures, Psalm 110:3. Micah 5:7. John 1:13. Psalm 72:6. Job 38:28.

DEUTERONOMY 32:3

Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

Precious thought! that doctrine will descend as the rain, and under divine influences will work its way, like the soft insinuating dew, which proclaims JEHOVAH in all his threefold personality of character and covenant-offices. For what is GOD's greatness to his people, but his great salvation in JESUS? When Moses desired to see the glory of the LORD, GOD said, I

will make all my goodness pass before thee. Exodus 33:18, 19.

DEUTERONOMY 32:4

He is the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

No less than six times in this chapter, and eighteen times in other places of the Old Testament, is the LORD distinguished by the title of a Rock; as if to show the firmness, durability, and everlasting strength of the LORD, in his covenant relations to his people. And I beg the Reader to remark with me, the attention of Moses in this description of our covenant GOD. It would have been a striking account of JEHOVAH, had the man of GOD represented him under any of his glorious perfections, for all the attributes of GOD, are so many standards of character, to distinguish the excellency of his nature. But in this place he is speaking of him in a more endearing view; and how shall he do it more effectually than by assuring his people, that his faithfulness is like the rock of ages, Holy LORD! enable me, and enable the Reader, always to keep this view of thy immoveable, and unchanging love to thy people, in remembrance. See that precious continuation of this, Deuteronomy 7:9.

DEUTERONOMY 32:5

They have corrupted themselves, their spot *is* not *the spot* of his children: *they are* a perverse and crooked generation.

Alas! what a striking difference, when we look into our own nature, there is between our corruptions and the LORD'S purity. Observe, the charge is, not that GOD made man corrupt, for GOD made man upright, but that he hath

destroyed himself. Ecclesiastes 7:29. Hosea 13:9. Their spot is not the unavoidable spot, which compared to the unsullied holiness of GOD, all-created excellence hath but it is the spot of sinful fallen nature. Oh! The happiness of those children of our GOD, who have been washed in that fountain which taketh out all spots! 1 John 1:7. Revelation 7:14.

DEUTERONOMY 32:6

Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? *is* not he thy father *that* hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?

Reader! suppose you drop the view of Israel for a moment, and fancy this expostulation addressed to yourself, at any time when causing the LORD to serve with your sins, and wearying him with your iniquities. Is not GOD your FATHER by adoption and grace in CHRIST JESUS? Hath he not chosen you in CHRIST; called you in CHRIST; justified you in Christ; fed you, taught you, purchased you, redeemed you, sanctified you; and for which of these acts is it, that a pressing temptation leads you thus to requite him?

DEUTERONOMY 32:7

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

No subject more affecting than the remembrance of past mercies. It is the sweetest of all subjects, the most improving of all plans of education, when a father can take his children by the hand and recount unto them the mercies of his GOD and their GOD, to him and to them, and to their father's before them. And especially when a parent can speak of mercies in grace, as well as providence: of redemption, as

well as preservation. Oh! the joy of an awakened parent, thus to relate the LORD'S dealings with his soul. The church doth this, after recounting a long series of mercies. Psalm 107:43. Reader, can you say anything of the like in your own experience? If so, you will not need my advice to tell it to your children, and your children's children. Psalm 103:17.

DEUTERONOMY 32:8-9

When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. (9) For the LORD'S portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

The sweetest of all subjects, and the most interesting of all histories, is that which makes a man acquainted with himself. In looking back to the original formation of GOD's church and people, we behold a plan reaching into eternity. Their husband was set up from everlasting. Proverbs 8:23. At the creation and division of the earth, the boundaries of men, as well as of the church, were all fixed by infinite wisdom. But there can be no question from the whole account in the Bible, which is but a brief history of the church, that the bounds of all other of the sons of men, were intended to minister to GOD's church and people. GOD hath made of one blood all nations of men; and they are all the works of his hands: but here he peculiarly calls Israel his portion. The Israel of the LORD are as the garden of the LORD, amidst the world's wilderness. This people, the LORD saith, I have formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise. If the Reader wishes to see some very striking scriptures to this purpose, he will find them, Isaiah 43:21. Deuteronomy 7:6-8. Matthew 11:25, 26. What a rapturous thought is it to the soul, that is conscious of an interest in it, that GOD hath a people, and that

he himself belongs to that people, and is of the LORD'S portion. There is but one thing more to make it complete, and that is, when the soul that is the LORD'S portion, can call the LORD his portion also. See Psalm 16:5. Song Of Solomon 6:3.

DEUTERONOMY 32:10

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Our GOD may be said to have taken all his people from a wilderness state, when calling them by his grace; for what the Apostle saith of the church of Ephesus, is equally applicable to every individual: we were by nature, children of wrath even as others. Ephesians 2:3. With respect to Israel of old, nothing could be more descriptive, than that of GOD'S finding them: for they were apparently lost in the bondage of Egypt, and groaning under their oppression. Reader! let you and I look back, and behold the spiritual bondage of our Egypt, when under Sin and Satan. Did not our JESUS find us there when he passed by and saw us cast out, and no eye but his to pity us? Ezekiel 16:5, 6. And how hath he led us about, nursed, and brought us up and taught us by his HOLY SPIRIT, the great things of salvation, and with that tenderness kept us as the apple of his eye. Oh! thou gracious GOD and Saviour, lead me frequently to review the ruined state of my nature, that the tokens of thy grace may be more abundantly precious. Isaiah 51:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 32:11-12

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: (12) *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

The figure here made use of, of the eagle, is uncommonly beautiful and striking; and especially, if, as some naturalists have said, the eagle, not only protects, feeds, and nourisheth her young, but is much engaged in instructing them. The young eagles, like other young birds, are much disposed to sleep in their nests: but the old eagle stirs them up. When they are awakened she flutters over them, as if to teach them the use of their wings. And as if this was not enough, she carries them on her wings, until they are well able to use their own. All this is uncommonly striking, in illustration of the care of GOD over his people. For Israel lay in Egypt, like the young eagles in their nest, stupid, indolent, and unawakened; as those that were in love with their slavery, and unwilling to be brought out of it. Hence the LORD is said to have borne them on eagles wings, when by the ministry of Moses, he brought them out. Exodus 19:4. And, if we carry on the similitude further, in allusion to the LORD'S bringing them out in this manner, as nothing from beneath could possibly hurt the young eagles on the back of the old bird, until the shot or the spear had pierced through the body of the dam, to pass through, and wound or destroy the young: so when JEHOVAH undertook the salvation of his people, everything manifested the security of their redemption; as JESUS hath said, Because I live, ye shall live also. John 14:19. Reader! is there nothing in all this, which bears a resemblance to the same LORD'S dealings with your soul? Hath not your GOD and Savior found *you* in a desert land, and amidst all the dangers of a waste and howling wilderness; hath he not borne you, as upon eagle's wings; fed you, nourished you, taught you, protected you! Oh! for grace in the review of mercies, to say with one of

old, Bless the LORD, Oh, my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Psalm 103:1-5.

DEUTERONOMY 32:13-14

He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; (14) Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape.

See! what a good house our GOD keeps! They that sit down at his table, will find both plenty, and of the best. But are not gospel mercies veiled under these figures? It is true, our fathers in the wilderness, had all these things in abundance. But yet in a gospel sense: the pure milk of the word, and the wine of the grape, imply the feast of fat things in GOD's holy mountain. Isaiah 25:6.

DEUTERONOMY 32:15

But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

Jeshurun, means the *upright*. But alas! how changed!

DEUTERONOMY 32:16-18

They provoked him to jealousy with strange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger. (17) They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. (18) Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.

What a melancholy picture of rebellion, folly, and sin, to forget GOD, to forsake him, to be unmindful of the rock of his

strength. Alas! who should have conceived the possibility of the thing itself. But this is not all, Israel added provocations to neglect, and took up with dunghill deities. And observe their character; these gods were not only contemptible in themselves, but gods they knew not. Moreover, they were newly risen up, as if gods, like mushrooms, came up in a night. Neither was this all, they were devils, and such as their fathers feared not. How striking is that expostulation of God by the prophet: Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit? Jeremiah 2:11. Reader! is there nothing in all this, in which your heart, and mine, can find a too just resemblance.

DEUTERONOMY 32:19

And when the LORD saw *it*, he abhorred *them*, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.

Of all sin, and sinners, nothing is so aggravated as in those instances, where a nearness of affection should have induced the reverse. An holy God must hate sin, as sin, wherever it be found. But in his children, it appears in the strongest colors. Psalm 55:12, 13.

DEUTERONOMY 32:20-25

And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end *shall be*: for they *are* a very froward generation, children in whom *is* no faith. (21) They have moved me to jealousy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with *those which are* not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. (22) For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. (23) I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. (24)

They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. (25) The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.

The judgments here threatened, will be found in correspondence to their sin. They forsake GOD, and he withdraws the favor of his countenance from them. They provoke him to jealousy with strange gods; and Israel shall be provoked to jealousy with the call of the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul, under the HOLY GHOST, explains it so in the conversion of the Gentiles. Romans 10:19. And when we consider the happy state of Israel when in Canaan, and compare it with the desolations of Israel in their captivity in Babylon, their ruin in Jerusalem, after our LORD'S return to glory, and their dispersion at the present hour over the earth; who can help remarking the just judgments of the LORD, as here awfully described, falling upon that people! See Jeremiah 52:4-11. Matthew 24:15-21.

DEUTERONOMY 32:26-27

I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: (27) Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, *and* lest they should say, Our hand *is* high, and the LORD hath not done all this.

Here is a little brightening up in those verses. But Reader! pause, to remark with me, how our GOD over-rules the malice of their enemies, to work for his people's good. We have striking examples in holy writ, where GOD'S people make use of this plea to find GOD'S favor. See Exodus 32:11, 12. Joshua 7:9. And may we not from hence, and from our own

experience, draw this certain conclusion, that the LORD absolutely lays the foundation, sometimes, of the peculiar mercies he manifests to his hidden ones, on the very malice of their enemies! That is a very strong passage in the Psalms in proof: Psalm 105:25.

DEUTERONOMY 32:28-29

For they *are* a nation void of counsel, neither *is there any* understanding in them. (29) O that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *that* they would consider their latter end!

Even people void of understanding, in divine truths, may consider the sure consequence of sin. The wages of sin is, and must be death. Romans 6:23.

DEUTERONOMY 32:30-38

How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? (31) For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves *being* judges. (32) For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes *are* grapes of gall, their clusters *are* bitter: (33) Their wine *is* the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. (34) *Is* not this laid up in store with me, *and* sealed up among my treasures? (35) To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. (36) For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is* none shut up, or left. (37) And he shall say, Where *are* their gods, *their* rock in whom they trusted, (38) Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, *and* drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, *and* be your protection.

There are two ways of reading those verses. If we consider the words, How should one Israelite chase a thousand? we must then view the salvation of Israel, as effected by God.

But if we consider the words, rather as corresponding to a deserted state by reason of Israel's sin, it will then appear; that the timidity of Israel ariseth, in that the LORD hath given them into the hands of their enemies. See Isaiah 30:17. The contrast drawn between the confidence of GOD's enemies, and the GOD of his people's confidence in those verses is beautiful. But Reader, remark with me, the graciousness of GOD, and the LORD'S pity over his people, when they are brought down to a low estate. See Leviticus 26:40-43.

DEUTERONOMY 32:39

See now that I, *even I, am he*, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

Observe how GOD asserts his own sovereignty. It is worthy the Reader's observation, how Moses in the close of his day of grace, is reminded of what the LORD said to him, on the first opening of that day: "I am, that I am." Exodus 3:14. Reader! do not overlook the person of JESUS in this. John 8:59. How precious to a dying believer, the revelation, that He that was, and is, and is to come, is the eternal I am, who begun, hath carried on, and will complete his great salvation; being the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8. I would have the Reader to observe in those verses, the LORD'S awful declarations upon the enemies of his people. And it is an awful thought; is not GOD, as much pledged to execute his threats, as to fulfil his promises? Doth he say, if any man love not the LORD JESUS CHRIST, let him be Anathema, Maranatha, and can it be otherwise? 1 Corinthians 16:22. I beg the Reader to remark with me, how graciously the song concludes. It is full of joy and peace, to GOD's people. GOD will

enlarge the borders of his people: he will avenge them of all their enemies; and the glory of GOD shall be upon them. If we read those words in a gospel sense, they are still more beautiful and refreshing. In JESUS shall all the house of Israel be justified, and shall glory: the multitude of the isles shall stretch out their hands unto GOD. And while his people rejoice, their enemies shall be destroyed: the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under their feet shortly. Romans 16:20.

DEUTERONOMY 32:40-48

For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. (41) If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. (42) I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. (43) Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people. (44) And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun. (45) And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel: (46) And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. (47) For it *is* not a vain thing for you; because it *is* your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong *your* days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. (48) And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day, saying,

When Moses had finished his song, which he delivered not only in the hearing of the people, but particularly of Joshua, his successor, as if that he might be a witness both for the LORD and for himself, he makes a short observation upon the whole: and as a dying pastor, again, and again, affectionately

entreats them to be wise unto salvation after his departure. See a beautiful example of this kind in Paul. Acts 20:28-37.

DEUTERONOMY 32:49-50

Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, *unto* mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, that *is* over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: (50) And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

What can a true believer in JESUS desire more, when he hath finished his day as an hireling, and seen the LORD'S CHRIST like Simeon, than to depart in peace according to GOD'S word. What is there worth living for! nay, rather what is there not worth dying for! Oh for the spirit and desires of holy Paul! Philippians 1:23.

DEUTERONOMY 32:51-52

Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. (52) Yet thou shalt see the land before *thee*; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel.

There is great mercy in the LORD'S reminding Moses of Aaron's death. But how precious is it to the believer in JESUS, to recollect in his dying hours, that CHRIST hath gone before to the grave, and through that passage to glory. Oh! for faith, lively faith, to be conformed to the lovely image of JESUS in all things. There can be no doubt, but that the view Moses had of the promised land, was accompanied with an assurance in the covenant righteousness of redemption by the promised seed, that though he entered not upon the possession of an earthly Canaan, he should enjoy the heavenly Jerusalem.

Dear LORD! let this be the portion of both writer and reader, if it be thy heavenly will, and then it matters not on what mount, in what place, at what time, or in what manner the summons for our dismissal is given. To live will be CHRIST, and to die will be gain. Philippians 1:21.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, and behold, the beautifulness of holiness, and of praise, in the conduct of a dying pastor, like Moses; and in the outlines of this hymn, behold how becoming it is to be faithful. Heaven and earth must witness at the last day for every faithful servant of JESUS, if he hath kept back nothing that was profitable for the people; and though the people be not gathered, yet he hath delivered his own soul.

Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, in viewing the LORD'S love to his church, and the series of mercies manifested towards his people, to discover, in a spiritual sense, the same gracious hand bringing us out of Egypt, and bearing us as upon eagles wings all the way through of our eventful journey. Oh! thou most gracious GOD! in every view which my soul is enabled to take of thy love towards me; and in all thy three-fold characters of Person, thou hast been my FATHER, and the guide of my youth. My Saviour, and the Redeemer of my soul; my Sanctifier, and the helper of all my ways. Oh! grant that I may not, like Israel of old, forget the GOD of my mercies, and lightly esteem the rock of my salvation. Do thou perfect that, gracious GOD, concerning me, which thou hast begun, for thou art indeed a rock, and thy work is perfect. It is of thine own free grace thou hast planned salvation, by thine own power thou hast formed it,

and wilt execute it. In thine everlasting love, in the eternal purposes of thy counsel, by the blood and righteousness of JESUS, and by thine own grace, and the influences of the HOLY GHOST, in the hearts of thy people, thou wilt accomplish and complete it: and shall I doubt thy gracious purposes concerning me? Be thou my rock, my JEHOVAH JESUS, to which I may alway resort; for thou hast promised to help me; therefore into thine hands do I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth.

CHAPTER 33

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The man of GOD here finisheth the whole of his ministry with Israel. Nothing remained after the Song but to bless Israel in the LORD'S name; and this he doth partly in a spirit of prophecy, in telling each tribe of Israel of some of the most remarkable events which would follow them; and partly in a spirit of prayer; of what he hoped the LORD would bless them with. He concludes the Chapter with a most animated apostrophe, both of the blessedness of the GOD of Israel, and of the Israel of GOD.

DEUTERONOMY 33:1

And this *is* the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

I beg the Reader in the opening of this Chapter, finally, and fully to remember once more the motto to be kept in view through all Moses's writings, *Moses wrote of CHRIST*. And while I request the Reader to be looking out for the LORD

JESUS in every verse; I desire him no less to remark with me, the superiority of the LORD JESUS over his servant Moses. The man of GOD closes his life and ministry, with praying for the blessing of the people. JESUS commands it. His language is, FATHER / *will*. John 17:24. Reader! take a leisurely, and close survey of the man of GOD, closing his ministry, and figure to yourself if you can, anything more interesting. Such should be the close of all faithful ministers! What can be more sweet and endearing, than to behold a faithful pastor, in such a spirit and frame of mind, taking a last farewell, in looking up to his great Head, and looking round upon the people, pouring out praise and prayer. Reader! do not forget to look at the ever blessed JESUS, as represented, Luke 24:50, 51.

DEUTERONOMY 33:2

And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them.

Moses begins his blessing, with looking first at him that blesseth. What *begins* in GOD, will *end* in GOD. Mount Seir, and Mount Paran, were two mountains some little distance from Mount Sinai. And it is probable, that when the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, the reflection of the glory shined upon those two mountains. The first giving of the law was accompanied with splendor, and the retinue of angels: for the law is said to be given by the disposition of angels. Acts 7:53. Galatians 3:19. Hebrews 2:2. The second revelation of the fulfilled law by the Son of GOD, when he shall come again without sin unto salvation, it is said, will be accompanied with angels. Jude 14, 15. The law is called a fiery law, because, it was given out of the midst of the fire of

Mount Sinai. Deuteronomy 4:33. And is it not equally a fiery law now, under the gospel, when it is brought home to the sinner's heart, in a way of conviction, by the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning. Compare, Isaiah 4:4. with John 16:8.

DEUTERONOMY 33:3

Yea, he loved the people; all his saints *are* in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; *every one* shall receive of thy words.

Sweet and beautiful expression, to denote God's love and care of his people. They are within his grasp; they are held, and upheld by him. And tell me, my brother, if you and I are of his people, and in his hand, who, or what shall unclasp the arms of omnipotency? Romans 8:35. Oh! precious, precious thought! LORD enable me to live more upon it.

DEUTERONOMY 33:4-5

Moses commanded us a law, *even* the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. (5) And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people *and* the tribes of Israel were gathered together.

If Moses be meant here as the king of Jeshurun, we may admire the modesty of the man. He never assumed the title himself; he did not affect to be called so; and seemed to be not anxious to preserve his name in the earth. For we never hear of the sons of Moses, but we do of the sons of Aaron.

DEUTERONOMY 33:6

Let Reuben live, and not die; and let *not* his men be few.

It is remarkable that Moses begins with Israel's eldest son. By birthright, no doubt, this was his privilege. Yet he had forfeited it. See Genesis 49:3, 4. It is hardly possible to

consider the family of the Reubenites, taking up their rest on this side Canaan, without finding the soul going forth in prayer to GOD, LORD grant that I may not, like Reuben, sit down short of JESUS'S kingdom! Hebrews 11:14-16.

DEUTERONOMY 33:7

And this *is the blessing* of Judah: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help *to him* from his enemies.

Observe, *Simeon* is passed over, whose turn by right of heirship, in the line of Jacob's sons it was. But perhaps as this tribe was in after ages incorporated with that of Judah; and Moses, by the spirit of prophecy, knowing this would be the case, meant to include both. Or whether, because the father, Jacob himself had marked his son Simeon with disgrace, Moses omitted him, I do not presume to say. Genesis 49:5. But of Judah there is much to say. The tribe of Judah is honored above all others, because our LORD sprang out of Judah, according to the flesh. Hebrews 7:14. The blessing is very peculiar, that the LORD would hear his voice, alluding perhaps to the very person of the LORD JESUS, in his office of intercessor. And that he would bring him to his people, perhaps referring to the time of JESUS appearing upon earth, for the salvation of his people. And that he would be an help to him from his enemies: probably the conquest of the spiritual Judah in view, in his destruction of sin, Satan, and death! These scriptures are express in point, if so; John 11:42. Genesis 49:10. and Psalm 89:20.

DEUTERONOMY 33:8-11

And of Levi he said, *Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou*

didst strive at the waters of Meribah; (9) Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. (10) They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. (11) Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

Moses dwells much upon the tribe of Levi, But it is remarkable, that though he himself was of that tribe, yet he never once mentions his relationship. It is precious to remark the humility of Moses. And yet more so, when we connect with it the grace of the LORD in him, from whom that humility originated. The prayer of Moses for the blessing of Levi in the priesthood is striking. The *Urim* and the *Thummim*, signified lights and perfections, qualities eminently necessary to be joined to the priesthood. But where among the sons of Levi, must we look for them? With thee only, blessed JESUS, who art indeed the holy one, and the only holy one of JEHOVAH: can we find these things, and with thee, they are forever. The waters of Meribah, and Massah, were monuments of the fallibility of human priesthood. Perhaps the period alluded to, of Levi's faithfulness, was as related. Exodus 32:27, 28.

DEUTERONOMY 33:12

And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.

The tribes are not mentioned regularly, according to the priority of birthright; but perhaps Moses was directed by the HOLY GHOST. I would have the Reader take particular notice of the title of Benjamin, *the beloved of the LORD*. Benjamin was

the beloved Son of his Father Jacob. But the beloved of the LORD infinitely surpasseth the highest love of men. Doth not the Reader behold in this, somewhat typical of him, who is the only begotten and beloved SON, who lay in the bosom of the FATHER before all worlds? Compare Isaiah 42:1. with Matthew 3:17.

DEUTERONOMY 33:13-17

And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD *be* his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, (14) And for the precious fruits *brought forth* by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, (15) And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, (16) And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and *for* the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let *the blessing* come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him *that was* separated from his brethren. (17) His glory *is like* the firstling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thousands of Manasseh.

The blessing of Joseph is very striking, and deserves the closest attention, from the interest all true believers in CHRIST have in it. It is true, Joseph was separated from his brethren when sold into Egypt, and separated from his Father's home: but the spiritual illustration of this, and the typical reference it had to the person of the LORD JESUS, in all which Joseph was as an eminent a type of JESUS as almost any one character in the scripture, demands, that we should look much beyond Joseph the Son of Israel, for the real, spiritual meaning of this blessing of the man of GOD. Joseph, as the head of a tribe of Israel, was indeed much blessed with the precious things of heaven, and the precious things put forth by the sun, and by the moon: but it was the good will of him that dwelt in the

bush, (even JESUS, who appeared to Moses at the bush), which sanctified and crowned the whole. But what I would more particularly desire the Reader to take notice of in this blessing of the man of GOD that he prayed all those mercies might be in the lot of Joseph, on account of *his* dweller in the bush. The words might be rendered, and perhaps ought strictly to have been so rendered, for the good will of him, *my dweller* in the bush. As if Moses meant to say, my dweller is him that dwelt there, when first he manifested himself to me, as my covenant head and Savior, who had undertaken, and in the fulness of time, would appear for the accomplishment of salvation. Hence the man of GOD, when in the full prospect of death, dwells so sweetly upon it, and seeks all blessings upon the head of Joseph, on this sole account. Here Reader! is the great secret of religion. If the good will of JESUS be in our mercies, this puts a sweetness, and gives an enjoyment to all. But if this be wanting, it is not all the precious things brought forth by the sun, or the precious things put forth by the moon, can give real comfort to the soul. Reader! pray be diligent in your seeking for this coronet mercy, to crown the whole in your experience.

DEUTERONOMY 33:18

And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents.

Zebulun, and *Issachar*, were the sons of Jacob, by *Leah*; hence Moses hath included both under one blessing. If we interpret the prophecy according to gospel terms, perhaps it will be found that the going out, and abiding in the tents, implies both the propagating the gospel abroad, and rejoicing in it at home. See Isaiah 9:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 33:19

They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck *of* the abundance of the seas, and *of* treasures hid in the sand.

This verse throws a further light upon the former. The mountain of the LORD, hath always been considered in scripture terms, as referring to the gospel of JESUS. Isaiah 25:6-8. Micah 4:1, 2.

DEUTERONOMY 33:20

And of Gad he said, Blessed *be* he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.

It was said of Gad, by Jacob his Father, that a troop should overcome him, but that he should overcome at the last. Genesis 49:19. And is not Gad, a figure of all GOD's people, who are variously exercised: and as it should seem frequently overcome by troops of sins, troops of oppressors, troops of enemies from the world, the flesh, and the devil? but yet, concerning whom, victory is not doubtful, for they shall certainly at last overcome every foe, by the blood of the LAMB. Revelation 12:11.

DEUTERONOMY 33:21

And he provided the first part for himself, because there, *in* a portion of the lawgiver, *was he* seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel.

The seat here spoken of, probably referred to the situation of Gad, on the other side Jordan Deuteronomy 4:43. Joshua dismissed the Gadites with a blessing after the war was over; see Joshua. Joshua 4:12. with 22:7, 8.

DEUTERONOMY 33:22

And of Dan he said, Dan *is* a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.

Taking, this blessing in a temporal sense, perhaps it might refer to the victories of Samson, who sprung from this tribe; or to the tribe itself, whose exploits are rehearsed. Judges 18. But if we read the promise, with an eye to spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS, to leap from Bashan, may imply the victory believers obtain over all their foes, when coming from Zion, the hill of JEHOVAH. JESUS complained in his unequalled sufferings, that the strong bulls of Bashan, had beset him around; meaning no doubt, the chief priests and elders of GOD'S house. See Psalm 22:12, compared with Psalm 68:15, 16.

DEUTERONOMY 33:23

And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south.

There is much of gospel in this blessing of *Naphtali*. And no doubt, Moses had an eye to spiritual things in his prophecy of it. And what is it to be full with the blessing of JEHOVAH, but, in his three-fold character of Person, to enjoy the FATHER'S love, the Redeemer's grace, and the HOLY GHOST'S fellowship? Reader! may it be your portion and mine, to have this fulness, and we shall then possess a Naphtali's portion. It may not be unacceptable to the Reader, to add, that *Capernaum*, of which we hear so much in our LORD'S days, belonged to Naphtali.

DEUTERONOMY 33:24-25

And of Asher he said, *Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. (25) Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.*

Asher's blessing, is one of the general blessings of all the spiritual seed of Israel. As the day of God's people is, so shall be their strength. Once known, and they must be acceptable to the brethren of the LORD JESUS, for they are accepted of the FATHER, in the beloved. Ephesians 1:6. And what could be more suited, as a general close to the blessing of the tribes of Israel, than a general assurance to all Israel, of favor and acceptance, both with GOD and man and grace suited to every occasion. Gracious GOD! let these blessings be the portion of both writer and Reader, and let JESUS to crown the whole be ours, and all will be well!

DEUTERONOMY 33:26

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

It is remarkable, how holy men of old, when under the SPIRIT of the LORD, break out in the midst of their office of blessing his people, with blessing the GOD of his people. Thus dying Jacob, in the midst of blessing his children, cries out, I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. Genesis 49:18. And here Moses breaks out in a commendation of the GOD of Jeshurun. Reader! observe with me how very sweet and striking this, and the following three last verses of Moses are, in praising the GOD of Israel, and in commending the Israel of GOD. They are the last word's of this great man, and the last words of great men, are always particularly to be attended to. In this verse, he pours out his praises upon Israel's GOD. There is

none like him, saith Moses. And he instanceth this, in those two grand distinctions of character, his sovereignty, and his glory. How sweet, how very sweet and dear are those perfections to the contemplation of his people. By the one, they are secured in his power, and by the other, in his love. Oh! that you and I, Reader, may know our covenant GOD in CHRIST, in both.

DEUTERONOMY 33:27-29

The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*. (28) Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob *shall be* upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. (29) Happy *art* thou, O Israel: who *is* like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who *is* the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

The man of GOD, having poured out his praises on Israel's GOD, now bestows his commendation on Israel. They have the eternal GOD for their refuge. JEHOVAH is engaged in all his covenant relations for their defense. He will protect, and govern, and bless, and rejoice over them; nay, he will not only protect, and govern, and bless them, but he will destroy their enemies. And when he hath thrust out all before them, they shall dwell securely in their GOD; they shalt abound with a fulness of all blessings; corn and wine shall be their sustenance, and their heavens shall drop down dew. If we read these things as temporal mercies, we must read them with certain limitations. It is sad to consider how Israel, in after ages, forfeited these things by their disobedience and ingratitude. But if we read them spiritually, and with an eye to the gospel church of the LORD JESUS, (and which no doubt, is

the chief sense of the words), to what a degree of greatness and sublimity do the blessings then rise to our view? Reader! look at the gospel church of the LORD JESUS; and see the Israel of GOD in him! Here indeed, the eternal GOD is the refuge of his people; for in the Covenant of redemption, in the blood and righteousness of JESUS, all the perfections of the GODHEAD are made over in an everlasting covenant, which cannot be broken, for the eternal security of his people. And GOD is not only the support and security of his people; but he is their refuge, their hiding place, their everlasting, and eternal home. Hence one of old, calls the LORD his hiding place, and bids his soul to return to his rest. See Psalms 46:1. 32:7. 90:1. 116:7. And how is the church of the LORD JESUS provided for? Every individual believer of it, hath the charter of all these blessings secured to him, in the blood of the covenant. GOD the FATHER is his, in all his covenant relations. JESUS, in his person, offices, and character; and the HOLY GHOST, with all his gracious influences. These mercies are the fountain of Jacob here spoken of, because they are fountain mercies indeed, which send off streams innumerable, to make glad the city of GOD. These are the heavens which drop down their dew upon the church, and every individual believer of it, to refresh, to comfort, to enlarge, and make fruitful. Well might the man of GOD, in a review of these things, and well may every one interested in them, echo to the same, and cry out, as he did, Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the LORD!

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 34

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

and burial, the mourning of Israel for Moses, and the appointment of Joshua as his successor.

DEUTERONOMY 34:1

And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that *is* over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

Moses' ascension to the top of *Pisgah*, for the purpose of seeing the holy land, opens to our contemplation a very interesting subject. Do not all believers in JESUS, truly behold with an eye of faith, that upper brighter world, of which this Canaan was a type? what is it to see the land that is very far off, when once the eye of the soul hath seen the king in his beauty, but to see GOD'S covenant love in JESUS, his grace, his salvation, his sure promises, as yea and Amen, and firmly made over to the soul, in the blood and righteousness of a Redeemer? Reader, if the LORD gives to you, and to me, that firm and well-founded assurance in JESUS, of an interest in him, so that we die as we have lived, upon those sure principles; is not this to ascend, like Moses the top of Pisgah, and by faith, behold the glory that shall be revealed.

DEUTERONOMY 34:2-4

And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, (3) And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. (4) And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

Observe, it is said, that the LORD showed it to him. Yes! every view and every renewed view, as well as the first manifestations of divine favor flow from GOD'S grace, not our

deserts. Hence Paul prays for the Ephesian church, that God would give them the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of JESUS. Ephesians 1:17, 18.

DEUTERONOMY 34:5

So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

Here we arrive to the close of all in Moses. He felt that sentence which passeth upon all men, because all have sinned. Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Genesis 3:19. But Reader! observe his character. He is said to have been the servant of JEHOVAH, the saint of GOD. And we know from the authority of the HOLY GHOST, that precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15. The expression of Moses' death in the original, is, as if Moses had died upon the very mouth of the LORD. The Jews say, that he breathed out his soul from the body, as with a kiss of love from the LORD. Certain it is, that it was according to the word of the LORD. According to the interest and union he had with the uncreated word: precious death!

DEUTERONOMY 34:6

And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

Concerning his burial, we have but a short account. But, short as it is, nothing can be more honourable. The LORD himself buried him, and no eye was privy to it. Probably to prevent any superstitious notions concerning him. We are informed by the HOLY GHOST, in his servant Jude's Epistle, that the devil disputed with Michael concerning his body. Jude 9. Sweet thought to the believer! the same power that buried Moses,

raised JESUS; and the same power which raised JESUS from the dead, is engaged to quicken our mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in us, Romans 8:11. Reader! if JESUS be now your living head, fear not to go down to the grave, in your dying moment: for he speaks to you, as he once did to the Patriarch, concerning the Egypt of the soul: Fear not to go down into Egypt, I will go with thee. Genesis 46:3. In that hour, and down that valley, JESUS thy Almighty head will go with thee. He loves thee living, dying, and forever. Oh! for strong, ardent, lively faith, to believe the record GOD hath given of his SON. 1 John 5:11.

DEUTERONOMY 34:7

And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

The promise, Thou shalt go down to the grave in a good old age, was remarkably fulfilled, in the instance of Moses. If the Reader will consult the genealogy of Moses he will discover, that his Maker, grandfather, and great grandfather, were all older when they died than himself. *Amram* his father was 137 years at his death. *Kohath* his grandfather 133, and *Levi* his great grandfather 137. See Exodus 6:16-20.

DEUTERONOMY 34:8

And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended.

The mourning of Israel for Moses, was decent and proper. We are not commanded to refrain from mourning, only we are not to sorrow as without hope. Oh! what a difference hath the death and resurrection of JESUS put in the circumstances of

death! To true believers in CHRIST, our charnel-house is but our chamber-house, whither we retire after the example of the LORD JESUS, to rest the wearied limbs of mortality. And what a sweet perfume hath his sacred body given to the dust of death! Reader! never forget that the first clear and distinct views of the future mansions of the blessed, were seen from the tomb of JESUS. John 20:17.

DEUTERONOMY 34:9

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

We are here first introduced into an acquaintance with Joshua, as the successor of Moses. Joshua is well known before as a faithful follower of the LORD, but not as the leader of the LORD'S people. Moses must first be buried before that CHRIST can be fully known and received. Moses must die in Moab, to our view, before that CHRIST can be sought after to bring us over Jordan. The law can go no further than Jordan. It is JESUS alone in his blessed gospel, which brings life and immortality to light.

DEUTERONOMY 34:10-12

And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, (11) In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, (12) And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.

Very honourable testimony is given to Moses, as a servant of JEHOVAH; and the HOLY GHOST confirms it in another part of the sacred writings; when pointing out the superiority of the LORD

JESUS in his divine office and character. Hebrews 3:5, 6. And here, Reader, we drop Moses. He hath served his generation, and by the will of GOD, is fallen asleep, and hath seen corruption; but he to whom Moses ministered saw no corruption: but when he had finished redemption work on earth, returned to glory there to complete the whole, by appearing in the presence of GOD for us. Hail, holy, blessed, dearest JESUS! may our eyes unceasingly gaze on thee, now thou art returned to thy kingdom above, angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject unto thee.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

Didst not thou, blessed JESUS, act as the messenger of JEHOVAH, when thou camest to our spiritual Egypt, to deliver thy people out of captivity? In all thy ministry, righteousness, and salvation, wast not thou the sent, the sealed, the anointed of thy FATHER? And wast not thou the great prophet, priest, and king of thy people? If Moses stood between JEHOVAH and Israel, as a Mediator, how much more thou? for Moses never could have stood, but as thy representative, none but thyself could turn away divine wrath, or make atonement but in thy blood. If Moses, acting as the minister of JEHOVAH, opened a way through the Red Sea, what was this, but as typical of that new and living way, which thou hast opened in thy blood and righteousness, for thy ransomed ones to pass over, when mountains of sin on every side, and the enemy, like Pharaoh, is behind, hastening on to destroy thy chosen? And if Moses' meekness forsook him not, amidst all the contumacy, ingratitude, and rebellion of Israel, what was Moses meekness compared to thine, Oh, thou patient LAMB of GOD, who, when thou wast reviled, reviledst not

again; but in all the backslidings, coldness, and departures of thy people, never leavest nor forsakest them, but having loved thine own, which are in the world, thou lovest them unto the end! Hail! thou first, and best, and chiefest among ten thousand! thou holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens! If I forget thee, dearest JESUS, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: yea, if I prefer thee not above my chief joy! And Reader! may you, and every ransomed soul, publish his name, declare his doings among the people, ascribe ye greatness unto our CHRIST; let everyone, the fathers unto the children, declare his truth!

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

upon earth, and a long time after the hand that now writes, shall have returned to its original dust. To the sacred Three in One be endless, undivided praises. Amen.

JOSHUA

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

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

It forms a memorable period in the history of the church, and especially so when considered with an eye to the spiritual conquest of the church over her enemies by the true Joshua,

in subduing all opposition, and bridging his people unto that rest which remaineth, for the people of GOD.

Reader! one request I have to make of you through the whole of the perusal of this history. Seek grace from him whose office it is to glorify JESUS, that in the conduct of Joshua in leading on the people of GOD to victory, you may look beyond the type, and behold the outlines of him, whose very office, as Joshua's was, is to save his people, to go before them, to conquer for them, and finally to give them all an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Oh thou Almighty Joshua! thou Captain of Salvation, who art bringing many sons unto glory, may I behold thee going before me in all the victories over sin, death, hell, and the grave; and drying up the Jordans of affliction, trials, temptations and difficulties, through which thou art leading me. Dearest JESUS! do thou lead on, and lead me out, and give me grace to follow, until thou shalt bring me in to behold thy glory, and dwell with thee forever!

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 1:1

(1) ¶ Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

There is no mention how GOD spake to Joshua. But as Eleazar had the breast plate of judgment, and acted as high priest, it is remarkable that the commission to Joshua came not through him which was the appointed way. See Numbers 27:18-23. I rather think that by way of honouring Joshua in his new commission after the death of Moses, the LORD spake to Joshua as he did to Moses without a medium. See Leviticus 1:1. But Reader! do not overlook JESUS our Joshua as represented here. All the sweet words we hear from our GOD are in, and through, and from him. John 1:18.

JOSHUA 1:2

(2) Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel.

I beg the Reader to observe with an eye to JESUS, what is said of Joshua, that he was Moses' minister. JESUS might be said in one sense to minister to the law, because by the influence of the HOLY GHOST the law becomes our schoolmaster to bring us to CHRIST. And JESUS was made under the law, to redeem us from the law. Galatians 4:4. It is a sweet and reviving thought that, though Moses is dead, JESUS ever liveth: though we are dead to the law yet alive unto GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Here are the first exercises in the entrance of Canaan. Jordan must be waded through; GOD orders no bridges, no rafters, to be made to get over by. My soul, is it not so by faith now? How shall I do in the swellings of Jordan? How,

but by faith pass over to the everlasting Canaan? Hebrews 11:29.

JOSHUA 1:3

(3) Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

The persons here mentioned to whom this land is given, are expressly named, both in the former verse and again in this. Is not this exactly conformable to what JESUS said to the mother of Zebedee's children. Matthew 20:23. Genesis 35:12.

JOSHUA 1:4

(4) From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

See the extent of the grant. And it is worthy remark that proselytes to the church were made from all those regions on the memorable day of Pentecost. Acts 2:5.

JOSHUA 1:5-9

(5) There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. (6) Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. (7) Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. (8) This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (9) Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

It is sweet to the believer to remark, in the instance of one so highly taught, and so greatly favoured in times that were past, how needful notwithstanding past grace, future assistance was. Though Joshua had been so faithful and courageous in the case of the spies, when his faithfulness made him and Caleb stand alone amidst the general murmur, yet grace is wanted afresh for every new occasion. Dearest JESUS! do thou supply my soul anew from thy fullness every day, for every day, and all the day, I need thy support. Say to me as to thy servant: 2 Corinthians 12:9.

JOSHUA 1:10-11

(10) ¶ Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,
(11) Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

In the preparation of these victuals, I am at a loss to know what the particular nature of the command was. We are told, Exodus 16:35. that manna was the food of Israel until they came to a land inhabited. And no doubt that land was Canaan. Perhaps a larger supply of this heavenly food was upon this particular occasion given them, as they were now going to besiege Jericho. But be this as it may, the Christian Reader may find a sweet lesson here. Wherever we are called, or to whatever siege we are led, until we come to Canaan itself, JESUS is the manna of his people. Not a day can we subsist without him. LORD the HOLY GHOST! do thou prepare this spiritual food for me and give me increasing supplies of JESUS, until that I come to the heavenly Jerusalem, where he will be my food and my glory forever. Revelation 7:17.

JOSHUA 1:12-18

(12) And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, spake Joshua, saying, (13) Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, The LORD your God hath given you rest, and hath given you this land. (14) Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan; but ye shall pass before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them; (15) Until the LORD have given your brethren rest, as *he hath given* you, and they also have possessed the land which the LORD your God giveth them: then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD'S servant gave you on this side Jordan toward the sunrising. (16) ¶ And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. (17) According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. (18) Whosoever *he be* that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.

The condition which had been made with those tribes we had settled; Numbers 32:1-32. The LORD grant that we may not, like those tribes, set up our rest on this side the land of promise. To go over to fight for the possession of our brethren, and to have no part ourselves would be a painful conclusion. The Rechabites were scribes to the lands of others, but had none of their own. Jeremiah 35:8, 9.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the review of the death of one servant of the LORD, and the appointment of another, what a precious thought is it, that our JESUS lives forever. Moses must die, and Joshua must die, and all the servants and ministers of the church must be gathered to their fathers, and see corruption.

But JESUS our dear Redeemer is the same, and his years shall not fail. Oh! what relief, amidst every dying circumstance of every faithful servant of the LORD!

In the prospect of passing over Jordan to the possession of the promised land, may my soul be enabled to act faith, in the certain assurance that, as Joshua was commissioned of the LORD to promise the people, so hath our Almighty Joshua promised and secured it to his. And here, as in a thousand instances, our glorious Joshua hath infinitely exceeded and outdone all that his type represented. Joshua, it is true, went before Israel, and went with Israel. And so doth JESUS in all the way, for he is ever with them, and his Almighty presence their support. But he is also gone before. He hath already taken possession of the promised inheritance in their name. The battle is already fought and won. The conquest is finished, By and by he will return to take his people to himself, that where he is there they may be also. Almighty Captain of my salvation! as thou hast overcome and art set down on the seat of the conqueror in thy FATHER'S throne, so do thou enable me to overcome that I may sit down on thy throne. In all my warfare let me behold thee before me, and may I be enabled to stand still, and see the salvation of my GOD.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

This Chapter contains that memorable history which is handed down to gospel times, with such honourable testimony of the

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

JOSHUA 2:1

(1) ¶ And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

The dismissal of these spies was not from any distrust, but rather a conviction, that the LORD would deliver Jericho into the hand of his people. Joshua sent those men that they might be convinced even before the victory, what the LORD would do. Joshua's conduct here was similar to that of John the Baptist, sending his disciples unto CHRIST, not for his conviction but for theirs. Matthew 11:2, 3. Their coming to the house of Rahab, surely was from the over-ruling power of GOD. That promise is never to be lost sight of: I will bring the blind by a way they know not. Isaiah 42:16. See also Proverbs 3:6. Jericho was about seven or eight miles from the water side. We are not told how those spies got over Jordan. No doubt the LORD that was with them made their way prosperous.

JOSHUA 2:2

(2) And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

The alarm of the king of Jericho was very natural. He and his people had heard of Israel, and of the LORD being among them. Remember GOD's promise. Deuteronomy 2:25.

JOSHUA 2:3-4

(3) And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. (4) And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they *were*:

The history of this woman forms so interesting a subject in the gospel, that we cannot be too particular in attending to all the circumstances the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give us concerning it. If whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, certainly this claims very peculiar regard, since we are expressly told that all this woman did for Israel was done by faith. Hebrews 11:31.

JOSHUA 2:5-7

(5) And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. (6) But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. (7) And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

The apostle James had it in commission from the HOLY GHOST, to tell the church, that the harlot Rahab was justified by works, but then it was, as he observed, the works of faith: meaning that her belief in the GOD of Israel, was not a cold inactive faith, but a faith that was so well founded, through grace, as to manifest itself in all suitable conduct. James 2:25.

JOSHUA 2:8-11

(8) ¶ And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; (9) And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. (10) For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. (11) And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

What a wonder working GOD our GOD is! Jericho is one of the cities devoted to destruction: and yet in this place there is a precious soul to be gathered to his people! Compare Joshua 6:26. with 1 Kings 16:34. In Jericho there is a woman of ill-fame, an harlot: and grace singles her out for the illustrious display of mercy. Reader, remember what the LORD JESUS told the chief priests and the elders; that *publicans and harlots would go into the kingdom of GOD before them*. Matthew 21:31. But the most astonishing thing of all concerning Rahab is, that she was one of the ancestors of the LORD CHRIST, according to the flesh. See Matthew 1:5.

JOSHUA 2:12

(12) Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have showed you kindness, that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

Observe what views she had of JEHOVAH, that the grand security she desired was an oath of appeal to him! Where

should she have learned this? Was not GOD her teacher? Isaiah 48:17.

JOSHUA 2:13

(13) And *that* ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

How earnest are the feelings of natural affection! Are we not taught by this instance to be very anxious for the everlasting welfare of our relations after the flesh, and to feel somewhat of Abraham's longing for the salvation of Ishmael. Genesis 17:18.

JOSHUA 2:14-21

(14) And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. (15) Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house *was* upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. (16) And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. (17) And the men said unto her, *We will be* blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. (18) Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. (19) And it shall be, *that* whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him. (20) And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. (21) And she said, According unto your words, so *be* it. And she sent them

away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

I pass over all the several particulars of the agreement between Rahab and the spies, to call the Reader's attention to the interesting circumstances to which Rahab was enjoined by the spies, as signals between her and Israel. In the scarlet thread which the men of Israel gave Rahab, is there not somewhat of a sacramental design, similar to what GOD had enjoined Israel at the passover, when the blood was to be sprinkled upon the door post? And as, the apostle had it in commission from the HOLY GHOST to tell the church in after ages, that all this referred to the blood of sprinkling of JESUS, who was and is our passover: did not both refer to one and the same thing, that the security of all redeemed souls is only in JESUS? And again, that none of her family at the time of Jericho being destroyed, should go without the doors of the house on pain of death; was not this a still further evidence of the same thing, very plainly proving; that one and the same object was intended to be conveyed under both sacramental signs? See Exodus 12:12, 13. Compared 1 Corinthians 5:7.

JOSHUA 2:22

(22) ¶ And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not.

Reader! do not fail to discern JESUS as the hiding place of his people, when both law and justice pursue them. The Psalmist took great comfort in this view. And why may not you and I? When JESUS *hides* his people, he *manifests* himself. Psalm 32:7.

JOSHUA 2:23-24

(23) So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain, and passed over, and came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all *things* that befell them: (24) And they said unto Joshua, Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

It is very sweet to exercise faith in GOD'S promises, and to enjoy his mercies by anticipation. Reader! remember that is not faith which hath in possession: it is not to trust GOD when the promise is realized. But that is faith which depends upon GOD when we see not how things will go, but believe that all shall go well, because GOD hath said so. Hebrews 13:5.

REFLECTIONS

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

Do not I behold, in the instance of Rahab the harlot, the testimony of that blessed doctrine, that where sin hath abounded grace should much more abound: and as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Take courage, my soul, in this, and in every other instance of the triumphs of GOD thy Saviour. Even in Jericho the LORD will seek out and save his people, if a soul of his be there. The LORD knoweth them that are his. And from all their filthiness, and all their idols, JESUS will cleanse them. Through him shall publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of GOD, while self-righteous Pharisees are cast out. Dear LORD! may thy precious blood be sprinkled on the door of my heart, as the scarlet

thread was fastened to the window of the harlot's house, that in the hour of visitation, as in the destruction of Jericho, thy destroying angel may see that sweet token between my GOD and me, and spare my soul. And convinced of my security and shelter in thy blood and righteousness, may my faith stand firm within, and never go out while the judgments of my GOD are passing, as in the case of Jericho, on the ungodly: for sweet is that assurance, *he that believeth shall not make haste.*

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

concerning thy people. All flesh is corrupt before thee, and all alike filthy and polluted. It is thine own arm which hath brought salvation, and to thee alone be all the glory?

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 3:1

(1) ¶ And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

We are called upon to pay the more regard to this interesting account, because we find, that the LORD himself in after ages appealed to it, as a token to his people, that he was and ever had been their gracious covenant GOD. And depend upon it, Reader, you and I cannot take a better method, of proving the righteous dealings of GOD with our souls, than when remembering all the path our GOD hath led us from our Shittim to Gilgal: from our first entrance through all the

eventful periods of our spiritual and temporal stages to the present moment. Reader! I do not know what your view of those things are. But I do know in my own experience, that faith finds great sweetness when the HOLY GHOST, acting as the Remembrancer of JESUS, brings to my memory afresh some of the many blessed tokens of past goodness the LORD hath shown me. When I can look back, and see how many apparently impassable Jordan were before me, and yet through how many of them the LORD hath brought me, setting up the stone of remembrance and saying, *Hitherto the LORD hath helped me*; I find cause through grace to add, And will he not bring me through all that remain? Reader! I beg you to read the resolution of the Psalmist upon this point. Psalm 77:10-12.

JOSHUA 3:2

(2) And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

Joshua had told the people, (chap. 1:11.) that they were to pass over Jordan. But it doth not appear that they were informed how. Reader! it is good to have faith exercised. Abraham was not told that a ram would be provided when the LORD led him to the mount of sacrifice. Moses had no consciousness that the LORD would dry the Red sea until the hour of need. The sinner little thinks, when first the LORD begins a work of grace in his heart, that deliverance shall come, and in a way so astonishing as the blood and righteousness of JESUS? Doth not our GOD say to us upon numberless occasions, as to the poor man in the gospel, *Believest thou that I am able to do this?* Matthew 9:28.

JOSHUA 3:3

(3) And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

JESUS is the ark of his people. In him as in the ark of old, are lodged the tables of the law, and the mercy seat from whence GOD speaks. My soul! when the HOLY GHOST gives me to see him before me, may I follow the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. And Reader! do observe, this ark is called the ark of the covenant of the LORD our GOD; meaning that CHRIST is GOD'S, and that it is a GOD in covenant with him for all his people. It is sweet to be looking unto the LORD JESUS CHRIST for mercy through him, unto eternal life. Jude 21.

JOSHUA 3:4

(4) Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed *this* way heretofore.

The distance pointed out is striking. I do not think as some have supposed, that the distance ordered between the ark and the people, was that the multitude which followed might not crowd upon one another, so as to prevent the whole from seeing. But I rather think that there was somewhat typical and figurative in it. Under the old dispensation, the people were prohibited from coming nigh. And this was meant to shadow forth the difference between the law and the gospel. See Hebrews 12:18, 19. But in the gospel-state, we that were afar off are brought nigh by the blood of JESUS. Hebrews 10:21, 22. There is somewhat very striking in this command. Two thousand cubits was almost half a mile. The priests

therefore in the face of an enemy's country were to pass over unarmed, and at a distance from the main body of the army. But then they had the ark of GOD's presence with them. Yes, dearest JESUS! where thou art an host of foes cannot make us fear. I would have the Reader remark with me, how much the passing of Jordan represented the river of death. Of this it may be also said to every believer, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." Oh! for the ark of the covenant of GOD, or which is the same thing, JESUS whom that ark represented, to be with me when I pass the dark valley; for then shall I fear no ill while thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Psalm 23:4. Isaiah 43:2.

JOSHUA 3:5

(5) And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

This sanctifying the people meant to set themselves apart from all worldly concerns. It is suitable and proper to withdraw from communion with men, in order to enjoy communion with GOD. And when our GOD is about in a more especial manner to come to bless his people, well may they be found waiting the LORD's approach. James 4:8.

JOSHUA 3:6

(6) And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

I would have the Reader remark with me that the priests, and not the Levites, were here appointed to the service of carrying the ark. See Numbers 4:15. Was not this to show that JESUS in his priestly office, and not the law which the Levites

represented, must go in before the people! Under the law they were seeking out a resting place. In the gospel that rest is found. See Numbers 10:33. Compared with Psalm 132:8. I beg the Reader yet further to remark with me, that heretofore the ark was carried in the midst of the people, implying that GOD was in the midst of his people. But now in going before, did it not imply, that JESUS would go before to take possession in their name? It is not an unsuitable observation neither, to remark, that the priests bearing the ark and going before the people may be supposed to intimate, that it is the office of the ministers of the gospel to go before the people in all appointed ordinances, holding up to their view the person of the LORD JESUS in all his endearing offices, and characters, and relations. Oh, for more of Paul's disposition in the servants of the sanctuary! See 1 Corinthians 2:2.

JOSHUA 3:7

(7) ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.

GOD had before honoured Joshua when returning from searching out the promised land. But not in so eminent a manner as now. I hope the Reader in keeping his eye all along upon Joshua as a type of the ever blessed JESUS, will not forget that it was from the same river of Jordan, and on the entrance of his ministry, that JESUS began to be so distinguished in honour, when a voice from heaven declared him to be the only beloved son of his FATHER. See Matthew 3:16, 17.

JOSHUA 3:8-13

(8) And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan (9) And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God. (10) And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. (11) Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan (12) Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. (13) And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

Reader! while looking at the letter of the precept, on the feet of the priests touching the river, do not overlook that sacred ark, the type of JESUS, as being with them? And though there were to be twelve men to attend the priests, yet these were as witnesses of the miraculous deed to be done that day, and not as party performers. There is somewhat very striking in the expression, *the LORD of all the earth*; meaning that Israel's GOD is GOD of all things; but with Israel only hath he entered into these covenant engagements. I hope the Reader will not fail to observe how in this instance, as in every other, the LORD makes the performance of one mercy to become the sure pledge of all. By the fording of Jordan, was to be proved GOD's promises for the total subduing all Canaan. And wherein do gospel promises differ from the same? Doth not the LORD say, in the fulfillment of every one of them, I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of? Genesis 28:15. Did not Moses, by the spirit of prophecy,

promise this passage to Israel, at least forty years before it came to pass? See Exodus 15:16, 17.

JOSHUA 3:14-16

(14) ¶ And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; (15) And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest,) (16) That the waters which came down from above stood *and* rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that *is* beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea, failed, *and* were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho.

We shall have a much better apprehension of the greatness of this miracle, if we call to mind some of the circumstances connected with it. Jordan, at this time, overflowed, from the mountains of ice which came down from Mount Lebanon being now melted, and had poured themselves into the bosom of Jordan. Had the LORD, by a sudden frost, congealed these waters, the mercy would have been, the same, and his interposition the same; yet then, the miracle would not have appeared so striking. In what a lofty strain have the sacred writers proclaimed this glorious event? See Psalm 114 and Habakkuk 3:8.

JOSHUA 3:17

(17) And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan

Reader, seek grace from GOD the HOLY GHOST to read the whole of this sweet scripture spiritually, and with an eye to GOD'S mercy in JESUS. As Jordan's sacred stream retired, to

make way for the ransomed to pass over; and as the priests' feet stood firm in the river until all was accomplished; so, depend upon it the covenant of grace, in the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS, stands firm in the midst of all the Jordans of this world of sin, and sorrow, and tribulation. The word of GOD saith it, and JESUS ever lives to secure it: the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away: Isaiah 35:10.

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

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

But chiefly thou, dear JESUS! who art both the ark and the resting place, the mercy seat and the security, the all in all of thy people. Oh! be thou ever with me in all places, at all times, in all the Jordans of difficulty, and in all the Canaan for happiness; for without thee nothing is safe, nothing desirable.

Be thou my ark, my sanctuary, my covert, my resting place, for in thy person and righteousness, are the lives of thy people eternally secured and made happy. Unto thee, blessed JESUS, as my everlasting home, do I desire to come, for thou LORD hast dealt bountifully with me.

CHAPTER 4

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

JOSHUA 4:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

While the people were engaged no doubt in contemplating the mercy, and all without the loss of a single Israelite, were passed over, the LORD directs Joshua to a service every way suited to the mercy received: namely, to perpetuate the remembrance of this great event to all ages of the church.

JOSHUA 4:2

(2) Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

Observe, it was not to be the work of every one, but special characters selected for this service. Oh! it is sweet to see our calling. And very sweet to run on JESUS's errands when sent by him. Isaiah 6:8.

JOSHUA 4:3-8

(3) And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

(4) Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: (5) And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: (6) That this may be a sign among you, *that*

when your children ask *their fathers* in time to come, saying, What *mean* ye by these stones? (7) Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. (8) And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

No doubt the choice of twelve stones was intended to manifest, that all the twelve tribes of Israel were equally interested in the memorial. And JESUS had his twelve apostles also. And the New Jerusalem, which this Canaan represented, had its twelve gates, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel upon them, as also the names of the apostles of the LAMB upon the foundations. Revelation 21:12-14.

JOSHUA 4:9-10

(9) And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. (10) ¶ For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hastened and passed over.

The erection of the memorial both on the river and on the land, might be intended to show the salvation of JESUS both by land and by water. Psalm 77:16-20.

JOSHUA 4:11

(11) And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark of the LORD passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.

The distinction between the ark and the people is not noticed for nothing. No doubt much is couched under it. And it may, perhaps, be intended to show, that as the ark rested in the water until all the people were secured from danger, so JESUS, whom the ark represented, will remain with the hindmost of his redeemed ones until every hoof is in safety. Precious JESUS! as thou art first, so last in everything which concerns redemption-work, that in all things thou mightest have the pre-eminence. Colossians 1:17, 18.

JOSHUA 4:12-13

(12) And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them: (13) About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

It is pleasant to see the forwardness of those tribes to lead the people on to victory. They had obtained their settlement.

And who so proper to stir up the LORD'S people as those who have tasted of his grace, and can tell by happy experience what the LORD hath done for their soul. Oh! that you and I, Reader, may feel somewhat of the same spirit of constraint to speak for JESUS, which the Psalmist did: Psalm 66:16.

JOSHUA 4:14

(14) On that day the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.

Reader! is not our Almighty Joshua magnified in the sight of all Israel on that memorable day, when a soul is brought safe over Jordan? Is not JESUS glorified before the throne in the presence of all Israel now in glory, and before all the heavenly host, when a soul is brought home to heaven, or when a soul is recovered by Almighty grace upon earth? Luke 15:10. I do not presume to say so much; but I would humbly ask: was not this magnifying of Joshua when the ark came up out of the river, a representation of the magnifying of JESUS when he came up out of the grave and ascended to glory? Romans 1:4.

JOSHUA 4:15-18

(15) And the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying, (16) Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of Jordan (17) Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, Come ye up out of Jordan (18) And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midst of Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as *they did* before.

Nothing could be more demonstrative of the miraculous holding of the waters, than the sudden return of the flood, when the purpose, for which the LORD held those waters in the hollow of his hand, was accomplished. May we not make a spiritual application of this passage, and observe, that in whatever place the ark of GOD resteth, or in other words, wherever the presence of JESUS is with his people, all the floods of sin are restrained. But if he withdraws, and takes away the influences of his SPIRIT, the glory is departed, the deeps of sin are broken up, and the flood-gates of iniquity pour in upon that people. LORD! I would pray for myself, for my people, and for the nation to which I belong; Take not, Oh! take not, thine HOLY SPIRIT from us. Psalm 51:11.

JOSHUA 4:19

(19) And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho.

The HOLY GHOST is pleased to have the very day recorded for the information of the church in all ages, in which this grand event was accomplished. And if the Reader is curious to make the calculation, he will find that it was the exact time, (wanting only five days) of forty years, which the LORD had said Israel should wander in the wilderness. Reader! as we learn from hence that GOD records his mercies, ought not you and I to record them also? And can we look back to the time, have we the memorandum always to have recourse to, when the LORD brought us over the spiritual Jordan towards the conquest of the Canaanite yet in the land? If not, is the work

yet not begun? These are solemn enquiries: LORD, by thy HOLY SPIRIT write them on our hearts.

JOSHUA 4:20

(20) ¶ And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal

Who knows but that these very stones were remaining in the days of our LORD? And it is not improbable, but as all the words of JESUS were significant and full of grace, JESUS might point to them when he said to the people, when he stood at Bethabara near Jordan, GOD is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. For these twelve stones were monuments of the twelve tribes of the stock of Abraham. And Bethabara seems to have been the very spot in the house of passage, where Joshua and the people passed over. Matthew 3:9. John 1:28.

JOSHUA 4:21-24

(21) And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What *mean* these stones? (22) Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. (23) For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: (24) That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

We meet with many passages in the Bible, of the LORD'S directing his people to gratify the enquiry of their children in all questions of divine things. And what can be more sweet or more suited to the situation of creatures such as we are, passing away one generation after another, than to hand

down from father to son the gracious works of GOD. Exodus 12:26, 27. Deuteronomy 6:19. I only detain the Reader to remark, that the LORD hath appointed the memorandum of one mercy, to connect with it the remembrance of another. The drying up of Jordan was to be the introduction of rehearsing the drying up the Red Sea, though there was *forty years* distance between those events. Our GOD, our JESUS is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. As he was with our fathers so is he with us, *for his mercy endureth forever.*

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

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

CHAPTER 5

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

JOSHUA 5:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

Observe the terror induced in the minds of GOD'S enemies: and no wonder. The mighty stream of Jordan yet more mighty than usual, from the season of the year overflowing its banks, had opened a passage for Israel, and evidently in a miraculous manner. The kings of Canaan recollected the circumstance of the Red Sea also. Who can stand when GOD opposeth? Reader! do not fail to spiritualize this passage, as the HOLY GHOST, it should seem, hath done before you. For when the church of the LORD JESUS, is represented as coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved; that is,

resting on him and his righteousness, the world of carnal men, like these kings of Canaan, is represented as beholding the sight, and exclaiming, *Who is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?* Song Of Solomon 6:10. Such, dear JESUS! is thy church, viewed in thy strength, and complete in thy righteousness!

JOSHUA 5:2-9

(2) At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time. (3) And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. (4) And this *is* the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. (5) Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people *that were* born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* they had not circumcised. (6) For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *that were* men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not show them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. (7) And their children, *whom* he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. (8) And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp, till they were whole. (9) And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

As circumcision was a sign or seal of the everlasting covenant GOD made with Abraham, and evidently referred to Him in whom the law was to be completed: it is not very easy to account for the long neglect of this rite, while the church was

in the wilderness state. Might it not be omitted, from the frequent unbelief, which so many times broke out in the camp? And, as the LORD had sworn in his wrath, that the generation which came out of Egypt, should not enter the land of promise; which, as a type of the great promise of redemption, was referred to in circumcision; probably the Israelites concluded the rite to be no longer their privilege, when the blessing folded up in it they were no longer entitled to. Be this as it may; the LORD commands the rite to be renewed. The people have now entered upon the promised land. This seal reminds them once more of the covenant. It distinguisheth them from their idolatrous neighbours; takes away the reproach of Egypt, who had said, that for mischief the LORD had brought them out to destroy them in the wilderness. The slander is now done away. They are proved to be GOD'S people, and the LORD their GOD. But, Reader, let not you and I stop here. Circumcision had an eye to JESUS. In the Old Testament it was appointed with reference to Him, with whom the everlasting covenant is made, and in whom it is completed. And from our Father's entrance into Canaan, until the coming of JESUS in the flesh, it is plain that it was appointed as a standing ordinance. But when the SON of GOD came in substance of our flesh, and submitted to this Jewish rite, by way of taking upon him the obligation to fulfil the whole law, from that time it ceased to be necessary, or even proper. The substance being come, the shadow is forever done away. Believers in JESUS are included, as the HOLY GHOST taught the church by the apostle, in that circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of CHRIST. Galatians 5:2. Colossians 2:11. Galatians 6:15.

JOSHUA 5:10

(10) ¶ And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

What a beautiful instruction doth Joshua and his army hold forth to all the soldiery, and all armies who profess to have the LORD for their GOD. You observe, that the campaign against Canaan is opened with prayer. And, Reader! never lose sight of this universal maxim, which must hold good in all ages: whatever is begun in prayer will give cause to end in praise. If any one of our soldiers or sailors in our British service should peruse this humble Commentary, I would beg of him to pause in this place; and, while he beholds this General in GOD'S army, with his whole soldiery, bending the knee before the GOD of their salvation, may he learn from hence, that the most lovely of all sights is here manifested before him. True courage can only arise front this source. While GOD is our hope and strength, we need not fear what man can do unto us. It is sure confidence and sure victory when, like another of the LORD'S warriors, the soldier fights in the, LORD'S cause, and can say, as he did, *the sword of the LORD and of Gideon*. Judges 7:20. But while I desire the military Reader to make this observation on the passage, I would call upon every real Christian Reader, whether of the soldiery or not, to make a yet more particular remark on the festival, which Joshua and his army observed in this opening of their campaign, and in the face of the enemy. It was the celebration of the passover. And that passover pointed to CHRIST. Compare Exodus 12:11, with 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8. Luke 22:15. And Reader! do not fail, to connect the services of circumcision and the passover together. When the people

had received one sign or seal of the covenant, to testify their acceptance of it, the LORD brought them to the enjoyment of the other. When the HOLY GHOST hath circumcised the foreskin of the heart, believers are prepared to feast on the body and blood of JESUS. Hence we find in the first days of the gospel church, after the disciples of JESUS had received the HOLY GHOST, and were baptized, the next account is, that they were engaged in breaking of bread and in prayer, that is, celebrating the LORD'S supper. Acts 2:41, 42. I only detain the Reader to make one observation more, on this delightful passage in the history: and it is just to remark, how very gracious is our GOD, that he should feast his people even in the very face of their enemies, and so powerfully restrain those enemies, by his terror put into their hearts, that though all this was done in the plains of Jericho, not a soul ventured to stir, or lift up a sword against them. Reader! depend upon it, so it is now. JESUS will spread his table for his saints, in the presence of their enemies: it is He which anointeth our head, and maketh our cup run over. Psalm 23:5.

JOSHUA 5:11-12

(11) And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the selfsame day. (12) And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

One mercy is followed by another. The people probably found corn upon their entrance on Canaan, in the houses of the inhabitants who dwelt on the coast, and fled at their approach: or as this was the season when the corn of the fields was ripening, their supply might be from thence. Hence

they were enabled to follow up the celebration of the passover, with the feast of the unleavened bread, which the supply of corn furnished them with the means of doing. Exodus 12:17. I desire the Reader particularly to mark with me, the display of divine mercy in the withholding the manna, and giving the people corn. Nothing could be an higher proof of GOD'S care and love for his people, than this supply of food from heaven, while the people were in the wilderness, where there were no fields for corn, and no supply of the common staff of life could be obtained. But when the LORD is pleased to make use of ordinary means, miraculous interpositions are no longer necessary. But let not the Reader overlook the spiritual lesson held forth to us in this sweet scripture, especially, when JESUS hath himself opened its meaning. JESUS himself is the bread of life, which this manna represented. While his church is in a wilderness state, he is, and will be, our unceasing food, conveyed to us in the means of ordinances. But when we have once passed over Jordan, and are come to our heavenly inheritance, we shall have the full enjoyment of JESUS; without the medium of ordinances,—an uninterrupted fruition of our GOD, in glory forever. John 6:48, &c.

JOSHUA 5:13-15

(13) ¶ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adversaries? (14) And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? (15) And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

I bring the whole of these verses into one view because they are connected. And I desire the Reader to attend to the very precious things contained in them. A more interesting portion, perhaps, in reference to the LORD JESUS, cannot be found in the Old Testament. Joshua, we are told, was by Jericho. Perhaps at prayer, or in meditation, seeking suitable grace from the LORD in the critical season now opening before him. He had, at the LORD'S command, observed the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread; and was now following up those services in humbly waiting on the LORD. See Habakkuk 2:1, 2. The sweetest seasons for expecting divine manifestations are, when we have waited upon our GOD, in his appointed way of ordinances. Who was this person to whom Joshua paid such reverence? Was it not the same whom Moses saw at the bush, though there appearing in a different form? Compare. Exodus 3:2-6. If the Reader will look further on to the next chapter (for the close of this is only preparatory to the opening of the next) he will there discover, that this person who appeared to him as a man, is spoken of as JEHOVAH, see Chap. 6:2. And if the Reader will connect with this appearance to Joshua the several appearances made to the patriarchs and other followers of the LORD, in the first ages of the church, he will not be at a loss to discover, that it must have been one and the same person which appeared to these holy men of old, according to the different accounts given of him: Genesis 18:2. 28:13. 32:24, &c. And who then could it be, that appeared thus to Joshua, but he who is indeed captain of the LORD'S, hosts, and is elsewhere called the Captain of our salvation. Hebrews 2:10. Who but thee, thou blessed JESUS! hath ever so manifested thy concern and love for thy people, as to come down to deliver them from all

their foes? How sweetly do we behold in this, and all the other instances we meet with in thy word, thy gracious longings, for tabernacling in substance of our flesh, when by becoming man for us and for our salvation, thou hast made us sons of GOD! Oh! thou dear Redeemer! even now as then, do I not know, that all the gracious words which believers hear from GOD, and all his gracious manifestations, are delivered through thy person, and by thy mouth? John 1:18. I beg the Reader to remark with me, that as Joshua so readily and so cheerfully surrendered his authority to this person, and fell before him with sacred worship, certainly his faith in JESUS, was strikingly shown by those acts, and his views of salvation by him, was evidently declared. Hebrews 11:32, &c.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! in the perusal of this chapter, stand still and see the salvation of GOD! Behold how thy GOD puts terror in the hearts of his and thy enemies! when thy GOD, thy JESUS, shall have conducted thee over Jordan, their hearts shall melt away, neither shall they have the spirit any more to make their attacks upon thee. In the consciousness of this, I would say, LORD! grant me the true circumcision of the SPIRIT! lead me, blessed JESUS, to the banqueting house of thy love, and may my soul keep the feast of the true passover, testifying to the whole congregated world of angels and of men, that I seek salvation only in thy blood and righteousness. And when the manna of ordinances shall cease: when, O my Saviour, I shall have done with my day and generation here below: bring me to that country, that promised land and city, whose builder and maker is GOD: and give me to eat of that hidden

manna, which thou hast promised to all thy people. Precious JESUS! do thou manifest thyself to me, as thou didst to thy servant Joshua, as the Captain of the LORD'S host; and the captain of my salvation. Was it not in these several appearances of thine? Was it not to give Old Testament saints a token of thy favor, and of the good will thou hadst towards our nature? Was it not to convince them that thou wast longing for the time, when as really and properly man, thou wouldest bear our nature, and perform that great work, which for our redemption sake thou hadst engaged to do, in the covenant made between thy FATHER and thyself? And now thou hast really and truly become man, and finished the work the FATHER gave thee to do, wilt thou not to me, and to all thy New Testament believers, agreeably to thy promise, manifest thyself to our souls, otherwise than thou doest to the world? Come dear JESUS, come to my soul in ordinance seasons, in the sweet promises of thy word, in the tokens of thy providences; comfort me, strengthen me, cheer my heart, revive my poor languishing frame, brighten up my evidences, warm my whole soul with thy love; and let me see, and my sole happiness be found in this, that thy love is shed abroad, from thine heart to mine, and that thou, and thou alone, art formed there, the only hope of glory!

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

This chapter is the continuation of the former. He which appeared to Joshua in the close of the foregoing chapter, begins in this to give directions, as captain of the LORD'S host,

how Joshua is to proceed in the reduction of Jericho. Here is the progress of the siege, and the event of it, in the overthrow of Jericho. Joshua pronounceth a curse upon the builder of Jericho, whoever in after ages should attempt it.

JOSHUA 6:1

(1) ¶ Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

If we spiritualize this history we shall find the outlines of it not uninteresting. When GOD layeth siege to a soul, there is no accommodation for peace. There is no truce in this war. None goeth out, and none cometh in. The sinner makes no overtures to throw down his arms and to surrender. And JESUS must have a complete victory, or the object of salvation is not answered. 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5.

JOSHUA 6:2

(2) And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour.

Reader! I beg of you to remark with me, that this is the same person spoken of in the preceding chapter, as captain of the LORD'S host: for, certainly as there is no interruption in the history from what went before this is the beginning of the discourse, in opening the cause for which the captain of the LORD'S host, appeared unto Joshua. I need not, I should hope, remind the Reader, that He which was called the captain of the LORD'S host in that chapter, is in this said to be JEHOVAH. A plain proof that JESUS is JEHOVAH; One with the FATHER, over all, GOD blessed forever. Romans 9:5. I desire the Reader to observe the LORD'S expression, I *have* given: that is, the thing is as good as done that GOD appoints. We have a similar

expression concerning the intercession of the LORD JESUS for Peter before his fall, which furnisheth, as in this instance, a sweet thought for faith to feed upon. Luke 22:31, 32.

JOSHUA 6:3-5

(3) And ye shall compass the city, all *ye* men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. (4) And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. (5) And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

This plan of omnipotence so astonishing as it appears to human reason, was evidently intended for the glory of God, and the exercise of the faith of Israel. But as the ark, in this instance as in the former, at the fording of Jordan, formed the principal object, how sweetly when beheld and explained in a gospel sense, doth it set forth the sure victory of God's people, before whom JESUS goes, leading on his army to conquest. The LORD had promised Israel that his people should possess nations, whose cities were great and fenced up to heaven. And here he graciously undertook to raze those walls to the ground before them. Deuteronomy 9:1.

JOSHUA 6:6

(6) ¶ And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD.

Every verse, and every circumstance contained in a verse, relating to the reduction and overthrow of Jericho, is

important and worthy to be attended to, if we view the whole as undoubtedly it ought to be viewed, with a typical reference to our spiritual conquests, through JESUS, over all the enemies of our salvation. Observe how the campaign opens. It is with the movement of the ark. Yes; if JESUS moves forward all his people are to follow: so the church in the wilderness. Exodus 13:21. So the church now, in following the LAMB whithersoever he goeth. Revelation 14:4. Observe also, how the priests are to precede the ark with their trumpets. GOD's ministers, in all ages of the church, are his heralds, to proclaim the year of the LORD. The jubilee trumpet was certainly a type of the glorious gospel. And do not the servants of JESUS now, sound an alarm in his holy mountain, when they hold up JESUS to the view of the poor sinner, and denounce, as to the men of Jericho, vengeance to the haters of the LORD: but pardon, mercy, and peace, to the lovers of JESUS? Isaiah 27:13.

JOSHUA 6:7-8

(7) And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD. (8) And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

There must have been somewhat particularly animating when the trumpets were blown, which bid defiance to the enemy, but inspired courage to the LORD's people. We have a striking instance in the encouragement it gave Ahijah against Jeroboam: 2 Chronicles 13:12. The office of the priest was intended as encouraging also, because it promised the LORD's presence. See Deuteronomy 20:1-4.

JOSHUA 6:9-10

(9) And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets. (10) And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall *any* word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

Though the armed men went before, yet their services would not be required. The victory GOD our Saviour had graciously reserved to himself. Silence throughout the camp intimated as much, similar to what was said to Israel, at the Red Sea. Exodus 14:13, 14.

JOSHUA 6:11

(11) So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about *it* once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

I cannot help detaining the Reader to remark, what an odd appearance this must have made to the enemy on the walls of Jericho, who no doubt looked very anxiously on, from the moment they saw Israel had passed the river, Reader! it is so with the carnal world in their view of all the operations of faith. JESUS and his saints, like Joshua and his fellows, are men wondered at, neither can the unregenerate enter into any apprehension of what their spiritual life is: see Zechariah 3:8. with 1 Corinthians 4:9-13.

JOSHUA 6:12-13

(12) And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. (13) And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

Rams'-horns were apparently contemptible instruments. Silver trumpets had been used in the temple service. Numbers 10:2. But is there not a sweet instruction veiled under this? JESUS worketh by base things of the world to confound things that are mighty. The foolishness of preaching is blessed of Him, to throw down the wisdom of this world, as the walls of Jericho are made to fall at the blast of the ram's-horn. How sweetly Paul recounts this, when he says the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty. 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5.

JOSHUA 6:14

(14) And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

What, perhaps, at the first view and on the first day, when the people marched round Jericho, most seriously alarmed the men of Jericho in their entrenchments; probably by the time that six days had passed, began now to excite security, and even laughter. Alas! the sinner is never so near his ruin, as, when he becomes hardened in his iniquity. When men say peace, then, sudden destruction cometh upon them. I Thessalonians 5:2, 3.

JOSHUA 6:15-16

(15) And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. (16) And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

Probably this was the LORD'S day; one of the seven days must have been so; and as this was the glorious day of victory, it is more than probable that this might have been the very day.

No doubt the whole process, both in the preceding six days, and now, seven times going round the walls on the seventh was intended for the exercise of the people's faith. And hence the Apostle next to the arm of JESUS, ascribes all the victory to this glorious principle, when he tells us, that it was by faith the walls fell down. Hebrews 11:30. But I beg the Reader to remark with me, to what an exalted degree of faith, must the mind of Joshua have been carried, when, before a single stone fell, and exactly at finishing the seventh time of compassing the walls, he commanded the people, to shout. Dearest JESUS! what cannot a lively active faith in thy precious salvation, and the assurance of being interested in it, do? Had not Balaam this victory in contemplation, when he was constrained before the son of Zippor, to testify that the LORD his GOD was with Israel, and the shout of a king in his camp. Numbers 23:21. And was not this shout, when commanded by the LORD, like the triumphs of faith answering to the promise of GOD, by the words of his ministers, as did the trumpets of the priests? I cannot dismiss this view of the subject without detaining the Reader just to observe, that an ancient writer upon the passage, hath very properly remarked, that as GOD'S people compass the walls of their enemies round about by faith, during the six days of their pilgrimage, and though they sometimes go heavily on, from the body of sin and death they carry about with them, none of the enemies' entrenchments all the while seeming to give way; yet on the seventh day of salvation, when their GOD and Saviour shalt descend from heaven, with a shout and the voice of the archangel, and the trump of GOD; the whole of Satan's kingdom shall then fall at once before our JESUS; and his people shall go up and enter in, to the everlasting pos-

session of their Canaan! But, Reader, remember, that in all this there is nothing of human strength or human foresight. Every event in the circumstances of GOD'S people joins issue, with that voice, not by might tear by power, but by my SPIRIT, saith the LORD. Zechariah 4:6.

JOSHUA 6:17

(17) ¶ And the city shall be accursed, *even* it, and all that *are* therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

Before the entry upon Jericho, Joshua gives suitable directions for the government of the people in their victory, and makes known the divine will concerning it. Reader! observe in this appointment, how the line is drawn between him that feareth the LORD, and him that feareth not. Malachi 3:18.

JOSHUA 6:18-19

(18) And ye, in any wise keep *yourselves* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselves* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. (19) But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are* consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

Is there not a sweet spiritual sense here? Doth not GOD mean to say, that they who have JESUS for their portion, should see in him all they need, and not have their eyes look with an evil covetousness, after any of the perishing things around them? Habakkuk 2:9.

JOSHUA 6:20

(20) So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Pause, Reader, and behold in this instance, the wonderful work of GOD! See how the LORD fights for his people! And when you have duly pondered the history, spiritualize it in the yet far sweeter subject of salvation by JESUS, our Almighty Joshua; and rest assured, that such, but only in an infinitely higher degree, will be the triumphs of thy GOD and Saviour, followed by his holy army, in the day when all the walls, which are fenced up to heaven, shall fall before him, and his redeemed return from Zion, with songs of everlasting joy upon their head. Isaiah 35:10. Revelation 12:10.

JOSHUA 6:21-25

(21) And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword. (22) But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. (23) And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. (24) And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. (25) And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

I have brought these verses together into one point of view, because they present to the Reader in one and the same moment what the apostle saith: *Behold the goodness and*

severity of GOD. Romans 11:22. What was there in the character and conduct of Rahab, which could have entitled her to favor above her countrymen? Is it not plain that grace made all the difference? Doth not this history proclaim what JEHOVAH himself had before proclaimed, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. Exodus 33:19. I hope my Reader is one of those who hath learned that grand truth: *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* Genesis 18:25. And if so, this will serve to guide him through a thousand perplexing circumstances he may meet with, both in the works of providence and grace. We are poor blind creatures, and see but a very little way into the plan of GOD'S government. Depend upon it, by and by, when we come to see the whole, and to know, even as we are known, this will be fully manifested, that GOD *is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* Psalm 114:17. I refer the Reader to what the HOLY GHOST hath said on this subject, and every other of a similar nature, by his servant the apostle, as a full answer to all the impious objections of the unbeliever; Romans 9:14-26.

JOSHUA 6:26

(26) And Joshua adjured *them* at that time, saying, Cursed *be* the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest *son* shall he set up the gates of it.

Evidently Joshua acted in this adjuration, under the immediate influence of the SPIRIT of the LORD. The event proves it, for in after ages, when *Hial*, the *Bethelite*, built Jericho, what Joshua had predicted came to pass: see I Kings 16:34.

JOSHUA 6:27

(27) So the LORD was with Joshua; and his fame was *noised* throughout all the country.

In the strict sense of the original, that the word of the LORD was with Joshua, no doubt is meant the uncreated word, as with Moses during the whole of his ministry. Exodus 3:4. Acts 7:38.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE! my soul, again and again, over the several parts of this most interesting chapter, and beg of GOD the HOLY GHOST to give thee to see the gospel sense of it, in thine own history. How was my heart, like Jericho, shut up, when the LORD laid siege to my soul! when without were fightings, within were fears! But when the LORD seemed to delay the execution of his anger against me, and destruction did not immediately follow, my confidence, like the men of Jericho, revived, and my rebellious heart became again stout. Oh! thou dearest JESUS, thou Almighty Joshua, when by thy SPIRIT, thou didst break down all The walls and resistances of my carnal nature, and didst cause the weapons of sin to fall out of my hands; then didst thou conquer my soul, and make me a willing captive in the day of thy power! Reader! let you and I, while contemplating with holy joy the victory of JESUS, rejoice with trembling, in beholding the inflexible justice of GOD over his enemies. Oh! the discriminating grace of GOD to his people. Oh! for an heart to love and adore such unparalleled mercy! LORD! give us grace to lay low in the dust, in token of our nothingness, and be ever ready to ascribe the whole of salvation, from beginning to end, to GOD and the LAMB.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 7:1

(1) ¶ But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

Observe, Reader, though but one person is said to have taken of the accursed thing, yet, the whole of Israel are included in the trespass. And the reason is plain. Israel is here considered as a body, and if one member transgress, of consequence the whole body is implicated. Doth not this suggest to the Reader, that solemn doctrine of the fall, in which, *by one man's disobedience many were made sinners*. And doth not the same doctrine lead by grace the Reader to that glorious soul-transporting truth, that *as in Adam all die, in CHRIST shall all be made alive*. See those scriptures, Romans 5:12 to the end. 1 Corinthians 15:22.

JOSHUA 7:2-3

(2) And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. (3) And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; *and* make not all the people to labour thither; for they *are but* few.

The scouts were not interrupted in their progress by the enemy, it seems, though for the sin of Achan the LORD intended to chastise Israel.

JOSHUA 7:4-5

(4) So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. (5) And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

Reader! spiritualize the passage, and say: Doth not your heart melt, when at any time the enemy seemeth to triumph, when from unbelief; or disobedience, or backsliding, the LORD hath a controversy with you? See that sweet text of Ezra, 9:6–10.

JOSHUA 7:6

(6) ¶ And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

Every step in the conduct of Joshua on this occasion deserves attention. He was unconscious of the cause, and for the moment, in the paroxysm of his distress, had forgotten to reflect, that it must have been some offence which induced it. Reader! depend upon it, if at any time the LORD JESUS seems

to frown, the cause, if searched out, will be soon discovered; sin is at the bottom. And if sin be felt by the soul heavy, depend upon it, our affliction, be what it may, will appear light. The church thought so, when she said, *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins.* Lamentations 3:39, 40.

JOSHUA 7:7

(7) And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

After Joshua had humbled himself before the LORD, and lain low in the dust, he now takes hold of GOD'S strength to make peace. JESUS is the strength and peace of his people. Isaiah 27:5.

JOSHUA 7:8-9

(8) O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! (9) For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear *of it*, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

Joshua advanceth in his argument of wrestling with GOD, and pleads, as the strongest and best of all arguments, the glory and honour of his name. What wilt thou do unto thy great name? Reader! mark it down as a memorandum, that GOD pledgeth his faithfulness for the fulfillment of all his promises in CHRIST JESUS. Precious assurance! JESUS is himself the great promise of the Bible. And in him all other promises are folded up and included. We have not only his blood and righteousness, our security for the fulfillment of them: but our

GOD and FATHER is engaged, in all his covenant engagements, by his word and by his oath, to the same. You and I may, therefore, plead with our GOD upon all occasions, as Joshua did, the glory and honour of JEHOVAH's name, as the most certain security for the accomplishment of all his promises in JESUS. LORD! if the enemy triumph, where is our confidence in JESUS? It matters not what becomes of us, or if our worthless names were to perish forever: but thine honour is a thousand times dearer than our lives. Oh! never let the enemy say, *Where is now thy GOD?* These are sweet and powerful pleadings before the throne: for here is found in them the work of the HOLY GHOST, enabling the soul so to plead; the faithfulness of the FATHER, and the honour of his name; and the never-failing covenant, blood and righteousness of JESUS. See also, another beautiful instance of this kind: Exodus 32:11-14.

JOSHUA 7:10

(10) ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?

Observe how instantly the LORD answers prayer. So Daniel found it while he was yet speaking. Daniel 9:21. It is even so, when we lodge our sorrows and complaints before GOD. Here lies all the mighty difference between the carnal and the awakened. Carnal men in their crosses complain of GOD. Gracious souls complain to GOD. Where shall we go in our troubles, but to the LORD JESUS? See Job 23:3, 4.

JOSHUA 7:11

(11) Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of

the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff.

The LORD mercifully points to the cause. Yes! unless the HOLY GHOST discovers to us our sins, never shall we be convinced of them. John 16:8.

JOSHUA 7:12

(12) Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.

Such will be the issue in all generations. Sin separates between the LORD and man, and it is JESUS only which makes up the breach, by his blood and righteousness. Reader! mark the solemn expression of the LORD'S determination; in which the LORD saith, neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Oh! for grace to search out the *Achan* in the heart; to accept the punishment of our iniquity; to put away the ungodly thing, and to come under that blood of sprinkling, which alone cleanseth from all sin. Leviticus 26:41, 42. Hebrews 12:24.

JOSHUA 7:13-15

(13) Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow: for thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *There is* an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. (14) In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, *that* the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man. (15) And it shall be, *that* he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he

hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel.

Reader! doth not your heart tremble while this examination is making? Do you not feel interested in the prospect of a similar enquiry, which must one day take place in your own circumstances? May there not be an Achan in your heart? Have you looked diligently, searched the ground of your hopes, and seen whether JESUS be indeed your security? have you heard that precious voice, referring to your own case: *deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom!* Oh! for assurance in a matter of such infinite concern. Job 33:23, 24.

JOSHUA 7:16-18

(16) ¶ So Joshua rose up early in the morning, and brought Israel by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken: (17) And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken: (18) And he brought his household man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

Observe, Reader! the tribe of Judah, out of which our LORD, after the flesh, sprang, had an *Achan* in it. And only of twelve disciples the LORD had a Judas. Dearest Redeemer! let me pause to admire and adore thy wonderful condescension! In all things, and in all alliances, how precious is it to see thee going before us! Hebrews 2:17, 18.

JOSHUA 7:19

(19) And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide *it* not from me.

Observe what a beautiful example Joshua holds forth to judges, and men in authority, when exercising their judicial power over the guilty. No railing accusation, but the most patient language. There needed no confession by way of gaining information, for the same LORD, who by lot pointed to the very man, could with equal ease have pointed to the crime. But it was, perhaps, meant in mercy to Achan, that by confessing his sin, the LORD might be merciful to his soul in another world, though suffering the just reward of his deeds in the body in this. Luke 23:39-43.

JOSHUA 7:20-22

(20) And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: (21) When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. (22) So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, *it was* hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

Achan (or as he is called in 1 Chronicles 2:7. *Achar*) which signifies trouble, corresponded to the evil he had brought upon Israel. Alas! what endless troubles do not the same lusts of the eye, and the corruption of the heart, induce in life!

JOSHUA 7:23-26

(23) And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. (24) And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. (25) And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and

burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. (26) And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day.

It is awful to behold the sure effects of sin. It is awful to behold how it involves a man's posterity in the commission of it. Oh! all-precious JESUS! where, but for thee, would the sin of our first parent Adam have involved the everlasting ruin of all his race! And what door of hope, but in thy blood and righteousness, should any of his posterity have found to have escaped the wrath to come? Is it not from this very thing, in the salvation of JESUS, the HOLY GHOST commissioned the prophet in after ages, when pointing to the gospel church to proclaim that from thence, the LORD would give her a door of hope. For who but JESUS is the hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof? Jeremiah 14:8. And when doth JESUS appear more lovely, more interesting and desirable than when the soul is brought down to the deepest of soul distresses by reason of sin in the valley of *Achor*? Hosea 2:14, 15.

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BEHOLD, my soul, in the dreadful example of *Achan*, the ruined state of our corrupt nature: and, while justly condemning him, learn to search thyself. Oh! who can stand in GOD'S sight, and challenge strict enquiry. LORD! I would say; *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight can no man living be justified!* Teach me, thou blessed SPIRIT of all truth, teach me to look into myself; to lay my hand with trembling and godly fear upon my heart, and ask how my GOD is sanctified? How are his commands revered? And how

his name and majesty honoured? Alas! I fear from the principle of self-love and self-deception, I shall make no discovery equal to what the state really is. Teach me then, thou HOLY SPIRIT, so to stand convinced, of the multitude of transgressions which are secret to my own knowledge, but which are all open to the light of GOD'S countenance, that solemnly condemned in my own heart I may fly to JESUS, take refuge in his all-atoning blood and justifying righteousness; that I may plead this, and this only, before the throne, under all the self-reproaches of my own mind, the charges of Satan, the curses of GOD'S broken law, and the holy demands of his justice. Here, dearest JESUS, do I fix my hope. On thee do I hang all my expectations of pardon, mercy, and peace, through thy blood. And when the demand is made, what I have to say, this shall be all my plea: *Thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my GOD.*

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 8:1

(1) ¶ And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to

Ai: see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land:

Observe, the renewal of the friendly intercourse between GOD and his people, begins on GOD'S part. If we love him, it is because he first loved us. Probably Joshua paused on the further prosecution of war, after what had happened, of Israel being chased by the men of Ai: the LORD therefore encourageth him. Reader! it is sweet amidst all our doubts and fears in our spiritual warfare, to hear the voice of JESUS calling us to come on. Song Of Solomon 5:2.

JOSHUA 8:2

(2) And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it.

How gracious the LORD promiseth! Is it not so, in all our wars? The final issue is not doubtful. Romans 16:20. Observe how the LORD giveth the spoil and the cattle now to Israel, not as in the case of Jericho. See chap. 6:19. And observe, moreover, that the LORD graciously condescendeth to teach Joshua, by an ambush, how to war. The prophet Isaiah, ascribeth the knowledge of the husbandman to the LORD'S teaching. And David refers all his power and might in war to the same source: compare Isaiah 28:24 to the end, with Psalm 144:1, 2. It is most sweet and precious, to refer all our powers, of what kind soever they may be, unto the LORD. Isaiah 42:16.

JOSHUA 8:3-9

(3) ¶ So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour,

and sent them away by night. (4) And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, *even* behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready: (5) And I, and all the people that *are* with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, (6) (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. (7) Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. (8) And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, *that* ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you. (9) Joshua therefore sent them forth: and they went to lie in ambush, and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai: but Joshua lodged that night among the people.

How beautiful to observe piety blended with valor. No doubt, after Joshua had arranged and formed the disposition of his army, according to the command of GOD, he retired to this valley, where he lodged that night among the people, to enjoy communion with GOD in prayer. Like another Jacob, who, when he had sent his little army over the brook, stayed to wrestle with his Covenant-head and GOD in prayer: or, like a greater than Jacob, and of whom Joshua was a type, after he had sent the multitudes away, went up into a mountain apart to pray. See Genesis 32:23, 24. Matthew 14:23.

JOSHUA 8:10-22

(10) And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. (11) And all the people, *even the people* of war that *were* with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north side of Ai: now *there was* a valley between them and Ai. (12) And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city. (13) And when they had set the people, *even* all the host that *was* on the north of the city, and their liers in wait

on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley. (14) And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw *it*, that they hasted and rose up early, and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wist not that *there were* liers in ambush against him behind the city. (15) And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. (16) And all the people that *were* in Ai were called together to pursue after them: and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city. (17) And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel, that went not out after Israel: and they left the city open, and pursued after Israel. (18) And the LORD said unto Joshua, Stretch out the spear that *is* in thy hand toward Ai; for I will give it into thine hand. And Joshua stretched out the spear that *he had* in his hand toward the city. (19) And the ambush arose quickly out of their place, and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and hasted and set the city on fire. (20) And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven, and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers. (21) And when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city ascended, then they turned again, and slew the men of Ai. (22) And the other issued out of the city against them; so they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side: and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape.

I pass over, in a short remark, the mercy of the LORD vouchsafed Israel in this victory, to call the Reader's attention, to the manner in which the LORD was pleased to appoint the victory should be obtained; and that was, seemingly, in being overcome. Israel for awhile appeared as routed, and become an easy prey, and the enemy triumphed with an high hand. Reader, is it not so with our Almighty Joshua and his army in their warfare? Do not his people seem to flee before their enemies? When they fall, doth not the foe cry, Aha! so would

we have it: and like that monster of old, who, was a type of the devil, doth he not still say, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil." But, our JESUS conquers, even by apparently being overcome. By dying and by death he overcame death. And by his cross he spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them openly. Oh! thou glorious Captain of our salvation, to thee belongeth the whole victory. In becoming weak thou hast conquered the strong: and in poverty opened the true riches. By thy humiliation in taking upon thee our nature, and by thy death and passion, thou hast gotten thyself the victory. LORD, lead me on in all my spiritual warfare, under thy guidance and protection: for thou art my strength and my song, and art become my salvation. Isaiah 12:2.

JOSHUA 8:23-29

(23) ¶ And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua. (24) And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword, until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned unto Ai, and smote it with the edge of the sword. (25) And *so* it was, *that* all that fell that day, both of men and women, *were* twelve thousand, *even* all the men of Ai. (26) For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. (27) Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. (28) And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, *even* a desolation unto this day. (29) And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day.

The sacred historian relates in those verses, the improvement which Israel made of their victory; and a glorious one it was; because there was nothing done here, but what was agreeable to the divine appointment. If the Reader keeps in view, the spiritual sense of those wars he meets with in the holy word, and recollects while reading those accounts, that these things were typical of JESUS and his army, subduing all the enemies of our salvation; his mind will be led to this most certain conclusion, that the victory cannot be complete, until the LORD JESUS hath put all his enemies under his footstool. See 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26, compared with Hebrews 2:3, 9.

(30) ¶ Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal,

Observe, how lovely it is, when even war is not suffered to interrupt religious services to GOD. Though Joshua was now getting more and more into the heart of the enemies' country, yet he will pause to bless GOD, Oh! that all the victories of Israel now, were thus followed up with praise!

JOSHUA 8:31

(31) As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up *any* iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings.

The Reader will find this command twice given. Deuteronomy 11:29, 30. Deuteronomy 27:2. And what day so proper, as the day made remarkable by a plenitude of mercies!

JOSHUA 8:32-33

(32) And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

(33) And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

Observe, the ark is particularly noticed. And when the sacrifices were offered, and the law of curses was read, and the altar itself set up, upon the very spot Mount Ebal, where the curses were to be pronounced, who doth not see, or will not behold, how sweetly all these things pointed to the ever-blessed JESUS, whom that altar represented, and who is expressly said, to be made sin for us, and to have redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in him. Is he not the ark and the altar, the high priest and the sacrifice? Galatians 3:13. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

JOSHUA 8:34-35

(34) And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. (35) There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

It is a most profitable thing to have the law often read, in order that, by viewing the universal condemnation of it, the precious delivery from it by the law-fulfilling, law-expiating, and sin-atoning merits, and blood of JESUS, might become more exceedingly precious. For certain it is, the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to leave it upon record, that by the law is

the knowledge of sin, and it becomes a blessed schoolmaster to CHRIST. And I venture to think, that it is on this account, the Ten Commandments are placed over the altars of our churches, and read every LORD'S day, in order that true believers in CHRIST, may see and confess the justice of their condemnation, in the very moment they are looking up to that precious blood of JESUS, as represented at the table, being shed to wash away the sins of all his people. Romans 7:7. Galatians 3:24.

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

CHAPTER 9

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 9:1-2

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when all the kings which *were* on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard *thereof*; (2) That they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

Reader! observe, how all nations unite against Israel. No doubt, the *Hittite* and the *Amorite*, had their jealousies and struggles one among another for preeminence, as well as other people; but, yet there is but one common cause among them, when the LORD'S people are the object. Was it not so in after ages, when the LORD of his people himself, was brought before Herod and Pilate. Foes as they had been to each other, yet when JESUS and his cause comes in view, the same day they are made friends together. Luke 23:12. Is it not so now? Are not all the parties of sin confederates against JESUS? Psalm 83:2-7.

JOSHUA 9:3

(3) ¶ And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

The Gibeonites, as appears by the 17th verse, possessed four cities in the country of the Hivites.

JOSHUA 9:4-6

(4) They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; (5) And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* mouldy. (6) And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.

I pass over the historical relation of the Gibeonites conduct, to direct the Reader to the spiritual gospel sense of the passage. Are not those Gibeonites a picture of the Gentile Church, coming to our Almighty Joshua, in all the poverty of the tattered garments of a ruined nature, and from having heard of the wonders wrought by the GOD of Israel in a covenant way, earnest to seek the redemption of their life, in any manner, and upon any terms, the LORD shall think proper? Reader, bring the subject nearer home. Are not we ourselves by nature like the men of Gibeon, being Gentiles and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise? And as such, until introduced into the privilege of the church of JESUS, and brought nigh by his blood, may it not be said of us, that we are from a far country? For who so far from salvation by JESUS, as those who sit under his gospel, and yet to whom it is the savour of death unto death? Ephesians 2:11-13. 2 Corinthians 2:16.

JOSHUA 9:7-14

(7) And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? (8) And they said unto Joshua, We *are* thy servants. And Joshua said

unto them, Who *are* ye? and from whence come ye? (9) And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, (10) And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which *was* at Ashtaroth. (11) Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We *are* your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. (12) This our bread we took hot *for* our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: (13) And these bottles of wine, which we filled, *were* new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. (14) And the men took of their victuals, and asked not *counsel* at the mouth of the LORD.

The, deceit which the Gibeonites made use of, blinded the eyes of Israel. And it is astonishing it should, so: for in the close of the defeat of Ai, Joshua caused Israel to hear the command of GOD, that no covenant of peace was to be made with the inhabitants of Canaan, on any consideration whatever. See Deuteronomy 7:1, 2. Yet it is worth our observation at the same time, that certain provision for peace, the gracious LORD had made, concerning those nations, like Gibeon, who accepted overtures of peace. I beg the Reader particularly to consult on this point, Deuteronomy 20:10, 11. And is there not much of gospel here? Is it not thus, that our Almighty Joshua sends out his ambassadors to propound pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of his cross, and prays sinners in CHRIST'S stead, to be reconciled to GOD? 2 Corinthians 5:20.

JOSHUA 9:15

(15) ¶ And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

Reader! do not fail to behold your own interest and concern in this history. Are you come, as the men of Gibeon, to seek peace in JESUS? And hath your Almighty Joshua made peace with you, and entered into covenant with you, and made you his? Read that precious passage of JESUS'S love to this purport, concerning his church: Ezekiel 16:8.

JOSHUA 9:16

(16) And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbours, and *that* they dwelt among them.

When we consider the motives for which Gibeon sought the peace of Israel, because as they said, they had, heard of the LORD GOD of Israel: when we add to this consideration, that the people of Israel, were all of them to a man, led to make peace with them they knew not how: and when we consider yet further, that the LORD gave Israel an account of the Gibeonites, as we read in the next chapter, the most glorious victory Joshua ever had, we cannot but be led to reflect that the hand of GOD was in it. Dearest JESUS! is it not thus, that thy kingdom is to be extended, and that the Gentiles are to come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy shining? Isaiah 60:3.

JOSHUA 9:17-18

(17) And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. (18) And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation

had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

The murmuring of the congregation, on account of the mercy shown Gibeon, serves to remind us, of the displeasure of the elder brother in the parable, because of the mercy shown the younger. The case is similar. Our LORD thereby evidently meant to show, how, in the first instance, our elder brother the Jew is hurt, at his younger brother the Gentile being made a fellow-heir, and partaker of the same promise in JESUS. But dearest JESUS! how doth it tend to endear thee to the love of all thy people! And how endeared no less is the FATHER'S grace and mercy thereby to every believer's heart. Luke 15:25. to the end; Ephesians 3:6. Isaiah 49:6.

JOSHUA 9:19-21

(19) But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. (20) This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. (21) And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

Observe, how the LORD overruled the minds of his people, in behalf of Gibeon. See this doctrine illustrated more fully: Genesis 20:3-7.

JOSHUA 9:22-23

(22) ¶ And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We *are* very far from you; when ye dwell among us? (23) Now therefore ye *are* cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

The curse here denounced by Joshua, is done away by the privilege the Gibeonites were brought into, as incorporated among GOD'S heritage. JESUS hath redeemed both Israel and the Gentile church from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them. And if they were doomed to servitude, it was a service that is perfect freedom when employed in the house of GOD.

JOSHUA 9:24-25

(24) And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing. (25) And now, behold, we *are* in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

Reader! remark with me, what grace teacheth. Doth not every poor sinner, when he is brought by the HOLY GHOST to JESUS, our Almighty Joshua, doth he not say: Behold I am in thine hand, do LORD as it seemeth right by me.

JOSHUA 9:26

(26) And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

Here, surely, I behold my JESUS, delivering me from the hand of every enemy, and rebuking Satan, who stands to accuse me. Zechariah 3:1, 2.

JOSHUA 9:27

(27) And Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he should choose.

Oh! what an honour were those Gibeonites brought to, in this best of all services. If the Reader will consult the prophecy of Isaiah, he will there discover, that the LORD hath promised to gather all nations to see his glory; and that he will make of the poor heathens, like Gibeon, priests and Levites for his sanctuary: Isaiah 66: 18-21.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 10:1

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them;

I have often pondered over the name of this king, and been led to wonder whence he derived it. ADONAI signifies LORD, and hence our JESUS is called ADONAI, Psalm 110:1, where it is said, JEHOVAH the LORD said unto my ADONAI, LORD. And again

by the prophet, I saw also the ADONAI, meaning Christ, sitting upon a throne, &c. Isaiah 6:1, And his other name, *Zedak* signifies *righteousness*. But what reference had his name to his character? Alas! so far from being righteous, he joins in league with the enemies of GOD. Reader! what a pity is it in the present day, to discover so many precious names of scripture, given to men who have nothing precious in them!

JOSHUA 10:2-4

(2) That they feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai, and all the men thereof *were* mighty. (3) Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying, (4) Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel.

If Gibeon was so much greater than *Ai*, and yet had found it necessary to make peace with Israel, had Adonizedek been equally wise, would he not have followed the example? See, Reader, the difference between nations as, well as persons. And is it not grace which maketh men to differ? 1 Corinthians 4:7. Observe, moreover, that as Joshua, after the treaty with Gibeon, did not immediately penetrate into the country of Canaan, and space was left for other nations to follow their example, doth it not serve to manifest the long-suffering of the LORD? JESUS speaks of this space given to sinners to repent, in the case of Jezebel, as among the just arguments of condemnation. Revelation 2:20, 21. Observe yet further, Reader, that Gibeon calls forth the displeasure of Adonizedek, because of its amity with Israel. Yes! no sooner is a soul converted to JESUS, but the devil takes alarm, and will stir up his agents to persecute. Hence our dear LORD saith, if the

world hate you ye know it hated me, before it hated you.
John 15:18, 19.

JOSHUA 10:5-6

(5) Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they and all their hosts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it. (6) And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.

If we spiritualize the passage, it affords an interesting view of a distressed soul calling upon JESUS, because of the united force of all his spiritual adversaries. Psalm 3:1, 2, to the end. Reader! how stands the case with your soul! Have you, like Gibeon, made your peace with Joshua, JESUS? And are his enemies, and your enemies in consequence of it, come out against you, to battle? These are what I call precious marks of JESUS'S love. And to such that promise is very sure. Matthew 5:10–12.

JOSHUA 10:7

(7) ¶ So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

It is sweet to behold the readiness of JESUS to fly to the relief of his distressed people. Whoso toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. My soul! take confidence, JESUS will hasten to thy succour: so saith his promise: and so proves my experience. Psalm 1. 15.

JOSHUA 10:8

(8) And the LORD said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.

Observe the constant presence, and as constant assurance of the protection of GOD. Matthew 28:20.

JOSHUA 10:9

(9) Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly, *and* went up from Gilgal all night.

See how the soldiers of Joshua encountered the fatigues of the night. And shall not the followers of the LAMB endure hardness, as good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST? 2 Timothy 2:3.

JOSHUA 10:10-11

(10) And the LORD discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron, and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah. (11) And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.

Let the Reader particularly observe, that JEHOVAH is said to have discomfited them before Israel: perhaps, by the terrors of the LORD upon their minds. And by these stones, with which the slaughter of them was chiefly accomplished; it should seem, that the enemy was destroyed where Joshua and his army did not come: for *Betheron* lay to the north of Gibeon, whereas Joshua and his army was attacking them by *Azikah*, and *Makkidah*, which were southward. Job 38:22, 23.

JOSHUA 10:12-14

(12) Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. (13) And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. /s not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. (14) And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

This memorable event, one of the most extraordinary we meet with in history, hath mightily amused sceptics. But it is the misapprehension of the thing itself, which hath occasioned their folly, and not the real fact. GOD was pleased to suspend the light of the heavenly bodies, for the purpose of Joshua's carrying on the great victory, of destroying the enemies of the LORD. It was not the body of the sun that stood still in *Gibeon*, nor the moon itself in *Ajalon*: but the reflected light of those heavenly bodies. The original word, which means the sun or body of the sun, in Scripture is *Chemah*; and that of the moon *Libnah*; whereas, in this passage, the original is *Shemish*, solar light; and *Jarech*, lunar light; evidently meaning, that the LORD miraculously caused the reflected light of the sun and moon, to answer the purposes intended, by preserving both on the earth for the discomfiture of his enemies. And is there anything for laughter in this? Can anything be too hard with GOD? Doth not the HOLY GHOST say, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us? 1 John 5:14. Read that wonderful condescension of GOD: Isaiah 45:11. We have no account in GOD'S word, concerning this book of Jasher. Probably it was some historian of that day. But from not being commissioned by the HOLY GHOST to write, no further account is taken of

him. I stop the Reader, just to beg him to remark with me, that at the death of our glorious Joshua, which was the hour of his victory over death, hell, and the grave, the reverse of this miracle took place; for the sun was darkened at midday. And I detain him once more to observe, that there is a day coming when all the victories of our glorious Joshua shall be summed up, and it is promised that the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the LORD come. See Luke 23:44, 45. Acts 2:20 And doth not JESUS suspend the operations of nature very frequently, and the powers of darkness, in order to carry on his victories in the hearts of his people? The HOLY GHOST gives us authority to believe this, by what he saith in the ministry of his servant the prophet: when he goeth forth for the salvation of his people. Habakkuk 3:11-13.

JOSHUA 10:15-21

(15) ¶ And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal (16) But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah. (17) And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah. (18) And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them: (19) And stay ye not, *but* pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand. (20) And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest *which* remained of them entered into fenced cities. (21) And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

Some conceive that the phrase, *none moved his tongue against Israel*, was meant to say, that none of Israel was missing at the end of the battle; which seems more probable,

and more important to record. There will be none of our Joshua's army missing, when he makes up the people. John 17:12. Concerning the hiding of the five kings, we may remark, that none of JESUS'S enemies can escape his all-piercing eye. Hebrews 4:13.

JOSHUA 10:22-25

(22) Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. (23) And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon. (24) And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. (25) And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.

So, Reader, will your JESUS, your Joshua, do by all his enemies and yours. JEHOVAH, the FATHER, hath said, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Psalm 110:1. So will he do by yours. The GOD of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Romans 16:20.

JOSHUA 10:26-27

(26) And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. (27) And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, *that* Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

"Remain until this very day," doth not mean the day of the Reader's perusal of the history: but the day of the history itself being recorded.

JOSHUA 10:28-43

(28) ¶ And that day Joshua took Makkedah, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof he utterly destroyed, them, and all the souls that *were* therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho. (29) Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah: (30) And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein; he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho. (31) And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it: (32) And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the second day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah. (33) Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining. (34) And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it, and fought against it: (35) And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that *were* therein he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish. (36) And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it: (37) And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that *were* therein; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon; but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that *were* therein. (38) And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir; and fought against it: (39) And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that *were* therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king. (40) So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the

south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel commanded. (41) And Joshua smote them from Kadeshbarnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon. (42) And all these kings and their land did Joshua take at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. (43) And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal

I bring all these into one point of view for the sake of shortness. They only serve to illustrate the astonishing victory of Joshua. But the grand point I wish to interest the Reader to attend to in this history is, the glorious victory of JESUS, over all the enemies of our salvation, which are here most beautifully represented in type and figure. As Joshua utterly destroyed all and everything which belonged to the enemy: so our glorious Joshua will eternally destroy all that oppose his finished salvation. Of them it is most positively said, they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe. 2 Thessalonians 1:9, 10.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the distresses brought upon the Gibeonites, by reason of their league with Joshua, what a lively picture it affords of every renewed soul, in the conflicts it is sure to be engaged in, whenever it is brought to seek fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST. Do I not know the truth of that scripture by heartfelt experience, that they who will live godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution. Oh! happy experience! blessed testimony! Be it my joy to suffer all things, so I may win CHRIST! Dearest

JESUS! vouchsafe to make a league with my soul! grant me an interest in thy covenant, and then will I not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

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

CHAPTER 11

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

JOSHUA 11:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard *those things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

It is astonishing what fear possessed the minds of the nations, at the victories of Joshua. And doth not equal fear take possession of the minds of GOD'S enemies now, when they behold the distinguishing victories of JESUS, by his grace on the hearts of sinners? What Moses sung concerning *temporal* mercies, surely the man of GOD meant yet more pointedly in the prospect of *eternal* mercies! See Exodus 15:14–18.

JOSHUA 11:2-5

(2) And to the kings that *were* on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west, (3) *And to* the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and *to* the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and *to* the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpeh. (4) And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that *is* upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. (5) And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

A goodly number truly if numbers could avail. And here we find cavalry also joined with them. *Josephus*, if I mistake not, makes the army of Canaan to consist at this time of 300,000 foot, and 10,000 horse, and chariots very many. But what saith GOD concerning such? Deuteronomy 32:30. And is it not so now in our spiritual warfare? If our eyes were opened to discern spiritual things, we should behold around the servants of JESUS, when their enemies are most numerous and powerful, what the prophet's servant saw, when at the prophet's prayer the LORD opened his eyes! 2 Kings 6:15–17.

JOSHUA 11:6

(6) And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

I beg the Reader to remark with me on this verse, how gracious the LORD is to his servants, in the repeated communications of his assured love and favor. Joshua had been told by his GOD, that he would certainly be with him, and that he should certainly conquer all his enemies. But yet you see the merciful and gracious LORD, will again remind him of his promise. Oh, thou dear LORD of thy people, how precious are thy constant communications of grace, and how much do' thy fearful, unbelieving people need them, and to be receiving fresh supplies, upon every fresh occasion, out of thy fulness, and grace for grace. Thus you see, that a life of faith upon our all-precious JESUS, is a receiving life. John 1:16. I hope the spiritual Reader will not fail to observe with me, that Joshua was a type of our Almighty Joshua in his spiritual encounter with his enemies. GOD the FATHER promised to support the human nature of JESUS, with suited strength for

every emergency. Compare Hebrews 5:7, 8, with Psalm 89:19–29.

JOSHUA 11:7-9

(7) So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them.

(8) And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining. (9) And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

If we read these wars with a spiritual eye, (and unless we do this, the mere historical relation will only leave us where it found us) we shall discover much instruction couched under those commands of our GOD, in the universal destruction of the foe, and all that appertaineth to him. The holy war admits of no accommodation. Our eye cannot spare, neither can we pity, whatever is in enmity with our GOD, or our own souls. The followers of our Joshua must covet none of the chariots, nor horses of the enemy. That is a sweet testimony the HOLY GHOST hath given the church, (the LORD grant that both Writer and Reader may feel the same influence) when he saith that the man of GOD esteemed the very reproach of CHRIST, greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Hebrews 11:26.

JOSHUA 11:10-15

(10) ¶ And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms. (11) And they smote all the souls that *were* therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*: there was not any left to breathe: and he burnt Hazor with fire. (12) And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, *and* he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the

LORD commanded. (13) But *as for* the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; *that* did Joshua burn. (14) And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe. (15) ¶ As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

As Hazor was the ringleader of this war, for so we read in the opening of the chapter, Joshua directed his special vengeance on him. This Hazor is a remarkable place in scripture, for it contained the enemy to GOD's church and people, for we find another Jabin of this kingdom, rising up to afflict Israel; see Judges 4:2. Perhaps as we read in the 13th verse, that Israel spared the strong cities of Hazor, this became a snare to their children after. For so the LORD hath said: Exodus 20:5. But let not the Reader overlook what is said of Joshua's uprightness, he left nothing undone of all the LORD'S commands. Oh! it is lovely to behold souls zealous for the honour of their LORD, and to have respect unto all his precepts. Psalm 119:128.

JOSHUA 11:16-23

(16) So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; (17) *Even* from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them. (18) Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. (19) There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all *other* they took in battle. (20) For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, *and* that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. (21) And at that time came Joshua,

and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. (22) There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. (23) So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.

These verses sum up the account of the whole conquests of all the northern parts of Canaan. If we compute the different periods, it should seem that it took no less a time than five or six years to subjugate and destroy the Canaanites. A lively representation of the long and toilsome war which the true Israelite hath to encounter, after he hath passed over the Jordan of the baptism of the HOLY GHOST, before that he rests from the war. Blessed be our Joshua, there is a rest, and there is a promise of that rest, when the Canaanites shall be no more in the land. Zechariah 14:21. I only detain the Reader with one observation more on this chapter, and which is, just to call his attention to the faithfulness of GOD in his promises. The LORD had said, he would drive out the nations before his people, and he would give his people their land to inherit. And now we see the fulfillment of the LORD'S promises. Oh! what a blessed thing it is, to have to do with this faithful GOD! see those scriptures. Genesis 12:1-3. 13:14-17. Deuteronomy 9:1-3. 7:9. But Reader! do not rest in the contemplation of the latter of these promises; carry on your thoughts to the spiritual fulfillment of the whole in CHRIST JESUS, for it is in Him that all the promises of GOD are yea and amen. And what a precious thought is it to the holy warrior in

CHRIST JESUS, that victory over all his enemies, is sure in the blood of the LAMB. Revelation 12:11.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in those wars of Joshua, the lively similitude of the victories thy Joshua hath accomplished, in the attainment of the heavenly Canaan. How did JESUS wade through difficulties, and contend with principalities and powers, in the accomplishment of thy salvation! Oh! thou great Captain of the LORD'S host, may I look beyond the Joshua of the camp of Israel, to behold thee to whom Joshua ministered, and of whom he was but the type; and view thee shadowed out, by all, that he accomplished, in thy victories, resurrection, and glory. Thou, thou art the standard and ensign thy FATHER lifted up for his people's conquest, in all ages of thy church. This was the holy war, which thou didst maintain in thy FATHER'S name, with hell, death, and the grave. And now, having triumphed openly over them all, and nailed them to thy cross, thou art our everlasting banner, by whom we triumph, and in whose name we are more than conquerors, and shall finally inherit the heavenly Canaan. Dearest JESUS, may this be my confidence when, like the *Hazor* kings, all my foes join in confederacy against me, that thou wilt go before me and subdue all things to thyself: and not only break down the force of the enemies from without, but break down within all the strong holds of sin, and the lusts of the flesh; and make my soul strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might.

CHAPTER 12

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

JOSHUA 12:1-6

(1) ¶ Now these *are* the kings of the land, which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun, from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east: (2) Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, *and* ruled from Aroer, which *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon; (3) And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt sea on the east, the way to Bethjeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdothpisgah: (4) And the coast of Og king of Bashan, *which was* of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, (5) And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon. (6) Them did Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it *for* a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

I comprise these verses into one view, because they relate to the victories of Moses, before the people passed Jordan. For what special purpose the HOLY GHOST thought proper to influence the mind of the sacred historian, to bring in, again in this place, the relation of Moses's victories, I presume not

to say. But one sweet instruction we may learn from it, namely, in the renewal of any tokens of divine favor, to call to mind past blessings. And when the HOLY GHOST is graciously pleased to act in his merciful office, as the Remembrancer, how very delightful is it to the believing soul, to look back and trace all the way, the LORD our GOD hath led us through the wilderness; to know the righteousness of the FATHER, and to be refreshed in the recollection of all the love-tokens of JESUS: see Micah 6:4, 6. John 14:26. Oh! thou blessed SPIRIT, thou glorifier of JESUS, and who alone canst shed abroad the love of the FATHER in our hearts! do thou continually condescend, to bring to the remembrance of my faithless and ungrateful heart, the recollection of past blessings, while giving me a proper apprehension and enjoyment of present ones! And when at anytime, my GOD is preparing for use renewed tokens of his favor, as well in his trying, as smiling dispensations, give me the spirit of thy servant *Asaph*, to remember the years of the right hand of the most high. Psalm 77:10-12. I must not forget to remind the Reader, that in the division of those countries, Moses had assigned to the two tribes and half of Israel at their request, as we have the account in the 32nd chapter of the book of Numbers; as well as the historical account of their extent and situation: Deuteronomy chapters 2-4. But when the Reader hath fully satisfied himself on those points, I would desire to call him to an higher improvement of the subject. Though these countries, particularly *Edrei* and *Ashtaroth*, were fruitful spots of the earth, and abounded with everything the eye or heart of natural desires could wish; yet Moses himself considered the whole as nothing, compared to what Joshua was to attain. Reader! turn to Moses's prayer on this subject, and hear how

vehemently he prayed, that GOD would grant his servant to see that good land beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain of Lebanon! see Deuteronomy 3:24, 25. Reader! spiritualize the subject. What is *Edrei* with all its beauties to Canaan: or this world with all its splendour to heaven? Who would set up their rest like the *Reubenites*, because of a fertile soil on this side the land of promise; or wish to dwell here when the rest of JESUS is before them. Dearest Redeemer! thou Joshua of thy people! do thou incline my soul, to long for the passage of Jordan, and may I here learn, that Moses and the law can confer only temporal blessings, but thine are eternal. The law can make nothing perfect, but the bringing in of this better hope doth, by which we draw nigh unto GOD. Hebrews 7:19.

JOSHUA 12:7-24

(7) ¶ And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel *for* a possession according to their divisions; (8) In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: (9) The king of Jericho, one; the king of Ai, which *is* beside Bethel, one; (10) The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; (11) The king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; (12) The king of Eglon, one; the king of Gezer, one; (13) The king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; (14) The king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; (15) The king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; (16) The king of Makkedah, one; the king of Bethel, one; (17) The king of Tappuah, one; the king of Hopher, one; (18) The king of Aphek, one; the king of Lasharon, one; (19) The king of Madon, one; the king of Hazor, one; (20) The king of Shimronmeron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; (21) The king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; (22) The king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; (23) The king of Dor in the coast of Dor, one; the king of

the nations of Gilgal, one; (24) The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

I bring all these verses together into one view, from the same reason as I did the former, because they all relate to one and the same subject, the splendid victories of Joshua. And I only detain the Reader with a short remark upon the whole: namely, how faithful GOD was to his promise; and this the church sung in after ages, when recounting the wonders of his love, in slaying mighty kings, and giving their lands for an heritage to his people. Psalm 135:10-12. But what are all the splendid victories of Joshua, to the victories of our LORD JESUS CHRIST! What the enjoyment even of Canaan, to the everlasting mansions the SON of GOD hath prepared for his people: Oh! for grace to behold, and see, and know, in all things thy preeminence. Colossians 1:13.

REFLECTIONS

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

LAMB whithersoever he goeth: and to count not thy life dear unto thyself, so that thou mayest finish thy course with joy, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life. Blessed JESUS! do thou, for thou alone canst accomplish it, arm me with thy strength, so shall I be more than conqueror through thee, who art the LORD my righteousness.

CHAPTER 13

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 13:1

(1) ¶ Now Joshua was old *and* stricken in years; and the LORD said unto him, Thou art old *and* stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

Reader! are you old in the account of *nature*? Are you aged in the account of *grace*? Methinks I would wish to ask my heart these questions, while reading the account of Joshua. But Reader! whether old or young, do not fail to remark the kindness of Joshua's God to him. Joshua though old, perhaps required to be put in mind that he and Caleb were the only souls now surviving, which were numbered at Mount Sinai.

Was it not gracious in GOD to remind him of it? And is it not profitable to all, when GOD enables us so to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalm 90:12.

JOSHUA 13:2

(2) This *is* the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri,

We may derive a very profitable lesson, from what is here said, of the land that still remained to be conquered! In grace, after many victories much of conflict will still continue, and never, until we are undressed for death, can we be said to be unbuckled from our armour in life. Acts 20:22, 23.

JOSHUA 13:3-6

(3) From Sihor, which *is* before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites: (4) From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that *is* beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites: (5) And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrising, from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath. (6) All the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim, *and* all the Sidonians, them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

A very extensive compass of country is here marked. The *Philistines* land lay South: the *Sidonians*, towards the West *Lebanon* lay East: and *Hamath* towards the North. Let the Reader observe, that with these nations yet remaining, Israel was to make no league. There can be no affinity between the carnal and the gracious. What communion can CHRIST have with Belial? 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

JOSHUA 13:7

(7) ¶ Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh,

It is remarkable that this land of Canaan is called an inheritance, because ages before it was given to Abraham. Genesis 12:7. But yet Israel obtained it by conquest. Doth not this resemble the everlasting inheritance? JESUS and his blessings are the *gift* of GOD; but yet JESUS hath *purchased*, and sought for our salvation with his blood. Reader! it is perfectly plain and intelligible, how our mercies are our FATHER'S free gift, and yet obtained for us by the work of the LORD JESUS. So thought the Apostle, and so hath he explained it, when he saith, in whom (that is in JESUS) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins: but all that is according to the riches of his grace; that is the FATHER'S grace, to the praise of the glory of whose grace it is, that he hath made us accepted in the beloved. For the admitting JESUS as our surety, makes it a matter of grace and a free gift, while the accomplishment of redemption, is by the conquests of the LORD JESUS in his victories, like Joshua, over all the obstructions to Canaan. Ephesians 1:6, 7.

JOSHUA 13:8-13

(8) With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, *even* as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them; (9) From Aroer, that *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the river, and all the plain of Medeba unto Dibon; (10) And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon; (11) And Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Bashan unto Salcah; (12) All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, which reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants: for

these did Moses smite, and cast them out. (13) Nevertheless the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

The portion of the *Reubenites*, the descendants of Israel's first-born, is here again mentioned. Moses had divided this before his death to this tribe. Deuteronomy 3:12-17. And here Joshua confirms that grant, at the command of God. I would only detain the Reader to remark to him, that within the portion of this tribe, was situated the Mount of Pisgah, from whence Moses was permitted to see the promised land. And according to the history of the event, it could not be far remote, where the prophet Elijah was, when the LORD took him to himself in a chariot of fire. 2 Kings 2:11.

JOSHUA 13:14

(14) Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, as he said unto them.

Particular exception is made of the tribe of Levi, and the reason: and which is yet further explained in the 33rd verse. Dearest JESUS! be thou my portion, and having thee I shall possess all things! 1 Corinthians 3:22, 23.

JOSHUA 13:15-21

(15) And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben *inheritance* according to their families. (16) And their coast was from Aroer, that *is* on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midst of the river, and all the plain by Medeba; (17) Heshbon, and all her cities that *are* in the plain; Dibon, and Bamothbaal, and Bethbaalmeon, (18) And Jahazah, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath, (19) And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah, and Zarethshahar in the mount of the valley, (20) And Bethpeor, and Ashdothpisgah, and Bethjeshimoth, (21) And all the cities of the

plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, *which were* dukes of Sihon, dwelling in the country.

No doubt the HOLY GHOST, in being so particular in the enumeration of places and their boundaries, had some gracious design in view. And, Reader, you and I may learn this from it, that we never can be too minute and particular, in eyeing every token of our GOD'S love; for every one brings with it a special sweetness, and affords an inexpressible relish to the soul, when we receive it and use it as his own. When I can say, this my GOD, my JESUS gave me: Oh! how sweet the gift, when more sweet is the giver! See Paul's joy upon this view of things: Galatians 2:20.

JOSHUA 13:22

(22) Balaam also the son of Beor, the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword among them that were slain by them.

I detain the Reader at this verse, just for him to remark with me, the sure end of such men. I refer back to the history of *Balaam* in the Commentary, see Numbers 22:23, 24, for a more particular relation of this very awful character: as also for the same record of his death: Numbers 31:8.

JOSHUA 13:23-33

(23) And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border *thereof*. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof. (24) And Moses gave *inheritance* unto the tribe of Gad, *even* unto the children of Gad according to their families. (25) And their coast was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that *is* before Rabbah; (26) And from Heshbon unto Ramathmizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir; (27) And in the valley,

Betharam, and Bethnimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and *his* border, *even* unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward. (28) This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad after their families, the cities, and their villages. (29) And Moses gave *inheritance* unto the half tribe of Manasseh: and *this* was *the possession* of the half tribe of the children of Manasseh by their families. (30) And their coast was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the towns of Jair, which *are* in Bashan, threescore cities: (31) And half Gilead, and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, *were pertaining* unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, *even* to the one half of the children of Machir by their families. (32) These *are the countries* which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other side Jordan, by Jericho, eastward. (33) But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not *any* inheritance: the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, as he said unto them.

The sacred historian is particular to enumerate these things concerning the portion of the two tribes and half; because it is a confirmation of what Moses had before done. Joshua only confirms the appointment. Some of those places were in after ages made more memorable. *Jazer* was near the borders of the half tribe of Manasseh.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the advanced years of Joshua, how all things, and all persons in nature, tend to decay. Well may we exclaim with *Zechariah, our fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live forever?* But oh! how precious in the contemplation, thy JESUS, thy Joshua, ever liveth, and is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Blessed JESUS! thou art the life-giving, the life-preserving, the life-rejoicing source of thy people! And because thou livest thou hast said they

shall live also, and when heart shall faint and strength shall fail, thou wilt be the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Let me as *Levi*, have no portion with the Reubenites on this side Jordan. But may JESUS be my portion, GOD my FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST my comforter and sanctifier. Give me, heavenly LORD, all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS: pardon, mercy, peace and joy in the HOLY GHOST here, and life forever in the world to come. Cause me in this sense to inherit all things, be thou my GOD, and make me thy adopted child in the LORD JESUS.

CHAPTER 14

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 14:1

(1) ¶ And these *are the countries* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them.

I would have the Reader observe, that the division which this Chapter opens with, is the division of the land of Canaan itself. The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, had their portion on the other side of Jordan.

JOSHUA 14:2

(2) By lot *was* their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and *for* the half tribe.

Observe it was by lot, not by chance or caprice, but by lot, that is by GOD'S appointment. Reader! it is ever a delightful thought that GOD fixes the bounds of his people's habitation. Deuteronomy 32:8.

JOSHUA 14:3-5

(3) For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them. (4) For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell *in*, with their suburbs for their cattle and for their substance. (5) As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

The two branches of Joseph's house, *Manasseh* and *Ephraim*, forming each a tribe, would have made Israel's family to have been *thirteen* to have divided Canaan, had not *Levi* been separated to the LORD; and *Reuben* and *Gad*, with half the tribe of *Manasseh* settling on the other side of Jordan.

JOSHUA 14:6-11

(6) ¶ Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto Moses the man of God concerning me and thee in Kadeshbarnea. (7) Forty years old *was* I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart. (8) Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. (9) And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God. (10) And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while *the children of* Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I *am* this day fourscore and five years old. (11) As yet I *am as* strong

this day as *I was* in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

This is a very interesting narrative respecting Caleb. The HOLY GHOST hath much endeared this man to the church, in the account given of him when he went up to spy out the promised land. And the modesty with which he puts in his claim to Joshua, who upon that occasion was only equal with himself, evidently gives us to see that he was a possessor of grace and of the spirit of humility. I beg the Reader to observe with me, that in this appeal to Joshua, he founds his pretensions on the divine promise, and brings with him of the tribe of Judah to justify his appeal. It is very sweet when we can plead GOD'S promises for the accomplishment of GOD'S glory. And it is very sweet also when we come before our GOD and Saviour, to bring with us his people. Our LORD sprang out of Judah. Hebrews 7:14. There is somewhat particularly interesting in this view of Caleb. He was now the very oldest person except Joshua, (and it is not very certain but he was the elder of the two), in all the host of Israel. To see him therefore, as an old and faithful servant of the LORD, coming with a petition, must have been a very interesting sight; and especially when he was enabled to plead his long and best, however humble, services. If it be a youthful Reader before whom these lines in my Commentary appear, I would have him pause and consider the loveliness of youthful zeal for GOD, and how sure it is, as in the instance of Caleb, to produce humble confidence in JESUS in old age. See Numbers 14:24.

JOSHUA 14:12

(12) Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fenced: if so be the LORD *will be* with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

If the Reader will compare, Numbers 13:30-33, with this passage, he will form a better opinion how to consider the excellent spirit of faith which Caleb possessed, than if he doth not recollect that passage. And though now forty-five years had added to his life since that period, that is thirty-eight years in the wilderness, and seven years spent amidst the wars of Canaan, yet his courage is not abated. But Reader! do not forget the cause. He was strong in the LORD and in the power of his might. He knew the faithfulness of that GOD who had promised, and like another Abraham believed that which the LORD had said he would perform. Romans 4:21.

JOSHUA 14:13

(13) And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

How lovely doth Joshua appear in this place. There was no rival-ship, no jealousy between those faithful servants of the LORD. Such should be, and such would be, the harmony amidst kindred souls, were grace to reign in the heart. See Moses' conduct upon a similar occasion: Numbers 11:29. But while admiring the grace in Joshua which the LORD had given him, let us look at him in yet a more interesting point of view, and see him as the type of JESUS blessing his people. Joshua blessed Caleb, and no doubt *the less is blessed of the better*. Dearest JESUS! do thou bless me, and then my GOD and FATHER'S promise of bringing his people to his holy mountain, will be a sanctified mercy indeed. Ephesians 1:3.

JOSHUA 14:14-15

(14) Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. (15) And the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjatharba; *which Arba was* a great man among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.

Hebron was a remarkable spot upon many occasions. It was near this place Sarah was buried. The honored spot also of the residence of the first Patriarchs. See Genesis 23:2. Hebron was after Caleb's possession of it made the city of refuge, and a place of residence for the priests. Joshua 20:7. and 21:1-3. In after times it became a royal city for David. 2 Samuel 5:3-5.

REFLECTIONS

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

manifestation of grace unto another, I shall at length with all the redeemed of the LORD appear before my GOD in Zion.

CHAPTER 15

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 15:1

(1) ¶ *This* then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; *even* to the border of Edom the wilderness of Zin southward *was* the uttermost part of the south coast.

I cannot pursue the subject of the dividing Canaan, without calling upon the Reader to remark with me, how exactly the division took place according to the prophecy of Jacob and the appointment as before settled by Moses. Genesis 49:1.

JOSHUA 15:2-12

(2) And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward: (3) And it went out to the south side to Maalehacrabim, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadeshbarnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa: (4) *From thence* it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea: this shall be your south coast. (5) And the east border *was* the salt sea, *even* unto the end of Jordan And *their* border in the north quarter *was* from the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan: (6) And the border went up to Bethhogla, and passed along by the north of Betharabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben: (7) And the border

went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that *is* before the going up to Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of Enshemesh, and the goings out thereof were at Enrogel: (8) And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same *is* Jerusalem: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the valley of the giants northward: (9) And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which *is* Kirjathjearim: (10) And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along unto the side of mount Jearim, which *is* Chesalon, on the north side, and went down to Bethshemesh, and passed on to Timnah: (11) And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel; and the goings out of the border were at the sea. (12) And the west border *was* to the great sea, and the coast *thereof*. This *is* the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

The particularity of Judah's lot in the statement of his boundaries, renders it unnecessary to explain it by a comment. If the Reader be fond of tracing the geographical situation of Judah's province, here is ample space left him for that purpose. I only desire him while doing this, not to overlook the several spiritual things to the contemplation of which it leads. As our LORD after the flesh sprang out of Judah, we find here that Judah's lot hath the precedency. And when we behold the great extent of territory Judah had assigned him, it may serve to remind us of the LORD of Judah, whose dominion was to be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Psalm 72:8. The Reader will do well to look at the Patriarch Jacob's blessing concerning Judah's lot, while reading the accomplishment of it in this

place. And if he leads the FATHER'S prophecy with the spiritual illustration of it in the LORD JESUS, he will find this scripture not to be without its sweetness. Let the Reader recollect that our LORD sprang out of Judah; was born after the flesh in those regions, and then let him consider concerning the sceptre and the lawgiver, the Shiloh and the gathering of the people to him, the redness of his eyes with wine, and his teeth white with milk, and compare with it what the church saith of him whose love is better than wine, and whose eyes are as the eyes of doves washed with milk, and he will not need any comment from me if the HOLY GHOST be his teacher, to discover the sweet application of the FATHER'S prophecy fulfilled in the person of our LORD JESUS. See Solomon's Song Of Solomon 1:2. 5:12.

JOSHUA 15:13

(13) ¶ And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *even* the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron.

It should seem as if the HOLY GHOST was graciously pleased to hold forth *Caleb* to the church in the honourable testimony he had before given of him. And here again the same subject is introduced. Them that honour me, saith the LORD, I will honour. 1 Samuel 2:30.

JOSHUA 15:14-15

(14) And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmi, the children of Anak. (15) And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjathsepher.

Whether this *Debir* is the same with that mentioned, Joshua 10:38. I know not. But if it be, perhaps while Joshua was prosecuting the war in other parts, some of the Canaanites had again entered it and fortified it. The ancient name *Kirjathsepher*, implied the *city of learning*: or of *a book*. Probably a school might have been here. As the Egyptians were learned in arts and sciences, so might have been the ancient kingdoms of Canaan. Acts 7:22.

JOSHUA 15:16-19

(16) And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. (17) And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. (18) And it came to pass, as she came *unto him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted off *her ass*; and Caleb said unto her, What wouldest thou? (19) Who answered, Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs.

Every Reader must be struck with the singularity of Caleb's gift to his daughter. And few enlightened Readers, but have been led to conceive that the HOLY GHOST hath veiled spiritual blessings under the figure. Perhaps the *nether* springs imply the sanctified use of earthly comforts. See Hosea 2:18. And do not the *upper* springs convey to us JEHOVAH'S covenant love in the fulness of the FATHER'S mercy: JESUS in his person, offices, relations and characters, and the HOLY GHOST in all his precious gifts and influences?

JOSHUA 15:20-62

(20) ¶ This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. (21) And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur, (22) And Kinah, and

Dimonah, and Adadah, (23) And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan, (24) Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth, (25) And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, *and* Hezron, which *is* Hazor, (26) Amam, and Shema, and Moladah, (27) And Hazargaddah, and Heshmon, and Bethpalet, (28) And Hazarshual, and Beersheba, and Bizjothjah, (29) Baalah, and Iim, and Azem, (30) And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah, (31) And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah, (32) And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon: all the cities *are* twenty and nine, with their villages: (33) *And* in the valley, Eshtaol, and Zoreah, and Ashnah, (34) And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah, and Enam, (35) Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah, (36) And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages: (37) Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdalgad, (38) And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel, (39) Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon, (40) And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish, (41) And Gederoth, Bethdagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; sixteen cities with their villages: (42) Libnah, and Ether, and Ashan, (43) And Jiptah, and Ashnah, and Nezib, (44) And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah; nine cities with their villages: (45) Ekron, with her towns and her villages: (46) From Ekron even unto the sea, all that *lay* near Ashdod, with their villages: (47) Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great sea, and the border *thereof*: (48) And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh, (49) And Dannah, and Kirjathsannah, which *is* Debir, (50) And Anab, and Eshtemoh, and Anim, (51) And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages: (52) Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean, (53) And Janum, and Bethtappuah, and Aphekah, (54) And Humtah, and Kirjatharba, which *is* Hebron, and Zior; nine cities with their villages: (55) Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah, (56) And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah, (57) Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages: (58) Halhul, Bethzur, and Gedor, (59) And Maarath, and Bethanoh, and Eltekon; six cities with their villages: (60) Kirjathbaal, which *is* Kirjathjearim, and Rabbah; two cities with their villages: (61) In the wilderness, Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah, (62) And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi; six cities with their villages.

The recital of the names of the cities of Judah's lot take up all these verses. I think it unnecessary to make any observation upon them, excepting in this general way. The Reader of discernment will observe, that while the sacred historian mentions a certain number, the enumeration one by one as we read then doth not correspond. But this apparent difference will be easily accounted for if we only suppose, what is very probable; that some of them are not cities but hamlets or villages: and we cannot in this remote age form an opinion to which the title of city or village belonged. I think it more important to call the Reader's attention to a circumstance, which may not perhaps so immediately strike him, and yet the moment I mention it he will see its interesting nature. I mean that, as in the province of Judah's dominions our LORD in after ages was born, *Bethlehem* was the highly honoured spot of JESUS' birth, but yet is not in this list enumerated. Was it because Bethlehem at that time was not a city, or was it because it should be like the Redeemer himself, obscure and unnoticed? Dearest LORD! how dost thou by thy glorious example, put to the blush all that we think great and excellent? The prophet in after ages sung of Bethlehem on JESUS'S account, and then pointed to what alone made it excellent. Micah 5:2.

JOSHUA 15:63

(63) As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.

The dwelling of the Jebusites in the first of all Israel's dominions even in Jerusalem itself, which was not only the royal city, but the holy city, where the LORD pitched his tent

and temple of Zion, might be intended perhaps to teach a spiritual lesson, that everything here below is imperfect. Jebusites dwell even to this day in Jerusalem. Much corruption remains in that heart where grace dwells: And while our bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us, the best of GOD'S people find cause to cry out with the apostle, of carrying about with them a body of sin and death. But Reader! what a relief is it to the soul groaning under a sense of this, that by and by the GOD of peace will bruise Satan under our feet, and the Canaanite shall be no more in the house of the LORD of Hosts. Zechariah 14:20, 21. Romans 16:20.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

LORD, I would say, give me as *Achsah*, a blessing, and who but JESUS do I require? Men shall be blessed in him, and all

nations shall call him blessed. In him are contained all the upper springs and the nether springs of every joy. LORD JESUS! let all my fresh springs be in thee!

CHAPTER 16

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 16:1-4

(1) ¶ And the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Bethel, (2) And goeth out from Bethel to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth, (3) And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea. (4) So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

Joseph as a type of the ever blessed JESUS, had eminent distinctions assigned him by his Father. He was among the youngest of Jacob's children, but yet, after Judah, is one of the first to be provided for, in his tribe. If the Reader be curious to observe the boundaries of Joseph, he will discover that his lot was very favourably cast, being in the very heart of Canaan. And is not JESUS, whom Joseph typified, the sum and substance and centre of Heaven? Doth he not reign in the very heart of his people? Reader! do not forget to read Moses's prophetic dying blessing concerning Joseph. Deuteronomy 33:13-17.

JOSHUA 16:5-9

(5) ¶ And the border of the children of Ephraim according to their families was *thus*: even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper; (6) And the border went out toward the sea to Michmethah on the north side; and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah; (7) And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan (8) The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families. (9) And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

I stay not to make remarks on the boundaries of those tribes, because in the present hour it is impossible to mark with any precision the extent of each; time making such ravages both on places and names. But I beg the Reader, not to forget, that it was in these grounds the noted spot of *Arimathea* and the famous well of *Sychar* stood, which opens so interesting a subject in the annals of the gospel. And more especially the retired spot of our dear Redeemer, John 11:54.

JOSHUA 16:10

(10) And they drave not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

Alas! how do GOD'S people now suffer his enemies to remain. Dear LORD! when will all our enemies be subdued? 1 Corinthians 15:26.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 17

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 17:1-2

(1) ¶ There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh; for he *was* the firstborn of Joseph; *to wit*, for Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead: because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan. (2) There was also *a lot* for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families; for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hopher, and for the children of Shemida: these *were* the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families.

Nothing can be more clear and evident than that it is the LORD who fixeth the bounds of our habitation; and although in the first view of things, men seem to be guided by their own choice and humour; yet, whoever looks deeper into the matter, and especially, if he be enabled to wait the issue, all will be found to have originated in divine appointment. A sweet thought this at all times to GOD'S people, in the recollection of that covenant which is ordered in all things and sure: and, when the language of the heart to a GOD in CHRIST is, LORD! *thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.* 2 Samuel 23:5. Psalm 90:1.

JOSHUA 17:3-4

(3) But Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters: and these *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. (4) And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes, saying, The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

The daughters of *Zelophehad* opened an interesting subject upon this occasion before; and here they follow up the same business in a very suitable manner. See Numbers 36.

JOSHUA 17:5-6

(5) And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side Jordan; (6) Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons: and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

No less than ten portions in the one half tribe of Manasseh; and Manasseh himself but only an half tribe in Joseph; for

Ephraim his brother had an equal claim with himself. It may serve to show us the greatness of Israel as a people? and yet more, the glory of the GOD of Israel, in the fulfillment of his covenant promises. See Genesis 15:5.

JOSHUA 17:7-11

(7) ¶ And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethah, that *lieth* before Shechem; and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of Entappuah. (8) *Now* Manasseh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim; (9) And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river: these cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manasseh: the coast of Manasseh also *was* on the north side of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the sea: (10) Southward *it was* Ephraim's, and northward *it was* Manasseh's, and the sea is his border; and they met together in Asher on the north, and in Issachar on the east. (11) And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, *even* three countries.

I stay not to point out any further than the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to do, the extent of those provinces. The Reader will have a better idea of their connection with gospel times, when he is told that the famous town of *Cesarea* was among them; also *Antipatris* whither the apostle Paul was conducted as a prisoner for JESUS. Acts 23:31.

JOSHUA 17:12-13

(12) Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. (13) Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

Reader! do not overlook the general feature of Israel in this particular. They suffered the Canaanites to remain among them. Alas! even now, in the blessed times of reformation, and the renewal of the HOLY GHOST in the LORD JESUS, how do the LORD'S people groan under the body of sin and death they carry about with them. Romans 7:18, &c.

JOSHUA 17:14-18

(14) ¶ And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me *but* one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I *am* a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? (15) And Joshua answered them, If thou *be* a great people, *then* get thee up to the wood *country*, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. (16) And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, *both they who are* of Bethshean and her towns, and *they who are* of the valley of Jezreel. (17) And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, *even* to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou *art* a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot *only*: (18) But the mountain shall be thine; for it *is* a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, *and* though they *be* strong.

The narrowness of Joseph's boundaries may serve to teach us that even in Canaan causes arise to displeasure. Alas! there is nothing perfect here below! In the Canaan above JESUS hath ample space, and many mansions, suited to the most capacious desires of his people. Reader! doth not our gracious GOD sometimes send his people blasting, disappointing providences, on purpose to make heaven more desirable? Doth not JESUS take away those soft pillows we make for ourselves in the bosom of the creature to lean upon, with a

gracious design to make us long to return to him and his rest, where alone we can find, rest to our souls? Psalm 116:7.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 18

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 18:1

(1) ¶ And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them.

They who in attending to the division of the land, and have seen the several tribes moving off to their respective settlements, might well have enquired before this, Where is the ark of GOD to be placed? Where is the tabernacle to be erected? That is, in other words, where is JESUS in his type, which is the ark, to have a settlement? Reader! let me beg of you to read what the apostle hath said on this subject, Hebrews 9:1-5, for here you will see how JESUS was shadowed out, in signs and figures. It may not be amiss, by way of information to the Reader, to observe that the ark continued in this tabernacle for the space of about 320 years, until it was taken by the Philistines. See 1 Samuel 4:17.

JOSHUA 18:2-7

(2) ¶ And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance. (3) And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, How long *are* ye slack to go to possess the land, which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you? (4) Give out from among you three men for *each* tribe: and I will send them, and they shall rise, and go through the land, and describe it according to the inheritance of them; and they shall come *again* to me. (5) And they shall divide it into seven parts: Judah shall abide in their coast on the south, and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coasts on the north. (6) Ye shall therefore describe the land *into* seven parts, and bring *the description* hither to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. (7) But the Levites have no part among you; for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them.

There is no way of accounting for the sloth of the seven tribes. Surely they were interested to have their portion as well as their brethren. But it should seem to be a pause in the circumstances of Israel, while they inquired what remained to be done. In the christian warfare, how often is this the case? And how do we send out our spies again and again, to view what the enemy is doing? But how beautifully are we again told in this place, that the *Levites* were not included in these grants: the priesthood of the LORD being their inheritance. Dearest JESUS! here again I behold thy loveliness. Thou art our inheritance, and our portion forever; for thou hast made us a nation of kings and of priests, to GOD and the FATHER. Revelation 1:6.

JOSHUA 18:8-10

(8) And the men arose, and went away: and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land, saying, Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me, that I may here cast lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh. (9) And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came *again* to Joshua to the host at Shiloh. (10) And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

What an awe must have been upon the minds of the Canaanites yet remaining around them, that none of them assaulted them, as they walked through the land. Such, Reader, is the case now very frequently in the christian's walk. So true is that Scripture, *When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* Proverbs 16:7. But passing over this, as the inferior consideration in those verses, what I would beg the Reader to remark with me is, Joshua in this instance, acting as the type

of JESUS. Is it not JESUS who hath obtained our inheritance for us, by his conquest over our enemies? And is it not the same JESUS who ever lives to be the distributor of his own gifts? Sweet and precious thought to the believer! I shall not only have that very mansion which JESUS hath purchased for me, and which he is gone before to take possession of in my name, and which he knows to be the very one most suited for me; but what will render it doubly precious, he himself will put me in possession of it with his own dear hand. Nay, I shall sit down with him on his throne, for so the promise runs. Revelation 3:21.

JOSHUA 18:11

(11) ¶ And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.

The lot of Benjamin forms an interesting part in the portion of Israel. He was the beloved child of the Patriarch Jacob's old age: and the tenderness of his father's heart towards him we have largely recounted in the book of Genesis, 42nd chap. ver. 36-38. It was certainly from the LORD'S special appointment that the border of Benjamin was placed so near to the border of Joseph; for the Reader will recollect, that Joseph and Benjamin were of the same mother, Rachel. Genesis 35:24.

JOSHUA 18:12-28

(12) And their border on the north side was from Jordan; and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountains westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven. (13) And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, which *is* Bethel, southward; and the border descended to Atarothadar, near the hill that *lieth* on the south side of the nether Bethhoron. (14) And the border was drawn *thence*, and compassed the corner of the sea

southward, from the hill that *lieth* before Bethhoron southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjathbaal, which *is* Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah: this *was* the west quarter. (15) And the south quarter *was* from the end of Kirjathjearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah: (16) And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of the son of Hinnom, *and* which *is* in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel, (17) And was drawn from the north, and went forth to Enshemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which *is* over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben, (18) And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah: (19) And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea at the south end of Jordan: this *was* the south coast. (20) And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families. (21) Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin according to their families were Jericho, and Bethhoglah, and the valley of Keziz, (22) And Betharabah, and Zemaraim, and Bethel, (23) And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah, (24) And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages: (25) Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth, (26) And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah, (27) And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah, (28) And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which *is* Jerusalem, Gibeath, *and* Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This *is* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader with many observations on these verses. The principal things to be noticed concerning Benjamin's lot, are the spots which were made memorable in them; and the more illustrious persons, which in the after ages of the church sprang out of Benjamin. *Jericho*, and *Gilgal*, and *Mizpah*, and *Jebusi*, (which is Jerusalem) and *Gibeath* of Benjamin, and more especially

Bethel; these are names of places very familiar to the Reader of the Holy Bible, and well known from the remarkable circumstances connected with them. And when we recollect that Jeremiah, and the apostle Paul, were of this tribe, we cannot but feel interested concerning Benjamin. Jeremiah 1:1. Philipians 3:5.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

CHAPTER 19

CONTENTS

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

JOSHUA 19:1-9

(1) ¶ And the second lot came forth to Simeon, *even* for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. (2) And they had in their inheritance Beersheba, or Sheba, and Moladah, (3) And Hazarshual, and Balah, and Azem, (4) And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah, (5) And Ziklag, and Bethmarcaboth, and Hazarsusah, (6) And Bethleaboth, and Sharuhem; thirteen cities and their villages: (7) Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan; four cities and their villages: (8) And all the villages that *were* round about these cities to Baalathbeer, Ramath of the south. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. (9) Out of the portion of the children of Judah *was* the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them:

therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

There is somewhat very interesting in the division of the lands of Canaan to the sons of Israel, both when considered as the fulfillment of the divine promises, and as typical of a better country, that is an heavenly. But, as the names from time have undergone so much change, it is attended with no small difficulty, to ascertain the places with certain precision. Enough, however, may be still traced, to bring us acquainted with the spots rendered more memorable, in the after ages of the church, by our dear LORD'S exercising his own personal ministry in those neighbourhoods. I would have the Reader, therefore, recollect that here it was the LORD JESUS appeared, when he tabernacled in substance of our flesh: and as such, the places are endeared to the true believer. Respecting *Simeon's* lot, it is remarkable that Jacob's prophecy was so literally fulfilled concerning him when he said, *I will divide them in Jacob*. For Simeon's lot we find in those verses, was taken out of the lot of Judah. Genesis 49:7.

JOSHUA 19:10-16

(10) ¶ And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid: (11) And their border went up toward the sea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbasheth, and reached to the river that *is* before Jokneam; (12) And turned from Sarid eastward toward the sunrising unto the border of Chislothtabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia, (13) And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittahhepher, to Ittahkazin, and goeth out to Remmonmethoar to Neah; (14) And the border compasseth it on the north side to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthahel: (15) And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages. (16) This *is* the inheritance of the

children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The lot of *Zebulun* is rendered illustrious, by reason of our dear LORD'S residence in it. The Prophet, in his beautiful language ages before JESUS came, spake of this land of Zebulun, where the people that sat in darkness saw a great light. And when we view the LORD JESUS walking on the borders of *the sea of Galilee*, preaching his gospel to the people, we behold the prophecy fulfilled. *Nazareth* was within the province of Zebulun, from whence the LORD JESUS took his name, JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth. And *Tabor*, on which the Redeemer was transfigured, is no doubt the same as *Chesloth Tabor* here mentioned. Though I am no advocate for venerating spots with superstitious idolatry, yet were I to visit the coasts of *Galilee*, where my adored Redeemer delivered his blessed gospel, and wrought so, many miracles; or were I to walk on the mount *Tabor*, where his glory was revealed to his disciples: surely, I should say, here once trod the feet of JESUS! Here the SON of GOD condescended to be seen, and known, when for my salvation he came on earth! Oh! thou dearest Redeemer, since I cannot trace thy precious footsteps here below, let my soul follow thee now by faith whither thou art gone, until I awake up after thy likeness, to be fully satisfied with thee in glory. Psalm 17:15.

JOSHUA 19:17-23

(17) ¶ And the fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. (18) And their border was toward Jezreel, and Chesulloth, and Shunem, (19) And Hapharaim, and Shion, and Anaharath, (20) And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez, (21) And Remeth, and Engannim, and Enhaddah, and Bethpazzez; (22) And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Bethshemesh; and the outgoings of

their border were at Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. (23) This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

Though *Issachar's* lot doth not afford much of history in gospel times, yet there is much of history in the Old Testament records concerning it: *Jezeel*, and *Shunem*, and *Kershion* (or Keson) were in this portion, See 1 Kings 21:1. 2 Kings 4:8. Judges 5:21.

JOSHUA 19:24-31

(24) ¶ And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. (25) And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph, (26) And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal; and reacheth to Carmel westward, and to Shihorlibnath; (27) And turneth toward the sunrising to Bethdagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthahel toward the north side of Bethemek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand, (28) And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, *even* unto great Zidon; (29) And *then* the coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city Tyre; and the coast turneth to Hosah; and the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib: (30) Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages. (31) This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

Anna the prophetess was of this tribe, who is spoken of in so honourable a manner in the New Testament. Luke 2:36. Perhaps this is the same *Tyre* where our LORD frequently went. Matthew 15:21.

JOSHUA 19:32-39

(32) ¶ The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, *even* for the children of Naphtali according to their families. (33) And their coast was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaananim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan: (34) And *then* the coast turneth westward to

Aznothabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the sunrising. (35) And the fenced cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth, (36) And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor, (37) And Kedesh, and Edrei, and Enhazor, (38) And Iron, and Migdalel, Horem, and Bethanath, and Bethshemesh; nineteen cities with their villages. (39) This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

Naphtali's portion is also rendered memorable, in having so much of the presence of the LORD JESUS. *Capernaum* and *Bethsaida* being within it. Possessing the opening both of south and north, it had a favourable aspect. But principally being according to Moses's prediction, *satisfied with divine favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD*. Deuteronomy 33:23.

JOSHUA 19:40-48

(40) ¶ *And* the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. (41) And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Irshemesh, (42) And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah, (43) And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron, (44) And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath, (45) And Jehud, and Beneberak, and Gathrimmon, (46) And Mejarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho. (47) And the coast of the children of Dan went out *too little* for them: therefore the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem, and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father. (48) This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

In this department, *Joppa*, the residence of the apostle Peter lay. Acts 9:43. *Sampson* sprung from this tribe. Judges 13:2. 24.

JOSHUA 19:49-50

(49) ¶ When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them: (50) According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked, *even* Timnathserah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

We cannot but admire the humbleness and modesty of this great man, who is not served until all are served. But Reader! do not forget, nor overlook, a greater than Joshua, who though he was LORD of all, yet condescended to be the servant of all. Am not I among you (said that dearest JESUS) as one that serveth? Yes! thou glorious, humble Saviour! Oh! for a mind to be in me as the mind of CHRIST JESUS! Luke. 22:27. Philippians 2:5, &c.

JOSHUA 19:51

(51) These *are* the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

With this verse is ended the relation of the division of the land. All was done in *Shiloh* before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle. So at the last day before JESUS, the Shiloh himself, will be gathered all nations. And he will divide to the people their inheritance according to their lots. Dearest LORD! In that grand, decisive day, let it be found that thou art the portion of mine inheritance; and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. Psalm 16:5.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 20

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This chapter is but short, but the contents of it are interesting. The LORD appoints, and the children of Israel set apart, six cities for refuge. And as those cities were evidently

a shadow of good things to come, the relation of them is made the more particularly.

JOSHUA 20:1-3

(1) ¶ The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, (2) Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: (3) That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

I cannot enter upon the subject of this chapter, without again and again calling upon the Reader to attend to the very precious doctrine veiled under the appointment of this city of refuge. Its importance cannot be more strongly implied, than in the frequent notice of it made by Moses. So particular was the man of GOD in following up the LORD'S commands concerning it, that we find it in many places. Exodus 21:13. Numbers 35:6. Deuteronomy 4:41, 42. 19:1-3. And yet it must not be overlooked in the book of Joshua. How delightful a thing it is to see such provision in the gracious mercy of GOD! But this is not the principal point in the subject I wish the Reader to notice. Had the merciful provision made by the LORD for unintentional blood-shedding, been the only thing intended from the appointment of those cities of refuge, surely a court of enquiry among the elders of Israel, would have answered every purpose, in acquitting innocent persons upon those occasions. Doth it not strike the mind therefore with full conviction, that the whole of this was typical of some greater thing? And what so likely as that of representing the great shelter and deliverance to sinners from the blood-shedding of our poor souls, when by unbelief and sin we unintentionally destroy ourselves. Dearest JESUS! how strikingly art thou pointed out herein, as the refuge of thy

people, and what a strong consolation have we all to flee unto, in the shelter of thy blood and righteousness? Hebrews 6:18, 19.

JOSHUA 20:4-6

(4) And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. (5) And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. (6) And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

Those instructions are again repeated, which we find in Deuteronomy 19:1-7, as if the HOLY GHOST was pleased to have this important subject very clearly to be understood. I beg the Reader not to overlook that feature in it, which speaks of the death of the High Priest. Here we find that by the death of the High Priest, the poor captive got his freedom, and was permitted to return to his own city. Reader! was it not the death of thy High Priest and sacrifice that procured thy ransom? Did not our JESUS, liberate all his people in the day he died on the cross? And before that glorious moment was not his intentional offering of himself, as the lamb slain, from the foundation of the world, the grand cause wherefore the souls of his people, though kept in captivity, as in the city of refuge, from the avenger of blood, were kept by grace, and saved from everlasting destruction? Oh! thou dearest JESUS! how precious dost thou appear as the city of refuge to my soul, from all the avenging pursuits of my own guilty

conscience, and the terrors of a broken law! And how delightful doth thy everlasting priesthood become, in that thou ever livest, and the efficacy of thy salvation remaineth; while the Jewish High Priests continued not by reason of death, thou hast an unchangeable Priesthood, and therefore art able to save to the uttermost all that come to GOD by thee. Hebrews 7:23-25.

JOSHUA 20:7

(7) ¶ And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which *is* Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

Those three cities were now named, which the LORD had before commanded should be appointed so soon as the people were settled in Canaan: see Numbers 35:14. Their situation favoured the flight of the poor manslayer, at whatever part of the land he might happen to be in, when he shed blood. For *Kedish* was in *Naphtali*, the most northern of the tribes: Hebron as far south; and *Shechem* nearly central to them both. But who doth not see in this JESUS shadowed forth. He is nigh every poor sinner, and every poor slayer of his own soul: being brought nigh by the blood of his cross, hath access to the FATHER, on every side of the throne, and from every way. How sweet the Psalmist sings to this; and the prophet points to his person. Compare Psalm 32:7. with Isaiah 32:2.

JOSHUA 20:8

(8) And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

These three cities were before appointed, and are only here again mentioned. Deuteronomy 4:43. The situation of those cities were not only favourable for the flight of the poor manslayer, but as they were over against *Bethpeor*, the idol of the Amorites, a place of refuge in such a spot, served to teach the Israelite, the distinguished privilege of GOD'S people over idol nations. No Bethpeor could afford an asylum, like the city of refuge. But, Reader, when you have duly contemplated the privilege of Israel over other nations, call to mind the Christian's over Israel. JESUS himself is our city of refuge, our hiding place, our sanctuary. In him, my soul, thou mayest find shelter from all the pursuits of law, the terrors of conscience, the divine justice against sin, and the avenger of blood, when thou by sin hast destroyed thyself. Hosea 13:9.

JOSHUA 20:9

(9) These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

Reader! observe in this verse, how thy GOD, had an eye to the Gentile church, even from the beginning. The *stranger* is regarded, as well as the Israelite. May we not say upon it, as the HOLY GHOST hath authorized us: Is JESUS the GOD of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes! of the Gentiles also. Seeing it is one GOD which justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. Oh! precious, precious salvation, which includes both in one and the same fold under one shepherd, JESUS CHRIST the righteous. Romans 3:2. 30.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 21

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

JOSHUA 21:1-2

(1) ¶ Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; (2) And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle.

I cannot pass over these verses, which bring before us the claim of the Levites, without desiring the Reader to attend to those two things, First, though the LORD had graciously promised Levi to be his portion and consequently would provide for him yet *Levi* is to ask it. "For these things, saith the LORD" concerning all spiritual as well as temporal blessings, "I will be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Ezekiel 36:37. And secondly, *Levi*, though brought near to the LORD, to minister before him, is the last to be supplied in the church of GOD. Oh! that the ministers of JESUS would always keep this in remembrance. As servants at their LORD'S table, the children ought first to be served; and a kind and generous master will never let them go unremembered. Here again, as in all other instances, dearest JESUS, how doth thy precious person go before us in all the loveliness of example, when thou camest not to be administered unto, but to minister, and to give thy life a ransom for many. Methinks I hear those words of JESUS

vibrate in my ears, I am among you as one that serveth. Matthew 20:26-28. Luke 22:27.

JOSHUA 21:3

(3) And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs.

Out of their inheritance, means that the Levites were to be settled in the midst of their brethren, their office of ministering before the LORD, made it necessary that every tribe should be near the Levites. Sweet type this of the presence of JESUS in the midst of his people. It was the promise of the Old Testament, that GOD would dwell in the midst of his people. Zechariah 2:10. And JESUS, who is the promise itself in the new, assured his people of his being always with them, even to the end of the world. Matthew 28:20.

JOSHUA 21:4-42

(4) And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the priest, *which were* of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities. (5) And the rest of the children of Kohath *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities. (6) And the children of Gershon *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. (7) The children of Merari by their families *had* out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. (8) And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses. (9) ¶ And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are *here* mentioned by name, (10) Which the children of Aaron, *being of*

the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. (11) And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron, in the hill *country* of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. (12) But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. (13) Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs, (14) And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, (15) And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs, (16) And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, *and* Bethshemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. (17) And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs, (18) Anathoth with her suburbs, and Almon with her suburbs; four cities. (19) All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs. (20) And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim. (21) For they gave them Shechem with her suburbs in mount Ephraim, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Gezer with her suburbs, (22) And Kibzaim with her suburbs, and Bethhoron with her suburbs; four cities. (23) And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, (24) Aijalon with her suburbs, Gathrimmon with her suburbs; four cities. (25) And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs; two cities. (26) All the cities *were* ten with their suburbs for the families of the children of Kohath that remained. (27) And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, out of the *other* half tribe of Manasseh *they gave* Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Beeshterah with her suburbs; two cities. (28) And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, Dabareh with her suburbs, (29) Jarmuth with her suburbs, Engannim with her suburbs; four cities. (30) And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, Abdon with her suburbs, (31) Helkath with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs; four cities. (32) And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Hammothdor with her suburbs, and Kartan with her suburbs; three cities. (33) All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their suburbs. (34) And

unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs, and Kartah with her suburbs, (35) Dimnah with her suburbs, Nahalal with her suburbs; four cities. (36) And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, and Jahazah with her suburbs, (37) Kedemoth with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs; four cities. (38) And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs, (39) Heshbon with her suburbs, Jazer with her suburbs; four cities in all. (40) So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot twelve cities. (41) All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty and eight cities with their suburbs. (42) These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them: thus *were* all these cities.

I include all these verses in one point of view for the sake of shortness. If the Reader be desirous to look at them more particularly, he will discover how admirably they were all arranged and disposed of, so as to scatter the Levites over the whole land. And herein he will discover how great a correspondence this dispersion of GOD'S servants in the old church, bore to the dispersion of GOD'S servants in the new, when JESUS sent his disciples forth to preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15. If the Reader be curious to remark the division of the Levites further, he may observe, that there were four divisions of the Levites, and that they were placed according to the divine appointment. The *first* of the house of Aaron, which were the priests; the *second* the *Kohathites*, which were Levites; the third was the sons of *Gershon*, the eldest son of Levi; and the *fourth* the *Merarites* his youngest. But what I conceive to be much more important for the Reader's attention, in the provision made for all the house of Aaron, was the typical representation it afforded of the gospel church in the interest it holds, in the person of our

great and Almighty High Priest, to whom Aaron ministered. Doth not the peculiar reservation, made for this tribe of Levi, of whom it is expressly again and again said, Levi hath no part with his brethren, for the LORD is his portion, doth it not in effect say, that JESUS is the alone portion of his people, who are in him a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people? And is not the circumstance of their being scattered over all the tribes, a figure of the dispersion of JESUS'S priests who are made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER? And in the LORD himself dwelling among them as their portion, is there not a beautiful similitude of the everlasting presence of JESUS, amidst his spiritual Levites? Hail! thou LORD GOD of the true Hebrews: thou priest of the order of Melchisedeck! Grant me, LORD, a portion in thyself, in the true Canaan of thy gospel church here below, as a pledge of being forever in thy church of Canaan which is above. And do thou consecrate and set me a part by the sprinkling of the blood of JESUS, and the anointings of the HOLY GHOST, as thy servant to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by JESUS CHRIST. 1 Peter 2:5.

JOSHUA 21:43-45

(43) ¶ And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. (44) And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. (45) There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

These verses contain a beautiful summary of GOD'S faithfulness to his people. He had now accomplished what he had said. He had given them Canaan, brought them to his holy mountain, divided to them their several portions, driven

out all their enemies before them, and now appeals, as it were, to their own consciences, whether that precious character, in which he had revealed himself to them, and in which JEHOVAH himself seemed to glory, in that of a faithful GOD, was not most fully confirmed. Deuteronomy 7:9. And, Reader! while contemplating GOD'S faithfulness, to his covenant engagements to Israel, fail not to connect with it, the certain confirmation of the same glorious character to Israel now. GOD is faithful, (saith Paul) who hath called us to the fellowship of his Son JESUS CHRIST. Sweet relief to the soul of the believer under all his own unfaithfulness and unbelief. 1 Corinthians 1:9. 2 Timothy 2:13.

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

Pause, my soul! and remark the faithfulness of JEHOVAH to his people. And if there failed not aught of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to Israel, but all came to pass; will not this prompt thee to believe thy GOD to be faithful to thee also? Will not GOD thy FATHER fulfil all his covenant promises?

Will not thy JESUS be still JESUS in all his love and favor? And will not the HOLY GHOST continue his faithful influences, in directing thy heart into the love of GOD, and into the patient waiting for JESUS CHRIST? Oh! for faith in lively exercise to believe GOD'S word: to trust him now in the moment of trial, and not to hesitate, until it be seen, how things will go. Is he not still the holy one of Israel? And hath not all the faithful gone before, bore testimony to his faithfulness and truth? Oh! sweet thought! Blessed be the HOLY GHOST for teaching it to the church: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot, he will not deny himself. LORD! in this firm persuasion let me live; and in this assured hope may I die.

CHAPTER 22

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

JOSHUA 22:1-4

(1) ¶ Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, (2) And said unto them, Ye have kept all

that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you: (3) Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. (4) And now the LORD your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, *and* unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side Jordan

There is somewhat very striking in the history of the *Reubenites*, and *Gadites*, and the half tribe of *Manasseh*, in their choosing to set up their rest on the other side of Jordan. No doubt, as it is the LORD himself who fixeth the bounds of his people's habitation, those parts of Israel, (for they were, we hope, still of the true Israel in common with their brethren) were overruled to this desire, for the accomplishment of some gracious purpose. But yet in the view of it, I would say for myself and Reader, may the LORD grant that we may never set up our rest on this side our FATHER'S home. JESUS is gone before. And, therefore never may we rest, until We are where he is, to behold his glory. John 17:24

JOSHUA 22:5

(5) But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

How very sweet it is to behold the uniform attention of GOD'S servants to his glory. Joshua will not suffer the people to depart without once more putting them in remembrance of the first, and best, and greatest of all concerns. So, blessed GOD, may the sweet remembrancer of CHRIST JESUS,

continually remind me of my engagements to the Redeemer. I would pray for grace to cleave unto him, for he is my life.

JOSHUA 22:6-9

(6) So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents. (7) Now to the *one* half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given *possession* in Bashan: but unto the *other* half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them, (8) And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren. (9) And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Doubtless there was somewhat prophetic in the blessing of Joshua, as there was in all the blessings of the patriarchs, when taking leave: see Genesis 49:1. Deuteronomy 33:1.

JOSHUA 22:10

(10) ¶ And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that *are* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

No doubt, the object for which they erected this altar, was with an eye to GOD'S glory. Perhaps their minds began to fear, that now, separated as they were from the other tribes, they should be led to forget sometimes that they were Israelites, and therefore took this method to perpetuate their origin and connection with the God of Jacob. And that the motive was pure, however mistaken it might be, seems evident from

hence, that they did not erect a memorial of the wars of Joshua; but to perpetuate the glory of GOD. Blessed LORD! wherever I am, or however engaged, enable me to set up in my heart, rather than in any outward building, an *Ebenezer* to the praise of thy grace. JESUS! do thou live there in unceasing remembrance!

JOSHUA 22:11-12

(11) And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel. (12) And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

The holy jealousy of GOD'S people, affords a lovely picture to contemplate. In the first view of things, no doubt, the conduct of the two tribes and a half, which were returned home, appeared to be in opposition to the divine precept; and we cannot but admire their zeal for the cause of GOD. The place only of the LORD'S choosing was to be the hallowed spot, where his people were to offer on the altar. Reader! is it not so now? Is not JESUS the altar of our offering? Deuteronomy 12:5.

JOSHUA 22:13-20

(13) And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, (14) And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel; and each one *was* an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel. (15) And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying, (16) Thus saith the whole congregation

of the LORD, What trespass *is* this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? (17) *Is* the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, (18) But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, *seeing* ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. (19) Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession *be* unclean, *then* pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD'S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God. (20) Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.

Who could be so proper to be the leader on this occasion as *Phinehas*, whose zeal for GOD'S glory and honour, had manifested itself so strikingly upon another event before? Numbers 25:7. And, Reader, do observe with what prudence the embassy is conducted. They do not strike the blow of resentment first, and then attempt to justify what they had done after. But they expostulate on the supposed ill conduct of their brethren, by way of manifesting their wish to reclaim, rather than punish. Oh! that in the jealousies and controversies among brethren, and especially concerning divine things, all that profess the pure and lovely gospel of JESUS, by the same SPIRIT, had been, and ever would be, actuated!—Think, Reader, what a beautiful example is here held forth to all those who alike profess to seek salvation, in the name and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! And let not the Reader close his view of this expostulation of Israel to his brethren, before that he hath particularly noticed the

generosity of Israel as a people. They were ready to give up part of their portions in Canaan, if their brethren thought the other side of Jordan polluted and unclean; and would have come over to them again, to dwell with them where the LORD's tabernacle was. Oh! how very sweet and precious it is, when a true zeal for the LORD outruns all other considerations. Let JESUS be but honoured, and let what will come of temporal conveniences. Paul, if I mistake not, felt somewhat of the same spirit 2 Corinthians 6:11-13.

JOSHUA 22:21-29

(21) ¶ Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel, (22) The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if *it be* in rebellion, or if in transgression against the LORD, (save us not this day,) (23) That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the LORD himself require *it*; (24) And if we have not *rather* done it for fear of *this* thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Israel? (25) For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the LORD: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the LORD. (26) Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: (27) But *that it may be* a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD. (28) Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should *so* say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say *again*, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between us and you. (29) God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an

altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that *is* before his tabernacle.

I include all these verses in one point of view, because so delightful a passage of scripture, which takes in the whole of the meek and candid answer of the accused, ought not to be broken. The thing speaks for itself, and the words are too plain, and the answer too, satisfactory, to need a comment. The opening of it is very striking, solemn, and affecting. Looking up to, and calling in for, a witness of truth, the glorious covenant JEHOVAH ALEIM, Israel's GOD, was bringing the point to a speedy issue. Pleading the purity of their intentions, and then the apparent usefulness of their designs, very properly succeeds to that appeal. And, observe, above every other reason, which they offer for the erection of this altar, that it was only an altar of remembrance, and not for use in sacrifice. Doth not this plainly show, that those tribes, in common with the rest, had an eye to one sacrifice and one offering? And to whom could this refer, but to him, who in gospel times, was to offer himself without spot to GOD, through the Eternal SPIRIT, for the salvation of his people? With an eye to this the prophet beautifully speaks: Malachi 1:11.

JOSHUA 22:30

(30) ¶ And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them.

This is certainly an interesting relation, and the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have it stated to the church at large. We cannot but take a part in the pleasing view of the harmony of

brethren. What an happy issue is brought to pass in this alarming business, as it at first appeared, by the overruling grace of the HOLY SPIRIT on the minds of both parties.

JOSHUA 22:31

(31) And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD *is* among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.

Phinehas is a most engaging character in scripture. If the Reader will consult what is said of him elsewhere, he will, I think, be led to see in him, a lively type of the ever blessed JESUS. Numbers 25:10-13.

JOSHUA 22:32-33

(32) And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. (33) And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

The return of the embassy in peace, must have been highly grateful to all Israel. When ministers return with an account of their success, in their acting as ambassadors for JESUS, what holy joy doth it occasion even in heaven itself? Luke 15:10.

JOSHUA 22:34

(34) And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed*: for it *shall be* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God.

The word *Ed* signifies witness. Oh! that there may be many memorandums, as witnesses for me, of my interest in a covenant GOD in CHRIST. And, yet abundantly more and above all, do thou, blessed SPIRIT, witness to me, and in me, that I am united to CHRIST, and that he is formed in me the hope of glory. Romans 8:16. Colossians 1:27.

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

But is there not an higher improvement to be made in our view of the subject? Do I not behold in the *Reubenites* and their companions, the representation of all awakened believers on this side Jordan? Are we not all, as they were, remote by situation from the tabernacle, and the precious things in Canaan? Though JESUS graciously condescends to visit us, and warms our hearts with the sweet visits of his love, yet do we not need continual monuments to tell our hearts, that this is not our home; and these are not the objects on which our affections here below should be placed?

How often do even the ordinances of holy worship prove unsatisfactory: and the wells of salvation we cannot draw from by reason of our earthly, barren and lifeless frames! Precious JESUS! I would not erect an altar, nor offer a sacrifice, nor make mention of a burnt offering! I would not bring, if I had them, thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil: but I would look to thee; my longing eyes should fix on thy person, and my soul look to thee in the most dependant assurance of salvation, in thy blood and righteousness; for thou art the one only altar, the high priest and sacrifice; thou art all and in all. Be thou my witness, my hope, my portion, all the day. And although I am as yet on this side Jordan, yet, bye and bye, thou wilt come and take me to thyself, and I shall behold thy face in glory, when I awake up after thy likeness.

CHAPTER 23

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

JOSHUA 23:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old *and* stricken in age.

There is somewhat very interesting in the close of life, of the more immediate servants of the LORD. The dying frames of faithful ministers are of singular use to be recorded for the comfort and encouragement of living members of CHRIST'S mystical body. Hence it should seem, that the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have his servants held forth to view in the church in their last hours. The representation here made of Joshua, is truly engaging. We are not told of the precise time when it was, but only it is in general said, to have been a long time after Joshua's victories were ended. Probably as Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten years (see Chap. 24:29.) it was just before his death.

JOSHUA 23:2

(2) And Joshua called for all Israel, *and* for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old *and* stricken in age:

This preface to his discourse, is just what it should be, to call up their attention. *I said (says Elihu) days should speak, and multitude of years teach wisdom.* Job 32:7. Who suitable to speak of GOD'S love, as the man who hath long experienced it!

JOSHUA 23:3

(3) And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God *is* he that hath fought for you.

Reader! do not fail to observe, how Joshua's dying sermon opens. It is all of GOD. GOD, as a covenant GOD, was Joshua's text, and the sum and substance of all his sermon. Not a word of himself. Not a word to magnify his services, even as an instrument in GOD'S hand. The burden of his preaching was, what the JEHOVAH ALEIM had done, and what their own

experience knew to be true, of the LORD their GOD'S grace towards them. Dearest JESUS! may it be my happiness to copy after this illustrious example. In a living hour may I speak of thee and of thy righteousness only. And in a dying hour may long experience sum up the whole account, CHRIST is all and in all. Colossians 3:11.

JOSHUA 23:4-5

(4) Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

(5) And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

Observe with what confidence the man of GOD speaks of future blessings; and how he makes the review of past mercies, the foundation of all that are yet to come. Reader! pause over this doctrine. May the HOLY GHOST be your teacher while perusing it, and you will then learn that this is the great secret of religion. The only possible method for a poor tried soul to exercise faith, under the SPIRIT'S influence for what is to come, is by looking back, and beholding what of GOD'S faithfulness is in what is past. By faith in GOD'S promises we look forward and depend. GOD hath wrought deliverance before. The same GOD will do it now, and for all that is to come. What though there are Canaanites yet to be driven out, (Israel might say) yet in these already destroyed, GOD'S word is pledged for all that remain. Reader! apply this to your own case. Hath JESUS begun his grace in your heart? Hath he given you to see and feel the plague of your own heart, and a view of his preciousness! Are there yet remains of corruption still within, under which you groan? Look to him! He that is the

author, is the finisher also of faith. Thou saidst (said Jacob) thou wouldst surely do me good. Genesis 32:12. Hebrews 12:2.

JOSHUA 23:6-10

(6) Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom *to* the right hand or *to* the left; (7) That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: (8) But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day. (9) For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. (10) One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he *it is* that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

The holy jealousy which the man of GOD so warmly and affectionately recommended, may serve to teach us, with what circumspection believers in JESUS ought to walk amidst the swarm of vanities, with which they are surrounded in this wilderness state. It is said that the ancient Jews would not allow their children to mention even the name of certain things, which their laws forbade the use of. Swine's flesh they were taught to call strange flesh, if any occasion required its being mentioned at all. I should much rejoice if believing parents were to exercise a like caution over the rising generation in a multitude of instances. If Joshua commanded Israel not even to make mention of the name of the heathen gods which were around them, can it be consistent with believers to have their children educated in such systems of learning, as lead them into not only an acquaintance with the names, but with the whole history of the gods of ancient idolaters. And when men come to admire the phrases and

expressions, for the sake of the language of the heathen writers, is not the transition but too easily made, (except grace restrains) by the heart too much disposed by nature to evil, to the love of the persons or systems also. The prayer which begs not to be led into temptation, presupposes the desire of the soul not to lead ourselves into it. Sweet and precious is the direction of our dear LORD to this point. Luke 22:40.

JOSHUA 23:11-13

(11) ¶ Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God. (12) Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: (13) Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

How closely connected sin is with its sure punishment. My backslidings shall correct thee! The very thing which we lean upon for confidence or comfort; that above every other evil, shall be sure to pierce us through. In the unhappy, and I had almost said unnatural, coalition sometimes made between believers and unbelievers, what sorrow hath sprung out of them? There is death in the pot. Snares, and traps, and scourges, and thorns, we make for ourselves. The root is laid in unbelief, and it will be sure to bring forth and blossom with deadly fruit. LORD, keep thy people from themselves and the perversity of their ways, for they are well kept who are preserved by thee. John 17:11, 15.

JOSHUA 23:14-16

(14) And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof. (15) Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. (16) When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

The man of GOD makes use of the same argument again, of his old age and dying circumstances, to enforce all he had said. Not to endear his memory to them. Not to have a monument erected of his valour and his good deeds. Not a word of this. Not an intimation that he wished it. But his dying request corresponded to his living earnestness, that the LORD might be glorified in their souls. How sweet and lovely is it to behold the dying servants of JESUS, glorifying the LORD in their latter end, as they had been enabled to promote his glory in the beginning. And the apostle makes as suitable an inference from it, when he saith, Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of GOD, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Hebrews 13:7, 8.

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BLESSED JESUS! In the close of Joshua's ministry and labours, I see that all things and all men come to an end. But though

Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and Joshua must die, yet thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. Oh! the sweet consoling thought! the LORD liveth, and blessed be my strong helper; and praised be the GOD of my salvation.

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

CHAPTER 24

CONTENTS

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

chapter closes also with an account of the death of Eleazar, and of the removal of Joseph's bones.

JOSHUA 24:1

(1) ¶ And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God.

Whether this be a continuation of the same sermon, as in the preceding chapter, or whether it be another discourse, is not certain. As the former declared that he was that day going the way of all the earth, it should seem to have been intended as his farewell discourse. But it is possible that this might have been delivered at another time. However this point is not so interesting to determine. The subject of this and the former is one and the same. Both were preached to proclaim GOD'S glory; and this is the leading point which runs through both. It was in *Shechem*, not in *Shiloh*, Joshua delivered his farewell sermon; for this was nearer his home. And this is the more remarkable, because this was the memorable spot where the visions of God began with Abraham. Genesis 12:6, 7.

JOSHUA 24:2-3

(2) And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. (3) And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

Probably, the place of Joshua's preaching suggested to him the story of Abraham's conversion. But, if not, nothing could

be more proper than that in the recapitulation of GOD'S covenant love to his people, he should begin with that which magnified the distinguishing mercy of GOD. Reader! the sweetest views are those which enable us to look back and discover the love of GOD to us, when we had no love to him, nor to ourselves. To look unto the rock from whence we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit, from whence we were digged, are profitable reviews to the soul. Isaiah 51:1, 2. I cannot pass over the subject, of the call of Abraham, without desiring the Reader to remark with me, the freeness, and fullness, and sovereignty of GOD'S grace in such an instance. What soul can be apparently further from GOD than he was, when the LORD called him? Reader! do not overlook the sweet encouragement it holds forth to yourself, if haply you are yet in nature's darkness, and to your careless and unawakened friends, or relations. Paul evidently referred to this, when he said that GOD can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. Romans 4:3-5.

JOSHUA 24:4-13

(4) And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt. (5) I sent Moses also and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them: and afterward I brought you out. (6) And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the Red sea. (7) And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season. (8) And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and I destroyed them from before you. (9) Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab,

arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you: (10) But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand. (11) And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand. (12) And I sent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* not with thy sword, nor with thy bow. (13) And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.

I include in one view all these verses, for the sake of shortness, and because, as they refer to the history of the Patriarchs, already gone through in the Commentary, it would be unnecessary to swell the page again with the relation. The Reader can, if he pleases, refer to the subjects, in their respective places. But I would have the Reader remark with me, in addition to what was there said of the conjurer Balaam, that here it seems somewhat more plain, that this wretched man would, for the sake of gain, have cursed Israel, though he knew the LORD had promised to bless them, had not the LORD restrained him, and overruled his mind to do the very reverse of what he intended. And Reader! do you not believe that the LORD is doing the same for his people very frequently now? When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Proverbs 16:7. On the subject of putting away the false gods from among them, which is again repeated, verse 23, it should seem that there were some of the people which had images by them, though they might not worship them. But as the LORD is jealous of his honour and glory, even the figure of an

idol is an abomination. But Reader! if to our fathers in the old church the very mention of idols, or the keeping any representation of them, became so offensive, in the divine eye, what think you must be the indignation of our GOD, if we hold in our heart a kind of rivalry with GOD, in making our prayers and our services a part-Savior with JESUS? Shall I not put away all idols in any supposed goodness and righteousness of my own, and learn herefrom that JESUS alone is my Savior, in whose righteousness his people are accepted? Ephesians 1:6.

JOSHUA 24:14-15

(14) Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. (15) ¶ And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

What a noble resolution Joshua made for himself, and for his household? How worthy of imitation in all families! But could Joshua answer for his servants, or for his family? Certainly he could not compel their consciences: neither did he mean it. Unless led to it by the sweet influences of the HOLY GHOST, he could not assure himself that he should serve the LORD; and he well knew that it must be from the same Almighty power his household could do it. But yet, as far as the outward means could be made use of, he resolved to enforce the observance of these upon himself and people. Reader! are you a parent, a master of a family, or placed in any situation of authority? Behold then the beautiful example of Joshua. And think how inexcusable that man, that parent or master

must be, in whose house there is no family worship! Tell me, if you can, wherein such households differ from the brutes which perish, when they rise up and lay down as the herds of the stall, and never ask where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night, Job 35:10.

JOSHUA 24:16-18

(16) And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; (17) For the LORD our God, he *it is* that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: (18) And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: *therefore* will we also serve the LORD; for he *is* our God.

The answer of Israel is just what we might have expected. They have well spoken, said the LORD himself concerning them upon a similar occasion, all that they have spoken. But he who knows what is in the heart, knows what poor, irresolute, weak creatures we are: and, therefore adds, Oh! that there were such an heart in them! Deuteronomy 5:28, 29. Reader! if you know anything of your own heart, you have learnt somewhat of its deceitfulness; and, therefore, will not venture to trust it. I know, says holy Paul, that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Romans 7:18.

JOSHUA 24:19-20

(19) And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he *is* an holy God; he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. (20) If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

If (as some read those words) we read this passage according to the original in the *plural* number: *He is the holy Gods*, meaning *He*, JEHOVAH existing in a threefold character of persons, the Holy Gods; this is a sweet and precious passage in confirmation of the Holy Trinity. Hear, O Israel, the LORD thy GOD is one LORD. A thing unnecessary to have been remarked, if at the same time it had not been suggested, that in this one eternal essence of the GODHEAD, there existed a plurality of persons. And hence, in the opening of the Bible, the phrase is the same plural: so in Solomon: Remember thy *Creators*; for so it is in the original. Ecclesiastes 12:1. Joshua's representing the difficulties, was not intended to put them off from their pious resolution; but only to forewarn them of the difficulty. Our dear LORD told his disciples somewhat similar, when he represented his service as taking up a cross, plucking out an eye, and cutting off an arm.

JOSHUA 24:21-24

(21) And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. (22) And Joshua said unto the people, Ye *are* witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, *We are* witnesses. (23) Now therefore put away, *said he*, the strange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. (24) And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

The resolutions founded in divine strength, and under the assurance of divine aid from GOD'S covenant mercy and love, are well founded: so said Paul, Philippians 4:13. 1 Corinthians 4:4.

JOSHUA 24:25

(25) So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

It is worthy observation, that twice in the life, both of Moses and of Joshua, the renewal of this covenant was made. See Exodus 24 Deuteronomy 29. and Joshua 8 and now, Reader, it is always profitable, though not to lay again the foundation from dead works, yet to look over the past solemn transactions between GOD and the soul.

JOSHUA 24:26-27

(26) And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. (27) And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God.

There is somewhat truly interesting in the ancient custom of setting up tokens of remembrance. Samuel's Ebenezer and Jacob's pillar, not to mention many others, are precious evidences of the kind. 1 Samuel 7:12. Genesis 28:18. Reader, have you none of this kind in your life? Have there been no Bethel visits from JESUS to your soul; no marks, no stones of help set up by you to say, Here in this place, and upon such occasions, my GOD manifested himself to me otherwise than he doeth to the world! John 14:22, 23. Was not the sanctuary the ark of the divine presence? And if so, was it not a sweet type of the presence of the ever blessed JESUS? Matthew 18:20. 28:20.

JOSHUA 24:28

(28) So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

Perhaps, Joshua took his leave of the people in prayer, as he knew it would be his last interview, so did Moses, partly in blessing and partly in prayer, and in affectionate remembrance. Deuteronomy 28:1.

JOSHUA 24:29

(29) ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, is the one common lot. And hence the most faithful of GOD'S servants die as well as others, though not as do others. The Reader should remark, that the same title is given to Joshua, as was given to Moses. He is called the servant of JEHOVAH. Sweet title! It doth not appear at what particular period it was when Joshua died. Some have thought by calculation, it must have been more than twenty years after the children of Israel entered on the possession of Canaan. But this is not certain.

JOSHUA 24:30

(30) And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash.

The burial place of Joshua is rendered memorable by the name Gaash, which signifies quaking. The Jews had a tradition that there was a trembling of the hill at his burial, and this to upbraid Israel for not mourning for him as they did for Moses. But whether they did lament his departure or not, certain it is, that no mention is made of their lamentation, as they did for Moses. If we consider this as allegorical, I should say, we are all by nature more wedded to the law than the gospel. Moses is fairer to the eye of the world than JESUS.

JOSHUA 24:31

(31) And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel.

An honourable testimony is here given both to Joshua and the elders. Oh! for the influence of our almighty Joshua to be ever upon his people.

JOSHUA 24:32

(32) And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

The remembrance of the just is blessed. The bones of Joseph had been long kept if, as we may suppose, the funeral of them was only now performed. He had been dead nearly 200 years. Yet such was the affection of Israel to his memory, and obedience to his dying request, that they thought it no trouble to carry his bones about with them in all their journeys. See Genesis 1. 25. Exodus 13:19.

JOSHUA 24:33

(33) And Eleazar the son of Aaron died; and they buried him in a hill *that pertained to* Phinehas his son, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

Very honourable testimony is given also of Eleazar in his death and funeral, which, as the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to record, we may safely conclude, that precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. Psalm 116:15. It is worthy remark, that Moses the great lawgiver, and Aaron the high priest, died in one year. And it should seem, that

Joshua's death and Eleazar's were nearly together. How striking the observation of the Apostle: They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death. But JESUS in his unchangeable priesthood continueth forever. Dearest LORD! how sweet the thought, though our fathers die, and the prophets live not forever, thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. Hebrews 7:22, &c.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in closing this sacred book of GOD, and in reviewing the many precious things contained in it, let us with increasing diligence look up for the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, that beside the historical relation in it as the proof of GOD'S faithfulness, we may spiritually discern the great tendency of the whole in pointing out the heavenly Canaan, under the typical representation of an earthly land of promise. Joshua, as the minister of GOD, hath indeed brought the LORD'S people over Jordan, and brought them in, and divided them their inheritance, as was promised. But Joshua and all Israel found that land to be but the land of an earthly inheritance. Though they had the signs and symbols of worship, and the refreshing views of the divine presence, yet these were only suited to a transitory state. Beautiful and conclusive is the apostle's reasoning upon it. If Joshua (says he) had given them rest, then would the LORD not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of GOD. And what is that rest but JESUS himself, who is the very sabbath of the soul to his people, and who hath promised to give all them that come to him, to find

rest unto their souls. This (saith the prophet) is the rest wherewith ye may pause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing. Isaiah 28:12.

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

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

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

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

JUDGES

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

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

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

There is much of gospel shadows and types, both as to persons, and things, in the several parts of the Book of the Judges. The HOLY GHOST was graciously pleased to cause many striking allusions to the great events of salvation, to be represented during the period of the church, which this book

refers to. And several of the persons, whose history forms a part in this scripture, were eminent types and servants of the LORD JESUS. The Apostle to the Hebrews makes special mention of several of them, and with the most honourable testimony, as very illustrious patterns of faith; such as *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and *Samson*, and *Jephthah*. Hebrews 11:32.

I shall not detain the Reader with any further preliminary observations on the Book of Judges. But I must request him before he enters upon the perusal of it, that he will bend the knee of prayer, and join my spirit in a fervent supplication to the mercy-seat of our GOD in CHRIST, that the minds of both Writer and Reader may be under the teachings of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to behold in every period and age of the church, how the LORD hath been carrying on the great purposes and counsels of his own will, and gradually preparing the minds of the faithful for that glorious era, when his people should not be under the commonwealth of Judges, but *a King should reign in righteousness, and execute judgment, and justice in the earth: in whose days Judah should be saved, and Israel dwell safely. And this is the name whereby he should be called, the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

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

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 1:1-2

(1) ¶ Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? (2) And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.

If the Reader regards the book of the Judges merely as an history, still he will discover in it sufficient to demonstrate the faithfulness of GOD to his promises. But, if he reads it also with a spiritual reference to the church of GOD shadowing forth beside the history some greater events connected with it, he will find this *Sepher Shophtim* (for so is it, in the original, very properly called, that is, *the Book of Judges*) not an uninteresting part of the sacred record. As Joshua was an eminent type of JESUS, do we not feel our minds led to the gospel history, and the case of the apostles, at the departure of JESUS? Well might the disciples enquire who shall go in and out before us, when the LORD is returned to his FATHER? See John 14:1, 2. We cannot be at a loss to assign the cause, wherefore Judah was chosen. The dying Patriarch looking forward to him who after the flesh

was to spring from Judah, declared, that *Judah was him whom his brethren should praise, whose hand should be in the neck of his enemies, and whose father's children should bow down before him.* Genesis 49:8, &c. And when we behold him who is expressly called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, whom all nations shall praise, and whose victory over the neck of his enemies hath been so marked, we cannot but discover the striking affinity. Hebrews 7:14. Revelation 5:5.

JUDGES 1:3-8

(3) And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him. (4) And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. (5) And they found Adonibezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. (6) But Adonibezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. (7) And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath required me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died. (8) Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

It should seem that, as this verse is inclosed in a parenthesis, it only meant to notice what had been said before. Probably Jerusalem was taken in the wars of Joshua. See Joshua 10:1, &c.

JUDGES 1:9-10

(9) ¶ And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley. (10) And Judah went against the

Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjatharba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

Judah, under the banner of the LORD, goeth on victoriously. Reader! how profitable is it ever to keep in view His arm, in whom alone we are victorious? If GOD be for us, who shall be against us? That is a sweet Scripture, and a sweet promise, Isaiah 54:15-17.

JUDGES 1:11-15

(11) And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjathsepher: (12) And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. (13) And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. (14) And it came to pass, when she came *to him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off *her* ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? (15) And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

We had this interesting account before, in the preceding book of Joshua, to which I therefore refer the Reader. See Joshua 15:15-19.

JUDGES 1:16

(16) And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which *lieth* in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

Doth not this account of the *Kerites* being with Judah throw some light upon that part of Israel's history, which we read respecting them in a period distant from this more than thirty years? See Numbers 10:29, &c. The *Kerites were* of this man's family.

JUDGES 1:17-19

(17) And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah. (18) Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof. (19) And the LORD was with Judah; and he drove out *the inhabitants of* the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

Here we trace the want of faith, and consequently the want of courage, in Israel. What were the chariots of iron, when GOD fought the battles of Israel? But is not this, in a spiritual sense, the very case of Israel now? The faith of Peter could prompt him to attempt walking on the water, to come to JESUS, at his command. But we are told that when he saw the waves boisterous, his faith forsook him. Oh! for a portion of that faith which can quench the violence of fire, and out of weakness can make strong. Hebrews 11:34.

JUDGES 1:20

(20) And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.

Though *Joshua*, we are told, had given this place to *Caleb* before, yet the possession of it was probably only now. See Joshua 14:13, 14. And were not the victories of JESUS the same? Though JEHOVAH had given him the heathen for his inheritance, as well as to raise up the tribes of Jacob; yet JESUS had to conquer both before that he took possession of either. But under the sure prospect CHRIST considers them as already obtained. *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine. All*

mine, (CHRIST said to the FATHER) are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Psalm 60:7. John 17:10.

JUDGES 1:21

(21) ¶ And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

Here we have another example of unbelief, and consequently of culpable timidity. The LORD had expressly commanded that there should be no affinity, nor treaty, with the Canaanites. But alas! Israel forgets the LORD'S precept, and the Canaanites dwell in the land. Reader! Is it not too often so, with spiritual Israel? Oh! for that glorious period, when the Canaanite shall be no longer in the land, Zechariah 14:21, compared with Deuteronomy 7:17, 18, 23, 24.

JUDGES 1:22

(22) And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel: and the LORD *was* with them.

The success of the house of Joseph is particularly marked in the cause of it. The LORD was with them. In the Chaldee paraphrase of this passage it is said, *the word of JEHOVAH was with them*, a well known title of JESUS. And in this sense how very precious it is to see the LORD JESUS with his people, leading them on to sure conquest and victory! We have abundant reason to bless the HOLY GHOST for the clear explanation of those passages which speak of the uncreated Word, in his decidedly referring to the person of JESUS, as that beautiful passage in the revelation shows, chap. 19:11-13.

JUDGES 1:23

(23) And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel. (Now the name of the city before *was* Luz.)

Bethel is a memorable name in scripture, ever since the Patriarch Jacob made it so. All true believers in JESUS know this name, and can tell, as Jacob did, what Bethel visits mean. Reader! was not that spot, that place, a true Bethel, or house of GOD to your soul, when the visions of GOD first began) See Genesis 28:19. Exodus 3:2-6.

JUDGES 1:24-26

(24) And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Show us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will show thee mercy. (25) And when he showed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family. (26) And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which *is* the name thereof unto this day.

Is there not a spiritual illustration of this scripture? May we not, without overstraining the passage, observe that the man, showing the house of Joseph the way into the city, but afterwards departing to the *Hittites*, and still preserving the original name of *Luz*, is a representation of those who act as ministers in the LORD'S hand, to show the spiritual house of Joseph the way to the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD, but not settling in it themselves? Like direction posts on the road, which point the traveler on his journey, but move not a step towards it. Very different are those guides spoken of in scripture, who not only direct to the

way of salvation, but say, *Come, and let us go up to the house of the LORD*. Micah 4:2.

JUDGES 1:27-36

(27) Neither did Manasseh drive out *the inhabitants of* Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. (28) And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. (29) Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them. (30) Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries. (31) Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob: (32) But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out. (33) Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Bethshemesh and of Bethanath became tributaries unto them. (34) And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: (35) But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries. (36) And the coast of the Amorites *was* from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

I include all these verses within one view, because one general observation suits the whole. We see in them the sad picture of Israel's want of faith, and consequently want of courage. Had those tribes trusted to the arm of GOD, they would not have feared the power of man. Had they called to mind that it was *their rock which had sold them, and that their LORD had shut them up*, their chariots of iron would

have been considered by them but as the reeds of Egypt; but *one of them would have chased a thousand, and two of them have put ten thousand to flight.* Deuteronomy 32:30. But Reader! while we behold the sad defect of Israel, let us look nearer home. How often doth that guilt breed fear, which like the *Canaanite*, dwells in our hearts, in our affections and lusts; and hence we forget our strength in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Oh! for more of that faith in lively exercise, which overcometh the world. 1 John 5:4.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, in the history of Israel, what conflicts await the believer after a work of grace is begun in the heart. *Let not him that putteth on the harness boast like him that putteth it off.* Never, until that we undress for the grave, can the soldiers in the holy army of JESUS be said to have done with battle. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* But oh! what a sweet relief to the mind is it, in the consciousness that the issue is not doubtful. Though the Canaanite be still in the land, the promise is, that he shall not always be. *There is a rest which remaineth for the people of GOD.* Blessed GOD! comfort the souls of thy people with this assurance. And, until the day of deliverance comes, may we fight under his banner, and in his strength, who is *the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

Dearest JESUS! at the very mention of thy name, methinks, new strength is imparted to my soul. How infinitely dost thou transcend thy type of Israel's Joshua, in all that is precious and endearing! He was not able to continue, by reason of death. But *thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* Oh!

how sweet, how very sweet is that assurance! *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* Be thou ever with me in all my trials, difficulties, and temptations. Be thou with me in all my happier hours of seeming prosperity and quiet. Be thou ever with me, to soften every evil, and to heighten every joy. Upheld by thine arm, which bringeth salvation, I shall be more than conqueror. And surrounded with thy love, my cup will run over. Oh! for the lively actings of faith thus to be always in the spiritual company of JESUS, and to live *to* him and *with* him, to the FATHER'S praise, and the SPIRIT'S grace, which maketh his people *accepted in the beloved.*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 2:1-3

(1) ¶ And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. (2) And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? (3) Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be *as thorns* in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

I beg the Reader to remark with me the leading feature in the character of this angel, and then let him determine for himself whether it was not the Angel of the Covenant, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Who but GOD could make use of this language, *I made you to go up out of Egypt?* And who was it that swore unto their fathers, but JEHOVAH? Oh! how very precious is it to trace the footsteps of him *whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting?* Didst thou, dearest JESUS, long for the season of thine incarnation? And didst thou adopt this method of showing thy love to our nature, by such tokens? See Exodus 33:1. Micah 5:2. *Gilgal*, from whence the angel is said to have come, could not but remind the people of the renewal of the covenant by circumcision, and which, as it was taking away their reproach, was called *Gilgal* See Joshua 5:2 and 9. The purport of the angel's message was reproof, in which the LORD explains wherefore their enemies were not wholly subdued. In their continuance as thorns in their sides, the word of GOD was fulfilled. See Exodus 23:33. Numbers 33:35. Deuteronomy 7:16.

JUDGES 2:4-5

(4) And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. (5) And they called the name of that place *Bochim*: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

The effect of the Sermon of the angel was as might be supposed. They were stung to the heart in the recollection of GOD'S mercy, and their unworthiness; and they wept. *Bochim* means *weepers*. Was not this sacrifice offered with an eye to the one great sacrifice? Let the Reader compare this passage with a similar one in the same book, and see whether there

be not a correspondence? Surely there is much of JESUS here. See Judges 13:3. 19, 20.

JUDGES 2:6-10

(6) ¶ And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. (7) And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. (8) And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. (9) And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. (10) And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

These verses have a retrospective view to the history of Joshua, as before related. And perhaps the subject is here again introduced, by way of contrasting the sad apostasy of Israel, to what their conduct had been during the life of Joshua, and that generation. Alas! when good men perish from the earth, what a melancholy thought is it, if an evil generation succeed them. The prophet makes a woeful lamentation of this, but forms a sweet resolution therefrom, that he will cease from man, and look unto the LORD. Micah 7:2-7.

JUDGES 2:11-13

(11) And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: (12) And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. (13) And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

Here begins the sad account which the HOLY GHOST hath caused to be recorded, of Israel's whoredom and idolatry, and which runs through all the future periods of their history, until they were unchurched. Sad, sad relation of poor human nature! And the more so, when we consider the resemblance it bears to GOD'S church in all ages. They served *Baal*, and *Baalam*, and *Ashtaroth*; single gods, and double gods: *for Baal* is singular, meaning one particular heathen god; and *Balaam* is plural, signifying many. And *Ashtaroth* was a goddess. See Kings 11:5. Oh! Israel, Israel! how art thou fallen! How sweet and expressive, but yet painfully feeling, is that expostulation of the LORD by the prophet. Micah 6:1, 2, &c.

JUDGES 2:14-15

(14) And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. (15) Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

Observe in the LORD'S punishment, what a correspondence between their sin and suffering. *Thy backslidings shall reprove thee*. Jeremiah 2:19. Reader! do not overlook the interest all GOD'S people bear in this. Trace divine chastisements in your own experience, and you will not be far to learn, if so be the HOLY GHOST is your Teacher, that the LORD'S corrections follow close upon his people's transgressions.

JUDGES 2:16

(16) Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

What a beautiful illustration is this of divine mercy? How sweetly doth it come in here, in proof of GOD'S covenant love? Let the Reader never lose sight of it. And, if he wishes to bring into one and the same point of view, another precious example, let him read that most interesting representation the prophet makes of abounding grace, Isaiah 43:22-25. But Reader! when you have seen this, and compared the whole, is there no other even yet more affecting? What think you of *your own* history? Cannot you find enough there to lay low in the dust, in the contemplation, that where *sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound*. Romans 5:20, 21.

JUDGES 2:17-23

(17) And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so. (18) And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. (19) And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themselves* more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. (20) And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; (21) I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: (22) That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not. (23) Therefore the LORD left

those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

All these verses fold up in their contents the two great leading points of the gospel doctrine, namely, human depravity, and divine benignity. In the forbearance of GOD, and the continued provocations of man, the language of the prophet meets us in all directions, and cries aloud, in all that is going on in life, *Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?* But Reader! do not overlook the cause. The Prophet that thus speaks had it in commission from the HOLY GHOST to assign the reason; for he adds, that it was *to perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham*. Yes, blessed JESUS! thou art the mercy promised. And it was in thee, and thy promised salvation, JEHOVAH manifested his pardoning love and mercy to Israel. Reader! I charge it upon you to read that most precious and interesting account of this love, which the Prophet gives. Isaiah 63:7, to the end.

REFLECTIONS

MYsoul! read again, and again, thine own history in this account of Israel's departure and backsliding. Can any portrait be more strikingly drawn! How hath the LORD overlooked and passed by thy disobedience! By how many messages of grace, like the angel from *Gilgal*, hath the LORD sent to call thy ways to remembrance? Oh! for the gracious office of GOD the HOLY GHOST, to act as the Remembrancer in my forgetful heart, to make my soul like *Bochim* before GOD.

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

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 3:1-4

(1) ¶ Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, *even* as many *of Israel* as had not known all the

wars of Canaan; (2) Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; (3) *Namely*, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. (4) And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

This is an interesting chapter, and the first verse acts as a key to let us into the meaning of it. The LORD, we are told, *left those nations to prove Israel*. Hence we learn, that the trials of GOD'S people are of GOD'S appointment. I stay not to dwell much upon the historical part of it, for I think it quite enough to observe, that the *five* lords of the Philistines, which, in after ages of the days of the kings of Israel, made such a figure in history, were the lords of *Ashdod*, and *Gaza*, and *Askelon*, and *Gath*, and *Ekron*. 1 Samuel 6:17. And *all* the Canaanites, included the idolatrous inhabitants from the extreme point of Israel's territories. But I rather would call the Reader's attention to the spiritual sense of the history. There is a passage in the Psalms that serves to show how the LORD raiseth up scourges for his people in their enemies, where it is said, that *the LORD turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people*. Psalm 105:25. Hence in all the afflictions for sin, the LORD'S hand is in every appointment. And this, Reader, may serve to illustrate the whole of our eventful life. Love is at the bottom of all the LORD'S dispensations. He is ever pursuing one invariable plan of mercy. But if the followers of JESUS transgress, and are led away by their idolatrous neighbors, GOD will visit their offences with the rod, and their sins with the scourge. So the promise runs. Psalm 89:30-32.

JUDGES 3:5-7

(5) And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: (6) And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. (7) And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

Those who have no knowledge of the corruption of the human heart, would be at a loss to conceive the possibility of such abominable conduct in Israel. But alas! what is not the human heart capable of doing, if left for one moment to itself! Read that solemn scripture, and pause over it, with an eye to self. Jeremiah 17:9.

JUDGES 3:8

(8) ¶ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years.

Here we have the relation of the first conqueror of Israel. King of *Mesopotamia* means, *in the midst of rivers*; probably so called from being situated between the two great rivers, the *Euphrates* and the *Tigris*. Eight years subjugation, no doubt, was long and grievous. Alas! how many years do God's people groan under the powerful enemies both within and without, which rise against them by reason of their rebellion.

JUDGES 3:9

(9) And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

Observe; before Israel's deliverance there was a cry to God for relief. How sweet is it to see when from the first *descent* of grace in the heart, the soul goes forth in the *ascending* prayer for mercy. Dearest JESUS! let thy prevenient grace be shed abroad in my heart; and then, the earnest supplication for mercy in thy all prevailing blood and righteousness, will be sure to bring relief down.

JUDGES 3:10

(10) And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.

Othniel is the first judge of Israel after Joshua's death. But Reader! do not fail to observe, how he became the deliverer of Israel. It was because the SPIRIT of the LORD came upon him. Oh! how precious is it to see that uniformity in every instance: that it is, not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD. And was it not so with the LORD JESUS? And must not the same blessed SPIRIT which anointed JESUS to his office, anoint also his church and people? Isaiah 61:1.

JUDGES 3:11

(11) And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Observe how many years the land had rest after GOD'S deliverance. But oh! what an everlasting rest remaineth for the people of GOD, when JESUS hath given them rest, who is indeed himself the rest of his weary and afflicted ones. Hebrews 4:9. Matthew 11:28.

JUDGES 3:12

(12) ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

There is a great degree of meaning in that little word *again*. Israel did evil again. Even *Israel*, GOD'S people, and who had received from the LORD such a series of mercies. And what made their iniquity the more odious was, that it was *again*, after that they had smarted for it, and after so much mercy. But Reader! in Israel behold the church of GOD in all ages. Oh! what departures, again and again, in the LORD'S people! This was the aggravated sin of Solomon. 1 Kings 2:9.

JUDGES 3:13-14

(13) And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees. (14) So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

The last servitude was *eight* years, and this *eighteen*. Observe, how the LORD, according to his promise, increaseth the stripes upon increased rebellion. See Leviticus 26:27, 28.

JUDGES 3:15

(15) But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a

Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

Reader! do not fail to remark, how grace manifests itself in the heart. When the LORD is about to appear in any remarkable manner, very frequently he sets his people to prayer. And then that promise is fulfilled, Isaiah 65:24. Read another, to the same effect, Isaiah 30:18. This *Ehud* was the *second* judge of Israel, after the death of Joshua. It is particularly recorded of him that he was left handed, and a *Benjamite*. The name *Benjamin*, signifies the son of the *right* hand. And therefore it is perhaps mentioned, as being the more remarkable. JESUS, as the deliverer of his people, is emphatically called, the Man of JEHOVAH'S *right* hand. Psalm 80:17.

JUDGES 3:16-29

(16) But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. (17) And he brought the present unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon *was* a very fat man. (18) And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present. (19) But he himself turned again from the quarries that *were* by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him. (20) And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of *his* seat. (21) And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: (22) And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out. (23) Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them. (24) When he was gone out, his servants came; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber. (25) And they tarried

till they were ashamed: and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; therefore they took a key, and opened *them*: and, behold, their lord *was* fallen down dead on the earth. (26) And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath. (27) And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them. (28) And he said unto them, Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over. (29) And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valor; and there escaped not a man.

Every circumstance related in this transaction, manifests that it was of GOD. *Eglon was* overawed at the supposed message from GOD, so as to arise. His servants were blinded to any thoughts of suspicion, from this visit of an enemy. And the event, in *Ehud's safety*, until he had escaped beyond the power of seizing him, carries evidence to the same purpose. And lastly, added to all, the destruction of Moab after Eglon's death, plainly testified that the thing was of the LORD. But oh! what a sweet thought is it to the oppressed of the true Israelites, that when the HOLY GHOST awakens the cry for mercy, and deliverance, in the hearts of his people, how all things conspire to give sure conquest, in the name and strength of JESUS. That is a sweet scripture to this effect, in which the promise runs, *For the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, now will I arise saith the LORD.* Psalm 12:5.

JUDGES 3:30-31

(30) So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years. (31) ¶ And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

This *Shamgar* was the *third* of the Judges which judged Israel. We have but a short account of him. But even this is as a Deliverer. As he rescued Israel from the Philistines, I am inclined to think the seat of his government lay *south*, and not to the *east*, on the banks of Jordan, as the situation of *Ehud`s* must have been. It is probable that *Shamgar`s* deliverance of Israel was suddenly effected, as the weapon by which he wrought it should *seem* to intimate. What instruments are too weak when the LORD commissions them! Rams horns can blow down the walls of Jericho, and the foolishness of preaching turn men from darkness to light, when the LORD gives the word. Joshua 6:20. 1 Corinthians 1:21.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! learn here again, in the history of Israel, how much in all ages the church of GOD is the same, and how uniformly the LORD is training his people for himself. GOD leaves his people in the midst of their enemies, to try them, and to prove them. As polished stones, for his temple, they are long preparing, and all the plan of his proceedings towards them, is mercy and goodness. But oh! how very precious is it to see, in Israel's history, how everything pointed to the LORD JESUS. Brought, as the people were, by sin and rebellion, into a state of repeated slavery, GOD raised up the several judges as their deliverers. But what are *Othniel*, *Ehud*, and *Shamgar*, compared to him who delivereth his people from the wrath to come, and whose deliverance is everlasting! Look up, my soul, to JESUS, when the corruptions from within, or foes from without, would bring thee again into bondage; and in the cry

of distress and sorrow to the LORD, oh for faith to behold JESUS the sent and sealed of the FATHER, to drive out thine enemies from before thee, and to make thee more than conqueror through him that loveth thee.

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 4:1

(1) ¶ And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.

The chapter begins with a melancholy account of GOD's people. They did again evil. Alas! GOD's people are by nature children of wrath, even as others. My people, saith GOD, are bent to backsliding. Hosea 11:7. Is it so, my soul, that there is in thy very nature a tendency to evil? Oh! precious, precious JESUS, what but for thee and thy perfect, all-satisfying, soul justifying righteousness, would be the hope of all thy people?

JUDGES 4:2

(2) And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host *was* Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

I beg the Reader not to overlook the expression, "the LORD sold them." Yes! every event, as well afflictive as prosperous, is of the LORD'S appointment. Painful as the LORD'S corrections sometimes are, yet, when his hand is traced in them, and the heart is enabled to say, *I know, LORD, that thy judgments are right*, this brings the soul up to its proper frame. Psalm 119:75.

JUDGES 4:3

(3) And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

Observe how grace works. The cry of the soul, and that cry, directed unto the LORD; these are sure marks of grace. If the Reader would see the contrast of this, it will not be far to find. Carnal men will cry out, in their affliction, and by reason of the multitude of oppressions, complain. But their cry is not to GOD for deliverance; none of them saith, where is GOD my Maker? Job 35:9, 10.

JUDGES 4:4-5

(4) ¶ And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. (5) And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

The HOLY GHOST hath thought proper to render this woman's name illustrious in the Church. Some have thought that, as *Lapidoth* is not a very common name for a man, and rather means *light*, and *illumination*, the expression is symbolical, for the extraordinary degree of grace imparted to Deborah, and particularly on this occasion, of delivering Israel. Be this as it may, certain it is, that she was highly esteemed; for the people came to her for judgment.

JUDGES 4:6-7

(6) And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? (7) And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

Under the impression of the HOLY SPIRIT of the LORD, Deborah evidently sent this message to *Barak*. And it should seem that in it, by the manner of her expression, in which she asketh, as it were, the question of Barak, both Barak and the children of Israel understood it to be of the LORD. *Hath not the LORD GOD of Israel commanded?* Reader! do observe, I pray you, the antiquity of that most precious doctrine, of the *divine drawings*. Yes! blessed GOD! it is thy drawings which alone inclines the heart to JESUS, and by which the souls of thy people are kept near thyself. Song Of Solomon 1:4. John 6:44.

JUDGES 4:8-9

(8) And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go. (9) And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the LORD shall sell

Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

I do not think that *Barak*, by this answer, manifested fear; but rather, it arose from the confidence he had, that by her accompanying him, the people would be the more convinced that the thing was of the LORD.

JUDGES 4:10

(10) ¶ And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

Though the LORD'S army were, by the express orders of Deborah, to be gathered from those two tribes, yet from some expressions we meet with after in Deborah's song, it should seem that there were others, who were, perhaps, volunteers in this sacred service. *See chap.* 5:15.

JUDGES 4:11

(11) Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which *is* by Kedesh.

The account of this *Kenite is* very properly introduced here, in order to explain what afterwards follows in the history, verse 17.

JUDGES 4:12-13

(12) And they showed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. (13) And Sisera gathered together all

his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

Deborah had promised *Barak* that the LORD would incline *Sisera* to the battle. And hence the sign of victory is instantly held out.

JUDGES 4:14

(14) And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

Oh! what lively faith did this animated woman possess! Observe the expression, *Is not the LORD gone out before thee?* Reader! what may we not insure to ourselves of success, in all the battles of our enemies, when we can see JESUS going before us, and leading on to victory? This is the apostle's direction, under the HOLY GHOST, *looking unto* JESUS. Hebrews 12:2.

JUDGES 4:15-16

(15) And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on his feet. (16) But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; *and* there was not a man left.

Such, Reader, will be, and such even now is, the sure event of the wars of GOD'S people, who fight under the banner of JESUS. There shall not a man be able to stand before thee all

thy days. So run the words of the royal charter to our Joshua JESUS, and his people in him. Joshua 1:5.

JUDGES 4:17

(17) ¶ Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

The peace here spoken of only implies that *Jabin* did not tyrannize over Heber's house, as over Israel's. The relationship on account of Moses, between Heber and Israel, could not have made Jabin's cruelties to Israel very pleasing.

JUDGES 4:18-20

(18) And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. (19) And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. (20) Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

Perhaps *Jael* was on the lookout, to show mercy to any poor Israelite which might have fled, from the battle. And if so, what must have been her surprise when she found *Sisera* at her door? Her hospitality to this sworn foe of Israel was no doubt intended for the better, and more easy accomplishment of the purpose, which probably by this time, when she saw his reduced strength and fatigue, she had conceived in her mind to perform.

JUDGES 4:21

(21) Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

That this thing was of the LORD, no one can doubt, who considers that *Deborah* had before pointed out, under the Spirit of prophecy, that the LORD had sold Sisera into the hand of a woman. See vase 9. And from the eminent blessings which, under the same authority, Deborah proclaimed in her song of victory, should be bestowed upon her. See chap, 5:24.

JUDGES 4:22

(22) And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her *tent*, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples.

I leave the Reader to his own reflection, to consider what must have been the thoughts of Barak, concerning divine mercies, when he beheld *Sisera* dead before him, and was enabled to trace the LORD'S hand in the whole battle. And I would equally leave the Reader to his own reflections, if he will make a comparative view of this subject, with the circumstances of his own life, if so be the LORD hath brought him acquainted with the spiritual conflicts in the life of grace, and hath at any time found such a glorious and unexpected deliverance as this from them. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet is it, to the true soldier of JESUS'S little army, when he speaks of his grace as sufficient for him, and when the LORD'S

strength is literally made perfect in human weakness. 2 Corinthians 13:9.

JUDGES 4:23-24

(23) So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. (24) And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

How beautifully the subject ends as it begun. It was not *Deborah*, nor *Barak*, nor the ten thousands of *Zebulun* and *Naphthali*, which got themselves the victory; but GOD himself which subdued their enemies, and brought down the king of Canaan under them. Sweetly doth the HOLY GHOST teach Israel to sing upon another occasion, which corresponds to this: Psalm 44:1-4.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

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

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

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

the divine goodness, and the instrumentality of human endeavors, crowned with GOD'S power.

JUDGES 5:1

(1) ¶ Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

Observe, how soon the song of praise begun. It was *on that day*. What day so suited as the day of mercy? When the LORD comes near his people in grace, *then* ought his people to go near him in praise. Reader! have you began *your* song of deliverance from greater enemies than *Sisera* and his host? Hath JESUS said to you what he once said to *Zaccheus*? Luke 19:9. Oh! how precious are the first visits of GOD to the soul! If the LORD remembers the day of our espousals, well may you and I. See Jeremiah 2:1 Song Of Solomon 3:11. It should seem that Deborah was both writer and speaker of this holy song. Evidently, therefore, a prophetess, and under divine influence. Oh! thou HOLY SPIRIT, how sweet and extensive are thy teachings! See that blessed Scripture, and behold its fulfillment at Pentecost, and yet more particularly, look after the gracious effects now in the church of JESUS, among his people, and in your own heart. Joel 2:28, 29. Acts 2:16-18. Isaiah 54:13. John 14:26.

JUDGES 5:2

(2) Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

It is precious to begin with Hallelujah. It resembles the worship of heaven. Praise is comely for the righteous. And oh!

what unceasing cause do the redeemed of the LORD find for it! I have often admired that sweet expression to this purpose, in Psalm 107:2.

JUDGES 5:3

(3) Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, *even* I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing *praise* to the LORD God of Israel.

The sacred song begins with calling upon the great ones of the earth to attend to it. Let impious princes take warning by the fate of Sisera. Let righteous princes never forget by whom they reign, and under whose authority they act. Psalm 2:10-12. There is a great beauty in the humbleness of Deborah's mind. Here is not a word of merit to herself, but all praise is referred unto the LORD JEHOVAH. Oh! how sweet it is, when the LORD hath exalted his people to the view of others, that they lay low themselves the more, and exalt him the higher. Isaiah 2:11.

JUDGES 5:4-5

(4) LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. (5) The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

Here is a beautiful retrospect to the LORD'S former mercies for his people, and to his former manifestations on Mount Sinai. The HOLY GHOST taught the Prophet *Habakkuk* to record similar things. Habakkuk 3:3, 4. It is always profitable to connect in one and the same view, GOD'S *past* with his *present* mercies. It shows his unchangeableness in his love to his people. And it serves to beget faith in the same for what is

to come. GOD in CHRIST is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8.

JUDGES 5:6-8

(6) ¶ In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travelers walked through byways. (7) *The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.*

(8) They chose new gods; then *was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?*

Deborah takes a most effectual method to heighten to the view of the people, the deliverance their GOD had wrought for them, by dwelling more particularly upon their former misery. From their last judge *Shamgar*, it should seem that their enemies would not allow them any judge or governor; consequently they had no ministration of justice. Hence their highways were infested with robbers, and the poor traveler was obliged to seek out his path through intricate ways. Trade from caravans was of course no more; nay, the very villages were deserted, and their fields not tilled. Everything was wretched and miserable to poor Israel. The very places for drawing water it was dangerous to go to. And as for the armies of Israel, there seemed to be not a soldier among them. But wherefore this sad state? She says they had chose *new* gods; and this gave birth to the war. Alas! alas! that nation so favored, so blessed, so upheld by JEHOVAH, should have so far fallen, as to leave the LORD for the dunghill gods of wood and stone. Reader! do turn to that portion of GOD's expostulation by the Prophet, and when you have perused it put your hand to your heart, and ask whether it is not but too applicable to yourself, and GOD's people in all ages? Jeremiah 2:11-13.

JUDGES 5:9

(9) My heart *is* toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD.

This is an interesting part of the song, in calling upon those whom the LORD had inclined to take a more active part in the service of the day. Psalm 110:3.

JUDGES 5:10

(10) Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

As she had so pathetically lamented in the former verse, that the soldiery of Israel had been so dispirited, that neither spear nor shield could be found among their armies, she now looks with pleasure upon them whom the LORD had inclined to be his instruments in this battle. Particular note is made of such, for while we behold the LORD'S hand in all things, we give due praise to the LORD'S instruments. They whom the LORD honors we ought to honour. White asses and mules were beasts of distinction in the early ages. See 2 Samuel 18:9. Judges 12:14.

JUDGES 5:11

(11) *They that are delivered* from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, *even* the righteous acts *toward the inhabitants* of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

Special songs of praise are justly expected from those who by the victory are delivered from their fears. But is there not much of gospel here? Let the poor sinner, who by JESUS' deliverance from sin and death is brought out of all his fears, let him, for he is best qualified to speak of it, let him say what righteous acts of JEHOVAH have been displayed in saving his soul from death, and his feet from falling. Psalm 40:2, 3.

JUDGES 5:12

(12) ¶ Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

It should seem by this new and repeated call of the Prophetess, that she thought her soul was not as yet sufficiently roused to the service of praising GOD. And though she had put forth all her strength, yet she fell so far short of what she wished to say, that language failed. It is remarkable, that the HOLY GHOST puts the same language in the mouth of the Church in after ages, when calling upon the great Head of his Church the LORD JESUS, under one of his well known characters, *The arm of JEHOVAH*. See Isaiah 51:9. And it is yet further remarkable, that the LORD himself is, by the voice of the Prophet, calling upon the Church in the same words, to take hold of him in the moment of need. See Isaiah 53:1. I do not presume to say that it is so, but I would humbly ask the Reader to pause over the passage, and devoutly inquire whether Barak, in being called upon to lead his captivity captive, was not a type of the ever blessed JESUS? Yes! thou dearest Captain of our salvation, it is thou which didst lead thy captivity captive, when thou ascendest up on

high; when thou hadst triumphed over principalities and powers, and hadst vanquished hell, death, and the grave. Psalm 68:18.

JUDGES 5:13

(13) Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

There is a great beauty in this verse. It is more than probable that from the long oppression the enemies of Israel had exercised over them, GOD'S people had been reduced in number. Yet, saith *Deborah*, the remnant were made victorious in this day over the mighty. Yea, such was the LORD'S display of the sovereignty of his grace, that he made *me*, a poor woman a mother in Israel, to triumph over the powerful. Reader! do not forget to recollect that the promise is, *Satan shall be bruised under our feet shortly*. Romans 16:20.

JUDGES 5:14-24

(14) Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. (15) And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart. (16) Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart. (17) Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches. (18) Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeopardated their lives unto the death in the high places of the field. (19) The kings came *and* fought, then fought the kings of

Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money. (20) They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. (21) The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. (22) Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones. (23) Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the LORD, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty. (24) ¶ Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.

If the Reader, after reading all these verses as they stand in their proper places, will attend to the several things contained in them, he will find that Deborah takes a view of the whole army both for and against Israel. Praise is given expressly, and with particular mention, to such of the tribes of Israel as were foremost in the battle. Just reproof to the tribes which remained at home. The defection of *Reuben* is very pathetically lamented; and *Dan* and *Asher* are noticed with suitable regret for their indifferency. But while those who ought to have been alive to the service of GOD'S cause are thus reproved for not doing it, how delightfully doth Deborah dwell upon the LORD'S interposition. The very stars fought from heaven on the side of GOD! I would desire the Reader to remark the confederacy of the kings. So earnest were they for the ruin of Israel, that contrary to their usage, in hiring out themselves and soldiers for gain, they were volunteers in the cause. Yes! to crush the LORD JESUS in his person, or in his people, the rulers of this world are confederate. Psalm 2:1, 2. Observe how this person looks with a twofold aspect; curses to GOD'S enemies: blessings to his friends. Is not this angel here spoken of as commending the execution of *Meros* the LORD JESUS? Joshua 5:13, 14.

JUDGES 5:25-27

(25) He asked water, *and* she gave *him* milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. (26) She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. (27) At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

What a very high commendation hath the HOLY GHOST been pleased to bestow on *Jael*? There is but one beside of whom the same is said, and the occasion is yet concerning a much greater deliverance, see Luke 1:28.

JUDGES 5:28-30

(28) The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot *so* long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? (29) Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, (30) Have they not sped? have they *not* divided the prey; to every man a damsel *or* two; to Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides, *meet* for the necks of *them that take* the spoil?

What an awful contrast to the wife of *Heber* doth Sisera's mother appear! Little better than a common strumpet, she seems to rejoice in her son's supposed debaucheries, and those of his army, over the chastity of Israel's daughters. What a disgrace to the delicacy of her sex! How ripe for ruin! And Reader! do not overlook the honour she conferred on the daughters of Israel, though on her part perfectly undesigned, when she makes mention of the prey on their needle work. What a proof this was that Israel's daughters were renowned among the nations for their industry. *Not slothful in business*, while *fervent in spirit, serving the LORD*, are qualities the apostle joins in the character of GOD's people. Romans 12:11.

JUDGES 5:31

(31) So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but *let* them that love him *be* as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

The song as beautifully ends in prayer as it had opened in praise: to the contents of which every lover of the LORD JESUS and his Church, cannot but say Amen. They who love GOD'S church, must hate the foes of that church, for there is no being neutral in this holy war. The appeal of every heart is like the Psalmist's, Psalm 139:21, 22. Forty years rest was a blessed consequence of this victory. But oh! what an everlasting rest hath the LORD JESUS, by his victory obtained over sin, death, hell, and the grave! And how is he himself become the rest of the soul. Isaiah 25:8. Matthew 11:28, 29. Hebrews 4:9.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD! My soul with holy joy, how infinite the resources are in the faithfulness of Israel's GOD! What hath he not wrought! What is he not able to accomplish! And although Israel merited it not, yet nevertheless JEHOVAH wrought for his name's sake, and that he might make his power to be known.

And is there nothing in all this, to lead the heart both of the writer and the reader in the discovery of similar deliverances? If *Deborah* and *Barak* had their day of triumph in the LORD'S manifestations for Israel, cannot you and I look back, my brother, and count the day when we had cause to praise the LORD for the avenging of Israel? Oh! yes, trust we may both

well count the day when the LORD JESUS made bare his holy arm, and rescued our souls from the arrows of the enemy, in the place of drawing water from the wells of salvation. Long did our foes oppose our way, and the highways of ordinances were unoccupied by us, until that JESUS arose and led captivity captive. Then, dearest LORD, when thou wentest out of *Seir*, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, then did the mountains of sin in our nature melt before the Sun of Righteousness at his rising, and Sinai with all its terrors gave way at the presence of JESUS. Oh! give us grace, dearest Redeemer, to awake and utter a song, even a song of salvation, to the LORD JEHOVAH. May this be the everlasting rejoicing of our hearts: *the LORD is our strength, and our song, and he is become our salvation.*

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 6:1

(1) ¶ And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

What a sad representation doth the HOLY GHOST give us in this renewed instance of Israel's sin, of poor human nature in its best characters. Reader! remember that this is GOD'S people, GOD'S church of whom we read. *My people* (saith the LORD) *are bent to backsliding*. Hosea 11:7. Sweet is that promise, I will heal their backsliding. Hosea 14:4. For I hope that the Reader hath not now to learn, that unless the LORD heals, there is neither balm nor physician in Gilead, Jeremiah 8:22. Reader, do not overlook the expression in this verse, that the LORD delivered Israel into the hand *of Midian*. For what is *Midian*? what are ten thousand enemies, except the LORD gives the power to scourge? Deuteronomy 32:30. Besides, this is the very tenor of the LORD'S covenant, Psalm 89:30, &c.

JUDGES 6:2

(2) And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: *and* because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.

Reader! do not fail to remark with me how conscious guilt breeds fear. Is this Israel, victorious Israel, that skulks away, and from a contemptible people whom their fathers had overrun and almost destroyed. See Numbers 31:7. But alas! is it not so with all GOD'S Israel? Dearest JESUS! how doth a sense of my manifold departures from thee induce fear and timidity in my heart. And what confidence doth the enemy make of it, to create shyness in my trust in thee? I feel at such seasons the whole force of that scripture: Psalm 40:12.

JUDGES 6:3-5

(3) And *so* it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; (4) And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. (5) For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it.

How hath the HOLY GHOST marked with precision, this very state of punishment which the LORD exercises over the sins of his people. See Leviticus 26:16, 17.

JUDGES 6:6

(6) And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.

Here is the first cry of grace which we meet with in the LORD'S heritage under all their sufferings? Seven whole years of misery before that one cry to the LORD for deliverance is heard. No doubt Israel did as you and I have done under our sorrows, that is, tried every resource but the right, and every effort of human policy and human contrivance before application is made to GOD himself. And never would the heart of either be brought to GOD, unless that GOD by his grace in the heart had inclined the sinner to seek him. Doth the Reader know this? Is he most solemnly convinced of it. If not: oh! that the HOLY GHOST may be his teacher! 1 John 4:19.

JUDGES 6:7-8

(7) ¶ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD because of the Midianites, (8) That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;

Observe the sweet methods of GOD'S grace. No sooner doth Israel cry but the LORD hears and answers. Indeed the promise is, Before my people call I will answer. The LORD waiteth to be gracious. Isaiah 65:24. 30:18.

JUDGES 6:9-10

(9) And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; (10) And I said unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

Observe how by the ministry of a prophet, the LORD makes way for the salvation of his people. And is not GOD doing so now? Doth he not by the word of the gospel call upon sinners to return? Is he not by yet an higher messenger, even the HOLY GHOST himself, preparing the heart for the cordial reception of JESUS? Oh! thou HOLY SPIRIT, thou Almighty Teacher! how art thou unceasingly pleading and expostulating with the hearts of thy people, to endear to them JESUS? Reader, are you a backslider from the LORD? have you been brought out of spiritual Egypt? And have you since that great and distinguishing mercy, forgotten the LORD GOD of your fathers? Surely if so, you will feel the great mercy of GOD in a personal application of what is here said. Is *this the kindness to thy friend?* 2 Samuel 16:17.

JUDGES 6:11

(11) ¶ And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites.

I cannot hesitate to believe, that this was that same Almighty angel who, all along from creation, at various times manifested himself to his people as occasion required, and as it pleased him. I say I cannot hesitate to form this conclusion, because he who is in this verse called an angel of JEHOVAH, is in the 14th verse expressly called JEHOVAH. And Reader! when you have duly compared this passage with several others, and compared also some of the expressions he was graciously pleased to make use of, such as in a very particular way, *Surely I will be with thee*, and the promise of victory; I shall hope if the LORD be your teacher, you will believe the same. See Genesis 28:15. Exodus 3:2-6. Yes, dearest JESUS! thy people taught by thy SPIRIT, are enabled to trace thee, in the footstep of thy love frequently going before and manifesting thyself to them otherwise than thou dost unto the world; and in a way and manner best known to thyself, long before thine incarnation, as if thou went longing for that time to show thine unequalled mercy to our fallen nature! Proverbs 8:22-31. I would have the Reader to remark with me, several very interesting things, connected with the relation of the appearance of this angel. Is there not somewhat similar to the general promulgation of the gospel, and of the coming of JESUS to his people? The prophet we are told first came to Israel, and then this angel. John the Baptist was the forerunner of CHRIST. See Malachi 3:1. John 1:19-23. And is it not so now, in the revelation of JESUS to his people? Doth not the HOLY GHOST first convince of sin, and then of the righteousness of JESUS? See John 16:3. I would detain the Reader with another observation on this passage. When

deliverance was about to be proclaimed to Israel from their sorrows, that deliverance was made known to those who were retired from the world, and engaged in their honourable employments. And was it not the same, when the angels made known to the shepherds, watching over their flocks by night, that a Saviour was then born to them in the city of David. Luke 2:10, 11.

JUDGES 6:12-13

(12) And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valor. (13) And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

There is somewhat very striking in this short conversation; short as it is, it conveys much more than the mere words express. If this angel was, as the whole sense of the passage seems to intimate, the LORD JESUS, it is very true indeed, that the LORD was with him. The answer is also as striking: for according to the *Chaldee* reading of it, the words are, If the SHECHINAH, (the well known character of the promised seed of the LORD) be our help, why then is all this befallen us? Reader! remark how common it is in all ages for the LORD'S people to be a tried people. And Reader! add this other remark to the observation; if the LORD'S people be a sinning people, their offences shall be visited with rods. Psalm 89:30, 31.

JUDGES 6:14

(14) And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

I beg the Reader not to overlook the expression, *the LORD looked upon him*. Was there not somewhat particularly striking in this look of the LORD? Surely his grace, his power, his love, his promised favor and protection, accompanied that look. Wonders have been wrought by the piercing eye of JESUS upon his people, no doubt like that of his look to Peter! Oh, dearest JESUS! let thine eye be upon me for good. Luke 22:61. There is somewhat very expressive, in the commission with which the look of the LORD was accompanied. *Go in this thy might*. What might? Not Gideon's might surely, but the might of the LORD, with which, in the moment of giving him his commission, the LORD endued him. Oh! for the same grace and the same power, to go forth in the strength of the LORD GOD upon all occasions of our spiritual warfare, and to make mention of his righteousness only. Psalm 71:16.

JUDGES 6:15

(15) And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house.

This objection, if greater had not arisen in Gideon's mind after, would not have carried with it an evidence of little faith, for it bespoke great humbleness of soul, and a becoming spirit. It is a promise never to be forgotten, that the LORD

resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. James 4:6.

JUDGES 6:16

(16) And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

Reader! do not overlook the gracious condescension of JESUS to the fears and doubts of his people, while you are reading this verse. It is thus, depend upon it, he deals with them all. Matthew 12:20.

JUDGES 6:17-18

(17) And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me. (18) Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set *it* before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

From this intreaty it is evident that Gideon's heart was affected, and that he desired only additional evidences of the authority given to him. And I rather am inclined to think, that, as in former cases to Israel, in the appearances made to them by this angel, whom we cannot suppose Gideon was so little acquainted with the history of the church as not to know, he recollected that the LORD had more fully manifested who he was in the moment of offering sacrifice. Gideon prayed that he might have this privilege also, of offering it upon the present occasion. See Genesis 15:7-18.

JUDGES 6:19

(19) And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he

put the broth in a pot, and brought *it* out unto him under the oak, and presented *it*.

Observe, Gideon presented it to the angel! Wherefore? Did he know indeed that our JESUS *was*, as well as *now is*, a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec? Psalm 110:4. Hebrews 7:15-17.

JUDGES 6:20-21

(20) And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay *them* upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. (21) Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that *was* in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

Observe the trials of faith. In pouring out the broth, and laying the flesh on the cold rock, would not both cool? And how then should both be fit for sacrifice? Is it not thus frequently done by the LORD to his servants, that against hope they may, by the influences of his HOLY SPIRIT, believe in hope? Romans 4:18. But what I more earnestly beg the Reader not to lose sight of, in this passage, is the rock. Surely, nothing, under a symbolical representation, could more plainly point to JESUS as the sole cause of the acceptance of all sacrifice, when we call to mind that CHRIST was the Rock that followed Israel through the whole of the eventful history of the Church in the wilderness. And, moreover, it was on this Rock that JEHOVAH manifested himself to Moses, when he desired to see the face of GOD, as a proof of his commission. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet is it, to behold in one and the same point of view, that JESUS is both the sacrifice, and the high priest, and the altar, *from whence*

the holy fire issues in approbation, and *on* which all offerings are presented.

JUDGES 6:22

(22) And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

The fear of Gideon, on the discovery, was very natural, and corresponded to what the LORD had himself long before told Moses concerning the sight of GOD. See Exodus 33:20. Reader! what a delightful view doth this give us of the person and offices of our adorable Redeemer. JESUS, by tabernacling in substance of our flesh, hath softened the awful majesty of GOD. In seeing JESUS, we behold the brightness of the FATHER'S glory, and the express image of his person. And seeing him, we see in him the FATHER also without danger. John 1:18. 14:9. Hebrews 1:3.

JUDGES 6:23

(23) And the LORD said unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

There is a great beauty in this verse, if read in gospel language. The eye that beholds GOD in CHRIST, is so far from being in danger of death, that in him he beholds peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. 2 Corinthians 5:19.

JUDGES 6:24

(24) Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

JEHOVAH SHALOM, means the LORD our Peace. As if he had said, The LORD is at peace with me. It is the title which in that very spot Gideon desired ever after to know his GOD by. And is it not so by the true believer in JESUS, after once the soul is brought into the possession of that peace with GOD which is in CHRIST JESUS? The LORD our peace; the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. But there is somewhat particularly striking in the uniform custom holy men of old had in recording divine mercies, and making the very spot for ever after memorable where the LORD manifested himself. See Genesis 16:13. 22:14. 28:19, &c. Reader! let you and I pause over the passage, and if we know anything of GOD, ask our own hearts how many memorable spots we have cause to mark in the recollection of divine mercies, where we might call those places by all these names and many others, of JEHOVAH JIREH, JEHOVAH SHALOM, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:6.

JUDGES 6:25

(25) ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it:

Perhaps this second visit of GOD was in a vision of the night. It should seem by this account that the house of Gideon was engaged in the worship of idols, as well as other houses in Israel. And if so, it serves to manifest an evidence of distinguishing grace, that from such an house the LORD should raise up a deliverer for Israel. Thus Abraham, when called of GOD, was an idolater. See Genesis 12:1, 2. How marvellous are all the ways and works of GOD! Sweet, in confirmation of it, is that scripture, Romans 9:13-16. There is somewhat particularly striking in this direction concerning the *second*

bullock. I do not presume to explain the reason: but I venture to suggest to the Reader's notice, another striking scripture of divine appointment, where the *second* is preferred before the first. See Genesis 25:23. I would have the Reader notice, that Baal's altar is to be thrown down before that the altar to JEHOVAH be erected. And the altar to JEHOVAH is not to be built in the same place; but upon the top of the very rock where the former manifestations had been made to him. Is not this, if looked at in gospel dress, a sweet token that both altar and sacrifice are to be offered *upon*, and *in*, and *through*, JESUS? Matthew 16:13.

JUDGES 6:26-27

(26) And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. (27) Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and *so* it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night.

Gideon's apprehension doth not seem to have arisen from fear of offence, in that he did it by night; but for fear of interruption, he wished to accomplish the divine command, and therefore did it perhaps the same night. He well knew the consequence of the people's displeasure, but which it should seem he did not fear.

JUDGES 6:28-30

(28) And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built. (29) And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing. (30) Then the men

of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it.

To what an awful length of apostasy must Israel have been arrived, to condemn openly and without shame, one whose offence was zeal for JEHOVAH'S honour, and a detestation of the worship of a dunghill deity.

JUDGES 6:31

(31) And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himself, because *one* hath cast down his altar.

Whether from fatherly affection, or from an higher principle of grace in the heart, this conduct of *Joash* sprung, I do not determine. But no doubt, the LORD overruled his mind in favor of his son.

JUDGES 6:32

(32) Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

Jerub-baal, that is, let Baal plead.

JUDGES 6:33

(33) ¶ Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.

The year of deliverance to Israel was come, and therefore the LORD inclined the hearts of their enemies to gather together. See chap. 4:6, 7. Micah 4:12, 13.

JUDGES 6:34

(34) But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

I beg the Reader to take notice of the expression, that *the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH came upon Gideon*. Yes! it is that holy and eternal GOD, who worketh by his instruments through all the world of Providence and grace. Reader! be very earnest in your searchings, whether *you* are under his blessed influence. Ephesians 4:7. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11. Zechariah 4:6.

JUDGES 6:35

(35) And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

Though clothed and armed with the SPIRIT of the LORD, yet, as the LORD is graciously pleased to work with human instruments, Gideon calls in the LORD'S people to his aid. And are we not taught to do the same by prayer? See Paul's manner on this subject, Hebrews 13:18, &c.

JUDGES 6:36-40

(36) And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, (37) Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. (38) And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. (39) And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will

speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. (40) And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

It is probable that those requests of Gideon were more for the confirmation of the faith of his companions, than for his own; similar to those questions which John the Baptist sent to JESUS. For they are proposed with such humbleness of soul, that they do not carry with them those marks of doubt that otherwise might be expected. Matthew 11:2, 3, compared with John 1:29-34. Reader! do not overlook the gracious condescension of our most gracious and indulgent GOD, either way, and in any direction, as shall best satisfy the doubts and scruples of his people; by a dry fleece, or a moist fleece, the LORD will answer the prayers of his people. That is a very precious scripture to this purpose, Isaiah 45:11.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let you and I pause over this chapter, and in the view of Israel's repeated departures from the LORD GOD of their mercies, behold the picture of our own hearts. How often, how very often, hath our adorable Redeemer saved us from our enemies, and yet how prone are we to forget the gracious hand that hath wrought our salvation? And while we view our unworthiness, let the reflection lead us to contemplate renewed mercies. Doth not GOD send his messengers, like the Prophet, to remonstrate with us? Are not his visitations, either in the common Providences of life, in sickness, trouble, persecution, and the like, voices like the Prophet's of solemn expostulation? And when, these

messengers of correction and reproof are accompanied with his grace, and put a cry in our heart, under a sense of sin, and the prayer of earnestness for deliverance, doth not JESUS fly to our aid, and like his type, the Gideon here spoken of, come forth to our rescue? Oh! thou adored LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS! how precious is it to my soul, to see thy renewed goings forth for me in all the redemption of thy mercy! Dearest JESUS! grant me, from such repeated testimonies of thy love, such unalterable assurance of my interest in thee, that I may neither seek the moistened nor the dry fleece, to tell me that thou art a faithful GOD. Oh! for grace amidst all the departures and backslidings of my unworthy heart! Oh, for grace to believe stedfastly the record which GOD hath given of his dear SON.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 7:1

(1) ¶ Then Jerubbaal, who *is* Gideon, and all the people that *were* with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so

that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

We had in the preceding Chapter, the reason assigned for the change of Gideon's name. The change of names is common upon remarkable occasions. As Saul, after his conversion to the gospel, is called Paul. Jacob's name changed to Israel. Abram to Abraham. Hence there is a vast propriety in it. And indeed, it is one of the special promises to the church, that she should be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD should name. Isaiah 62:2. And JESUS hath sweetly promised to new name his people, as a token of his favor. Revelation 3:12. Oh! to be of that happy number!

JUDGES 7:2-3

(2) And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. (3) Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

Observe how graciously the LORD follows up the *first* tokens of his grace with the after actings of his favor. But I would have the Reader more particularly remark how the LORD deals with his people in the trials of their faith; even by a method which proves the reverse of human policy. While Midian was so numerous, who would have thought of lessening an army against them. But Reader! look at this scripture spiritually, and see if the same direction be not held forth to every warrior in the holy army of JESUS. Faith sends everything back but JESUS. All the success of the believer is in him, and in the

power of his strength. "They overcame by the blood of the LAMB," is the motto of all the holy army in heaven. Revelation 12:11.

JUDGES 7:4

(4) And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, *that* of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

The Reader will do well, in reading this scripture, to meditate what he may suppose passed in the mind of Gideon, when, out of thirty-two thousand, ten thousand only remained. And yet even of those ten thousand, the LORD declared them to be too many. Oh! it is sweet, when faith is enabled to see all in GOD'S CHRIST, and nothing of human policy, or human strength mingled with it. The prophet felt this, I am persuaded, when he caused the sacrifice which was to be consumed with fire, to be first deeply drenched in water. And so did Paul, when he had learned to glory in his infirmities, that there might be more scope for the display of JESUS'S strength. See 1 Kings 18:33-38. 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.

JUDGES 7:5-7

(5) So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. (6) And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. (7) And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

What a strange process, according to human ideas, was this of the LORD'S, for pointing out to Gideon the army by which the LORD would conquer Midian. But Reader! turn your thoughts to a yet more astonishing process, when, by the cross of JESUS, the crown of salvation is obtained for his people. And still going on in the wonder-working plan of mercy, when by the foolishness of preaching, and the poverty of instruments, in a few dull and unlearned fishermen of Galilee, the LORD triumphs over all the wisdom of men. 1 Corinthians 1:21-29.

JUDGES 7:8

(8) So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all *the rest of* Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

This reminds us of the walls of Jericho, and the HOLY GHOST hath caused to be recorded, that the victory was on one and the same account, and both by faith. See Hebrews 11:30, 32, 33.

JUDGES 7:9-15

(9) ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. (10) But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: (11) And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that *were* in the host. (12) And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. (13) And when Gideon was come, behold,

there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. (14) And his fellow answered and said, This *is* nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: *for* into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. (15) And it was *so*, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

Observe, the gracious condescension of GOD, thus to furnish out means for the strengthening of Gideon's faith. Though the LORD JESUS is both the author and finisher of our faith, and all the faith his people have is of his own gracious giving; yet doth he mercifully arrange and order things for the strengthening and confirming that faith, which he himself hath planted in their hearts. Observe, how every event of this visit to the camp corresponded, as if to convince Gideon that all was of the LORD. The dream of one of the soldiers of Midian, and the interpretation of it by another, to say nothing of the safety of Gideon and his servants in going down unnoticed amidst this great host of foes; everything served to bring conviction to the mind of Gideon of the Almightyness of the LORD, and how sure he was of victory. Hence the impulse of worship which burst from his mind. Oh! how precious is it to trace the LORD'S hand in all the LORD'S ways, and to know ourselves; and all that concerns us, to be under his government and direction. Reader! the issue of this battle with the foes of thy salvation, though numerous as grasshoppers, is not doubtful, if so be thou fightest in JESUS'S name, and in JESUS'S strength. Remember his own sweet

words, and in all skirmishes wear them on thine heart. John 16:33.

JUDGES 7:16-18

(16) ¶ And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. (17) And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall ye do. (18) When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword* of the LORD, and of Gideon.

As the HOLY GHOST, in his own comment on this battle, (Hebrews 11:32,) hath pronounced it to be a battle of faith, we have his authority to mark the prominent features of it, agreeable to this account. And hence I do not think the subject at all overstrained, if we behold in it somewhat strikingly typical of the glorious battle fought by the LORD JESUS and his little army, over all the host of enemies which opposed our salvation. Was not the sword of our JESUS the sword of JEHOVAH, and of the man CHRIST JESUS? In his sacred person do we not behold both GOD and man? And, as in the army of Gideon there was neither sword nor spear, so in the army of our JESUS the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strong holds. 2 Corinthians 10:4.

JUDGES 7:19

(19) So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands.

The midnight hour is what is particularly spoken of, as a season of terror. Matthew 25:6.

JUDGES 7:20-21

(20) And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. (21) And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

Nothing can be more evident than that the battle was the LORD'S; for the army of Israel did nothing but alarm, make a great noise, and look on. *Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.* Exodus 14:13, 14.

JUDGES 7:22

(22) And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath.

The Reader should particularly remark the expression, *The LORD set every man's sword against his fellow.* The terrors of the mind make the wicked *flee*, when no man pursueth. And thus the LORD'S promises are fulfilled. For how otherwise should one of GOD'S people chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them? Deuteronomy 32:30.

JUDGES 7:23-24

(23) ¶ And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. (24) And Gideon sent messengers

throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan

Though the LORD would not suffer victory to be wrought by more than three hundred, yet all Israel shall be called to the spoil. And thus, when JESUS accomplished salvation for his church and people, the whole of his train are invited to the feast of joy. See Revelation 19:11-18.

JUDGES 7:25

(25) And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan

The church in after ages records GOD'S mercies to Israel, respecting those princes; and prays that the like vengeance may be taken of all GOD'S foes. Psalm 83:11. The names of those princes, *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, were significant of the furiousness of their nature, signifying the raven and the wolf. And it is probable that the spots where they were taken, were made memorable to Israel in after ages.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 8

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

JUDGES 8:1

(1) ¶ And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.

What cause so good, or what conduct so unexceptionable, but will meet with envy, and the baleful effects of our corrupt passions. But Reader! was not this displeasure of the men of Ephraim principally against GOD, by whose order Gideon had done what he had done? See the fruits of the same unrenewed spirit in the age before. Numbers 16:11.

JUDGES 8:2-3

(2) And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *Is* not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? (3) God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

How gracious the mind of Gideon, in turning away wrath by gentleness. But observe, how Gideon points to the hand of

GOD in all this business. See a sweet instance in the patriarch Joseph to the same effect. Genesis 45:7, 8.

JUDGES 8:4

(4) ¶ And Gideon came to Jordan, *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pursuing *them*.

Reader! remark the state of Gideon's little army; *faint, yet pursuing*. Is not this the exact representation of all the army of JESUS? Who more faint than the harassed soldier of the great Captain of our salvation? Who gives over less than he who holds on, and holds out, and is faithful unto death, that no man may take his crown? Revelation 3:11.

JUDGES 8:5-17

(5) And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian. (6) And the princes of Succoth said, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army? (7) And Gideon said, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers. (8) And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered *him*. (9) And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower. (10) Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand *men*, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword. (11) And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure. (12) And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host. (13) And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle

before the sun *was up*, (14) And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threescore and seventeen men. (15) And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men *that are* weary? (16) And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth. (17) And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

The men of *Succoth*, and of *Penuel*, were Israelites by descent, but sadly degenerated from the spirit of Israel. The Reader will recollect, however, that these things happened during the time of the commonwealth of Israel, when every man did according to his own corrupt desires. The Judges, which from time to time the LORD raised up among his people, served to keep alive the remembrance of the LORD, and to preserve a seed in the earth. See chap. 21:25.

JUDGES 8:18-21

(18) ¶ Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou *art*, so *were* they; each one resembled the children of a king. (19) And he said, They *were* my brethren, *even* the sons of my mother: *as* the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. (20) And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, *and* slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he *was* yet a youth. (21) Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, so *is* his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks.

This event, in the death of those princes, forms a song of praise, and a subject of prayer, in the after ages of the church. See Psalm 83:11. But let the Reader remark, in their destruction, the sure ruin of all the church's foes; for this is

the great improvement to be made of this history. It was for the church's sake the LORD came forth to the slaughter of Midian, with which, like Amalek, the LORD! hath declared war for ever. Exodus 17:16.

JUDGES 8:22

(22) ¶ Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.

This request was apparently very proper, for who so suited to govern as one whom the LORD had honored. Reader! If you and I spiritualize this passage, and make application to the LORD JESUS, of the request made to Gideon and from the same cause, would it not be exceedingly proper? For hath not JESUS delivered us out of the hand of our enemies? And is it not highly suitable and becoming, that he should be our King, who is, and was, the Prophet, and Priest, and Redeemer of his people? That is a sweet scripture to this propose, Isaiah 33:22.

JUDGES 8:23

(23) And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.

By Gideon's answer, it evidently appears, that there was a spirit of idolatry in Israel: they desired, like the nations around, a king, thereby denying the government of God. If you consult these scriptures, they will serve to throw a light upon the subject: 1 Samuel 8:4-7. and 1 Samuel 12:1 to 25.

JUDGES 8:24-27

(24) And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.) (25) And they answered, We will willingly give *them*. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey. (26) And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that *were* about their camels' necks. (27) And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

Whatever were the views of Gideon in this ephod, is not easily determined. Aaron had fallen into a similar transgression, in the time the church was in the wilderness. Alas! what are the best of men for a moment, if not upheld by grace? Exodus 32:1–4.

JUDGES 8:28

(28) Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

There is somewhat very remarkable in the agreement, between the times of the several periods in which the LORD gave rest to his people from their enemies, *Forty years*. Moses's life was divided into three *forties*. The church was in a wilderness-state forty years. And this is spoken of by the LORD himself; as a period in which his patience was exercised. Psalm 95:10. *Othniel*, *Barak* and *Gideon*, each governed *forty*

years. The prophet *Ezekiel* was commissioned in after ages to tell the church somewhat himself, as typical of these things. Ezekiel 4:6.

JUDGES 8:29

(29) ¶ And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

The retired state of Gideon, after the LORD had blessed Israel through his instrumentality, may serve to teach the believer the humbleness of mind becoming the LORD'S servants. It is sweet, when we are enabled through grace to minister to GOD'S glory in public; and equally so, when we are enabled to enjoy the LORD ourselves in private. Matthew 14:23. That is a very precious precept, and brings its reward with it. Psalm 4:4.

JUDGES 8:30-31

(30) And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. (31) And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

Although from the infirmities and corruptions of our fallen nature, many of the early followers of the LORD, had more than one wife, yet, the HOLY GHOST hath pointed out both the sin and folly of it; for, in every instance, we are taught what a trouble it produced in families; witness Abraham's household. Genesis 16:2-5. Genesis 21:9-11. But, that those indulgencies sprung out of the corruption of our poor fallen nature, is evident from what our blessed LORD hath said upon it. See Matthew 19:3-8. Gideon seems to have had such partiality to

this son of the concubine, as Abraham had to Ishmael: for the name *Abimelech*, signifies my father a king. How opposite, in many instances, are the feelings of nature to those of grace. Genesis 17:18.

JUDGES 8:32

(32) And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

A good old age, in scripture language, is, I apprehend, a life of grace. To this same purport is that very precious word. Isaiah 65:20.

JUDGES 8:33

(33) And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baalberith their god.

What an awful representation do the Scriptures of GOD afford, of the total depravity and corruption of the heart. In all ages it breaks out. LORD, what is man? *Baal-berith*, in the original, signifies, *the LORD of a Covenant*; as if Israel had covenanted with an idol to their ruin.

JUDGES 8:34-25

(34) And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: (35) Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel.

Observe how they forgot GOD, and how should they be grateful to man! How beautifully doth the Psalmist introduce

to view, the wonderful goodness of GOD, when from the very sins of his people, the LORD takes occasion to display the riches of his grace. Psalm 106. throughout, but particularly from verse 34, to the end.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

CHAPTER 9

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

JUDGES 9:1-2

(1) ¶ And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, (2) Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether *is* better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, *which are* threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I *am* your bone and your flesh.

Observe how by iniquity, the plan is laid for obtaining the government. Here is no lawful right, no just claim, no call of God; and at the same time it is in direct opposition to his father's own promise. See chap. 8:23.

JUDGES 9:3-4

(3) And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He *is* our brother. (4) And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baalberith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him.

Take notice, how the scheme was carried on. It began in man's ambition, unauthorized by GOD, and was kept up by bribes from an idol. Thus laid in sin; what can the end be but vanity and vexation of spirit? *The wages of sin is death.*

JUDGES 9:5-6

(5) And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, *being* threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself. (6) And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

See how the dreadful pursuit is marked. It is all written in blood. And to such a wretched state is Israel at this time, as a nation, reduced that instead of punishing, according to GOD's righteous law, the murderer, he is advanced with one voice to the throne. Oh, gracious GOD! how infinitely to be prized, in this view of the picture of the human heart, is thy preventing and restraining grace.

JUDGES 9:7

(7) ¶ And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

The LORD, by his providence, had saved *Jotham*, from the general massacre of his brethren, and no doubt, the same gracious GOD, which had saved him from destruction, led him to make the declaration to the Shechemites, for there was much of a prophetic spirit in what he spake.

JUDGES 9:8-15

(8) The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. (9) But the

olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? (10) And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us. (11) But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? (12) Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us. (13) And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? (14) Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us. (15) And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then* come *and* put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

It was a very favorite way in the Eastern world, to deliver weighty subjects by parable. And hence, in accommodation to this general mode of instruction, our adorable Redeemer chiefly delivered his precious discourses, under the cover of similitudes; so much so indeed, that at one time without a parable JESUS did not speak unto them. See Matthew 13:34. The figure of the tree chasing a king, and the nobler ones declining the station, while the bramble hastily caught at it, was plainly intended to show how Gideon had, modestly for himself and his lawful sons, declined this honour! while his illegitimate son, like a worthless bramble, seized it on the first offer. Nothing, in a figurative way, could have been more happily chosen, to point out the object Jotham had in view.

JUDGES 9:16-20

(16) Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; (17) (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: (18) And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, threescore and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidservant,

king over the men of Shechem, because he *is* your brother;) (19) If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: (20) But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

Nothing can be more evident, from the sequel of Abimelech's history, and which this chapter relates, than that there was a great deal of a prophetic spirit in this declaration of Jotham. The mutual destruction of Abimelech and the Shechemites, set forth this very strikingly.

JUDGES 9:21

(21) And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

It was prudent to hasten away, when he had delivered his message in such faithfulness. How few are there that can be found faithful to God and souls!

JUDGES 9:22

(22) ¶ When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel,

Observe, it is not said that Abimelech governed Israel for their good, or that he was a blessing to the people, but that he reigned so long, perhaps in his own enjoyments.

JUDGES 9:23

(23) Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:

Observe, when the triumphs of the wicked begin to draw to an end, how we are taught to mark the LORD's hand in it. An evil spirit sowed dissention among them: but it was the LORD which sent this evil spirit. The LORD never wants instruments to accomplish the purposes of his own righteous will. It is always profitable to eye the hand of GOD, in every providence both of mercy and judgment. None but GOD's people, however, can sing of both, and none but them can sing that song *to the* LORD. Psalm 101:1.

JUDGES 9:24-57

(24) That the cruelty *done* to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren. (25) And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech. (26) And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. (27) And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made merry, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech. (28) And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *is* not *he* the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him? (29) And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out. (30) And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled. (31) And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be

come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee. (32) Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that *is* with thee, and lie in wait in the field: (33) And it shall be, *that* in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion. (34) And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies. (35) And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait. (36) And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as *if they were* men. (37) And Gaal spake again and said, See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim. (38) Then said Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who *is* Abimelech, that we should serve him? *is* not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them. (39) And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. (40) And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown *and* wounded, *even* unto the entering of the gate. (41) And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem. (42) And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech. (43) And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and, behold, the people *were* come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them. (44) And Abimelech, and the company that *was* with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two *other* companies ran upon all *the people* that *were* in the fields, and slew them. (45) And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that *was* therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt. (46) And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard *that*, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith. (47) And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. (48) And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people

that *were* with him; and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid *it* on his shoulder, and said unto the people that *were* with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, *and* do as I *have done*. (49) And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women. (50) ¶ Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it. (51) But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and shut *it* to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower. (52) And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire. (53) And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. (54) Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died. (55) And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place. (56) Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren: (57) And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

One general observation runs through the whole of this history, and meets the Reader in every part of it: namely, that GOD'S judgments, sooner or later, overtake the sinner. The Shechemites are first punished by the apparent victory of Abimelech, but this victory only becomes the prelude to the death of Abimelech: so that both fall by the just judgment of Almighty GOD. So true and final is that solemn sentence of GOD: *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of GOD made he man.* Genesis 9: 6.

REFLECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 10

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

JUDGES 10:1-2

(1) ¶ And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. (2) And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

There is somewhat significant in the name of *Tola*; it signifies in the original, a worm. Perhaps it was descriptive of the humility of this man's mind, for, though he governed Israel twenty-three years, yet we hear nothing ostentatious of him. Reader! doth it not serve, in the view of this man's name, to remind thee of him, who in the unequalled humility of his soul, called himself the worm. Psalm 22:6. And was it not to him, as our great surety and representative, JEHOVAH spake, in that memorable scripture, Isaiah 41:14. Perhaps the Reader doth not know, that JESUS was called by way of reproach, the *Tolah*: meaning, the hanged one, after his crucifixion; and all his followers branded with being disciples of the *Tolah*: the hanged one. Precious Redeemer! in humbleness as well as glory, it behoveth thee to have the preeminence.

JUDGES 10:3-5

(3) And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years. (4) And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead. (5) And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

There was an illustrious *Jair* before this man. Numbers 32:41. Though *Jair* reigned twenty-two years, and was eminently distinguished as a father, with a numerous progeny, and provided for them nobly, yet all his history is contained in a small compass; that he was a *Gileadite*, that he had thirty sons, which rode elegantly; which possessed thirty cities, and after reigning twenty-two years, that he died. Alas! and what is the inscription of every man's tomb but like it. Oh! how precious it is, to belong to him who liveth forever, and hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* John 14:19.

JUDGES 10:6

(6) ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him.

Let the Reader, while he reads this sad account of the defection of Israel, call to mind the melancholy state of nature void of grace, in all ages. What a tender expostulation is that of GOD by the prophet, in the view of it. Jeremiah 2:11, 12.

JUDGES 10:7-9

(7) And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon. (8) And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel: eighteen years, all the children of Israel that *were* on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which *is* in Gilead. (9) Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

How close upon the heels of sin is the LORD'S chastisement. But Reader, do not overlook GOD'S love in all his judgments. Sweet is the confession of the Psalmist upon this subject, considered in his personal character. It will be well if both writer and reader in all their afflictions, can do the same. Psalm 119:75, &c.

JUDGES 10:10

(10) ¶ And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.

It was a gracious promise of GOD, that if his people under his judgments, accepted the punishment of their iniquity, GOD would remember his everlasting covenant. See Leviticus 26:40-42. Reader! do not overlook, in this promise, the salvation by JESUS. GOD'S covenant with Abraham was typical of the everlasting covenant of redemption. See Genesis 17:7. How else could it be called an everlasting covenant? And what else could be implied in being a GOD to him and to his seed, but the blessings of JESUS, in whom all the families of the earth are alone blessed.

JUDGES 10:11-14

(11) And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, *Did not I deliver you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? (12) The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. (13) Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. (14) Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

These strong, but gracious expostulations, are all leading to repentance. They all convey, what would be justice indeed,

but by grace accompanying them, they prepare for mercy. Oh! how precious is that rich, and complete salvation, in which the LORD, in the person of our Great Representative, hath taken vengeance of our sins, while sparing in him the sinner. Hence the assurance of that blessed doctrine. Romans 3:26.

JUDGES 10:15

(15) And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

Reader, do not overlook, in this acknowledgment of Israel, the characters of true repentance. They lie low in the dust, acknowledging GOD'S sovereign right to do as he pleased; and while they supplicate mercy, confess that they have no pretensions to it. Certainly the HOLY GHOST prepares the souls of true penitents for all the riches of JESUS' grace, in thus stripping the heart of everything, that JESUS may be more precious.

JUDGES 10:16

(16) And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

The expression here made use of, that the LORD'S *soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*, is so very striking, that I would wish the Reader to pause over the perusal of it. There is a similar one in the prophecy of Ezekiel, in which the LORD saith, *I am broken with their whorish heart*. Ezekiel 6:9. Was it not meant to convey to us, (for I do not presume to speak

decidedly upon so solemn a passage) the *human nature* of JESUS, of whom it is said, that in all the afflictions of his people, he was afflicted. Isaiah 63:9, 10. The GOD-HEAD of JESUS is not subject to such passions. If this be the meaning of the passage, how very sweet is it thus to trace the outlines of JESUS in his love to his people, in all their circumstances.

JUDGES 10:17-18

(17) Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh. (18) And the people *and* princes of Gilead said one to another, What man *is he* that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

When the LORD is about to appear for the deliverance of his people, he soon raiseth instruments for the purpose. That is a blessed scripture, for the encouragement of GOD'S afflicted ones in all ages, when the LORD hath prepared their minds for his mercy; we may be sure that the mercy is prepared for them. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy; now will I arise, saith the LORD. Psalm 12:5.

REFLECTIONS

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

But chiefly my soul, remark in this chapter, what is said of his unequalled love, and tender sympathy with his people; whose soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. Yes! dearest JESUS, here I fully recognize thee! It is JESUS' soul that was grieved. It is the same, of whom it is said, that in all their affliction he was afflicted. In his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and *vexed* his HOLY SPIRIT. Oh! sweet and precious view of the humanity of JESUS! Sweet and precious evidence, that he hath indeed taken our nature upon him! Sweet and precious assurance of his being the same JESUS, yesterday, and today, and forever: when, in an age so long before his incarnation, and the eternal purposes of salvation came to be fulfilled, JESUS' soul participated in the miseries of his people. And shall not my soul find a growing confidence in this unequalled view of his love? Shall I not rest assured, that if my adored Redeemer took a part, and so decided a part in the sorrows of his people, before redemption-work was finished; will he not now feel an interest, and concern in all that relates to them? Did the SON of GOD indeed come down from heaven; did he leave the bosom of the FATHER, and tabernacle in substance of our flesh, on purpose to accomplish salvation; and was his soul grieved for those miseries he came to do away; and will he now relax in his regard, and overlook the miseries of his Israel, when he is exalted at the right hand of the FATHER, and all power is His in heaven and earth? Will not JESUS, of whom it is said, having loved his own which are in the world, he loveth them unto the end; will he not commiserate our distresses, soften their asperity, and overrule them to his own glory, and his people's welfare? Oh! thou dear Redeemer! convinced as my soul is,

that amidst all the hallelujah's of the blessed, the care of thy church below, attracts thy unceasing concern; nor can all the joys of heaven cause thee to remit one moment thy participating in all the circumstances of the humblest and poorest of thy tried family: may my soul feel the SPIRIT'S constraining influence in drawing me nearer to the view, and to the enjoyment of thee my GOD and Saviour; till from conducting me through all troubles, and sympathizing with me in all needful afflictions, thou shalt bring me safe to that blessed place, where as the LAMB in the midst of the throne, thou feedest thy redeemed, leadest them to living fountains of waters, and GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 11:1-2

(1) ¶ Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, and he *was* the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. (2) And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou *art* the son of a strange woman.

It was remarked in the preceding chapter, that the men of Gilead were consulting who to appoint as their leader, to go

out with them to battle against the Ammonites. The LORD was about to appear for their deliverance. And when the LORD comes forth for this purpose, he never needs an instrument in order to accomplish his gracious designs. The distinction that is here made between the children of lawful wedlock, and those sprung from unlawful connections, is uniformly marked through the bible. There is indeed more in it, in a spiritual sense, than is generally considered. The married state is expressly said to be a figure of the union between CHRIST and his church. So the apostle explains it; Ephesians 5:24-32. But notwithstanding all this, we find instances in scripture, in which the LORD is pleased to show that publicans and harlots are not disqualified for participating in the mercies of JESUS. Perhaps a more illustrious instance cannot be found than in that of *Rahab* the harlot. And was not this a type of the call of the Gentiles, to whom the LORD was not married as to Israel? Compare Joshua 2:1-14. with James 2:25. Hebrews 11:31.

JUDGES 11:3

(3) Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

The gathering of vain men unto Jephthah, is not unsimilar to David's army, when he became their captain, when everyone that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became their captain. See 1 Samuel 22:2. But in all this, do I not see JESUS pictured out as the real David, and the captain of his people? Never, dearest LORD, should I have gathered with others unto thee, nor have sought to have thee

to reign over me, if I had not been in soul distress, by reason of sin; in a state of insolvency by reason of debt to the law of GOD, and miserably discontented in the claims of a guilty conscience, until I found ease under thy precious banner, as the captain of my salvation.

JUDGES 11:4-6

(4) ¶ And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. (5) And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: (6) And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.

Reader! spiritualize this passage, and see if the cry of the soul to JESUS in the hour of extremity is not similar. Before the soul is brought to this, we are like Gilead, without an head. But when ruin is before us, like the disciples on the lake, the language then is, LORD! *save or we perish*. Matthew 8:25.

JUDGES 11:7

(7) And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?

If the Reader connects with this view of Jephthah, the history of Joseph with his brethren, he will discover some similarity. But if he spiritualizeth the subject with a greater than Joseph, and recollects how the LORD JESUS was despised of his brethren, of whom it is said, that neither did they believe on him, he will find a greater beauty still. John 7:3-5.

JUDGES 11:8

(8) And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Just so the sinner in his approaches unto JESUS, when once convinced that there is salvation in no other. Oh! it is precious when once brought by the HOLY GHOST, to give all the glory to Him, as our head, and to crown him LORD.

JUDGES 11:9-11

(9) And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head? (10) And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. (11) Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

It is said of the adored Redeemer, that CHRIST glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but was called of GOD, as was Aaron. Hebrews 5:4, 5. It is beautiful, and even glorious in the contemplation of redemption-work, that in all JESUS did and accomplished; the FATHER'S gracious hand is seen joined with the Savior's work in the plan of mercy. My FATHER, saith JESUS, worketh hitherto, and, I work. John 5:17. I cannot close the perusal of this account of Jephthah's uttering all his words before the LORD, without reminding the Reader of that most sublime view of the SON of GOD, lifting up his eyes to heaven, just as he was about to enter on his last act, in the finishing redemption, and saying; FATHER, the hour is come,

glorify thy SON, that thy SON also may glorify thee, &c. John 17:1-4.

JUDGES 11:12-28

(12) ¶ And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? (13) And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those *lands* again peaceably. (14) And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon: (15) And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: (16) But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh; (17) Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not *consent*: and Israel abode in Kadesh. (18) Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon *was* the border of Moab. (19) And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place. (20) But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. (21) And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. (22) And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan (23) So now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? (24) Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. (25) And now *art* thou any thing better than Balak the

son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, (26) While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that *be* along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time? (27) Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. (28) Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

I include the whole of the treaty, which passed between Jephthah, and the leader of the Ammonites, in one point of view, not only for the sake of shortness, but also for the sake of connection. In the perusal of this passage, I would desire the Reader to keep in remembrance the spiritual state of GOD'S church, while he reads the historical events of GOD'S people. And in this sense, I would call upon him to look back, and recollect how Moses was commanded to go in unto Pharaoh, and demand the release of GOD'S people, before that the LORD brought them out. And was not Ammon's oppression of Israel similar? Was it not the church of JESUS, Satan endeavored to ruin and destroy? Let my people go, that they may serve me, was the demand of GOD? Was not our nature GOD'S right by creation, before that Satan ruined that nature by the fall? And if Ammon pleaded long possession of those territories, were not these lands the LORD'S gift to his people before? Reader! If Satan hath had long possession of our poor humbled nature, do not forget you are the LORD'S prior possession, both by creation and by redemption. For JESUS is the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8.

JUDGES 11:29

(29) ¶ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto* the children of Ammon.

I pray the Reader to remark Jephthah's anointing. It was the same spirit which came upon Jephthah, which descended upon the LORD JESUS, only with this difference, on Jephthah, according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST; upon the LORD JESUS without measure. But it is delightful to contemplate, that the anointing and qualifying of the LORD JESUS and his church is one and the same. All these worketh that one, and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. See Ephesians 4:7. John 3:34. 1 Corinthians 12:11.

JUDGES 11:30-31

(30) And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, (31) Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

Surely the vow of Jephthah proceeded from the want of faith; else why did he doubt, why did he say if the LORD would deliver Ammon into his hands? And Reader! make an observation of it in your own experience whenever faith fails, the ill effects of it are near at hand. A little faith, or lively exercise, will carry a believer through great difficulties. But if the LORD for the trial of our grace, and to let us see what mere feathers we are in the wind of temptation, if the LORD for a moment withdraws the arm of his strength, by which our faith is upheld; depend upon it, in that moment we fall. Hence our dear LORD, in the exercise of his mercy when upon earth,

so much praised the evidences of faith in his people, as if he seemed to suspend these mercies on this very principle. Believest thou that I am able to do this? According to your faith, so be it done unto you. Matthew 9:28, 29.

JUDGES 11:32-33

(32) So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

(33) And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

Observe who it was that made Jephthah victorious. Yes! As in heaven so on earth, the armies of GOD overcame by the blood of the LAMB. It is always delightful to trace from whence our mercies flow; because through grace all the praise will then return to the right owner. Revelation 12:11.

JUDGES 11:34-40

(34) And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his* only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. (35) And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. (36) And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon. (37) And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. (38) And he said, Go. And he sent her away *for* two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. (39) And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her *according to*

his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, (40) *That* the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

Various have been the opinions of pious men, on the subject of Jephthah's vow, and the event of it. But as the HOLY GHOST hath not thought proper to make the subject clear, it should seem that it is the LORD'S pleasure thus to leave it somewhat obscure; perhaps for the greater exercise of pious men's faith. If, as I before remarked, this vow of Jephthah proceeded from the weakness and littleness of his faith, certainly the LORD'S rebuke was manifested in the punishment which followed. If, *as* some think, that Jephthah did *not* offer his daughter in sacrifice; for *human* sacrifices were not allowed by the law, then perhaps her being devoted to a single state, and sent to the temple service, is in some measure explained, in her being allowed two months to bewail her virgin state, by which that great hope all Israel were so tenacious of, in giving birth to Him who as the seed of the woman, was to bruise the serpent's head, was in her case done away. And then the latter verse, which speaks of the daughters of Israel going yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, seems corresponding with it. But on the other hand, if her father really sacrificed her, which seems the most probable of the two, (though the reluctance of Jephthah doth not much prefigure the voluntary gift of our heavenly FATHER, in giving up his only begotten SON for our redemption,) yet the pure and virgin state of the daughter, becomes no unapt representation of the spotless innocency of JESUS, who in the prime of life, offered himself a sacrifice for the salvation of his people. But I presume not to decide the point. Certain it is, that the HOLY GHOST hath left the subject in obscurity. And

therefore it becomes us to read it with humble waiting for his divine instruction. If the Reader recollects the promise of JESUS concerning the SPIRIT'S teaching, and places himself under this heavenly teacher, not only in this, but in every other intricate passage, as far as is necessary to be understood, the HOLY GHOST will guide him unto all truth. John 16:13.

REFLECTIONS

READER! ponder over this chapter, and remark with me, how very striking the marks of distinguishing grace! While all the sons of Gilead, in hawkish descent, were passed by; Jephthah, the son of an harlot, is chosen to be the servant of the LORD to his people! From hence let you and I learn never to overrate anything, from the mere outward and adventitious circumstances of birth, or human distinction. Not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But GOD hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath GOD chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are. And oh! that the GOD of all grace, may give us both grace, that we may know by heartfelt experience, the sweetness and preciousness of being the distinguished object of so much mercy, which may be a never-failing source of comfort here, and of everlasting happiness hereafter.

But while we behold in Jephthah, this distinguishing mark of the divine favor, let the Reader learn in his instance, how to appreciate the grace of GOD, while beholding the little deserts of men. Reader! it is delightful, indeed it is, to observe in the history of all men, even the best of men (for this is the

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

CHAPTER 12

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

JUDGES 12:1-4

(1) ¶ And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst

thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire. (2) And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands. (3) And when I saw that ye delivered *me* not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me? (4) Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among the Manassites.

If the Reader recollects the dying benediction of the Patriarch over the two sons of Joseph, how under the spirit of prophecy Jacob put Ephraim before Manasseh, he will here trace the fulfillment of it, and therefrom discover the foundation of the jealousy between those two houses. See Genesis 48:13-20. But what a melancholy event is it in human nature, to behold from the consequence of the fall the quarrels of brethren to be even greater than among strangers. A brother offended (we are told in scripture) is harder to be won than a strong city. Proverbs 18:19. Precious JESUS! what a refreshing thought is it to my soul, that amidst all my numerous and repeated provocations, thou art not so offended. Thou art indeed *the Brother born for adversity; the friend that loveth at all times; and that sticketh closer than a brother*. Proverbs 17:17. 18:24.

JUDGES 12:5-6

(5) And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was *so*, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art* thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay; (6) Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and

slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

Shibboleth means a river. The only difference between this and *Sibboleth*, arose from spelling the former with the Hebrew letter *Shin*, and the latter with *Samech*. But what is the spiritual illustration of the passage to mark the *Shibboleth* from the *Sibboleth*? Is it not, according to what our adored Redeemer taught when he said, 'by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' Matthew 12:37. The language of the lips will correspond to the feelings of the heart. If JESUS be in the heart, depend upon it, his sweet name will be as honeycomb dropping from the lips. But if CHRIST be not formed in the heart the hope of glory, the *Sibboleth* of the conversation will betray the man, as Peter was discovered in the high priest's palace. Matthew 26:73.

JUDGES 12:7

(7) And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

How quick in succession the departure of men! It may be said of all GOD'S servants, as it is of David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of GOD, he fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption. But Reader! what a precious addition to this remark doth the HOLY GHOST make concerning our JESUS? He whom GOD raised again saw no corruption. Pray read the passage, and the two beautiful verses which follow, Acts 13:36-39.

JUDGES 12:8-15

(8) ¶ And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. (9) And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, *whom* he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years. (10) Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Bethlehem. (11) And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years. (12) And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun. (13) And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. (14) And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years. (15) And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

I include the whole of these verses, and of the reign of three judges, comprising a period of twenty-five years, within the compass of one view, not only for the sake of brevity, but because the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have nothing more recorded of those men but that they lived, and reigned, and provided for themselves and families, and then died and were buried. Alas! is there nothing to be remarked of them, in their zeal for GOD? Do their histories furnish no monuments of having promoted the divine glory? Then have we nothing to record to their honour? *Ibzan* was born in Bethlehem. This may, as it ought to, to remind us of JESUS, being the memorable spot of CHRIST'S birth and incarnation. So far therefore, the history of this judge of Israel furnisheth out subject for meditation. But what a deplorable state was Israel, as a people, now reduced to, that in the history of all these judges comprising a period of so many years, we hear nothing of Israel's altars, high priests, and offerings! What the prophet was commissioned to tell the church at another period, seems applicable also to this. Israel shall abide many days without sacrifice, and without ephod, and teraphim. But

afterwards they shall return and seek the LORD their GOD, and David their king. Hosea 3:4, 5. Precious promise then, and even before that period, though leading toward it, in the part of history we are now upon. For all the promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS are yea, and amen. And our glorious David compriseth in himself all the promises of the Bible. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Genesis 3:15. compared with Galatians 3:16. and Luke 1:72. 2 Corinthians 1:20.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! in all the contentions and animosities of life, and especially among brethren, never lose sight of Him, and his unequalled love, who passeth by the repeated provocations of thy sinful nature, and in return for thy manifold instances of ingratitude, pours himself, and his fullness of mercies into thy bosom. Precious JESUS! thou hast indeed endured the contradiction of sinners against thyself, and on the cross remembered our poor blind nature, when in that sweet prayer, thou didst call upon the FATHER to forgive the sins of ignorance, for they knew not what they did. Wilt thou be pleased, dearest LORD, to be to me all I need. Do thou fill up all relations: make up the want of every tie of natural affinities, and so influence my soul by the constraining graces of thine HOLY SPIRIT, that the language of my heart may be the true *Shibboleth* of thy gospel; so as never to betray thy interest, nor give the enemy cause to blaspheme; but that thy name, thy person, thy righteousness, thy salvation, may be as ointment poured forth, for the fragrancy of it, and my mouth

may daily speak of it among the people, for I know no and thereof.

CHAPTER 13

CONTENTS

This chapter commenceth with another sad account of Israel's transgression, and the consequent punishment from the LORD. We have in it also, the relation of the birth of Samson, and the message of an angel concerning him. The conference between the angel and the mother of Samson in the first interview, and the renewed conversation at a second, when her husband was present. Both are circumstantially related in this chapter.

JUDGES 13:1

(1) ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

This is but the same distressing page, varying only as circumstances required they should vary, concerning Israel's sin and the LORD'S punishment. But Reader! do not overlook, for it is a sweet consoling thought: correction is a mark of love, a proof of interest, the token of a father. If I see aman chastising a child, I instantly know that there is a relationship between them. That man I should say, without being told so, is the child's father. And do not these frequent corrections of Israel prove to me, that the LORD is Israel's father? You only have I known, (saith God) of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Amos 3:2.

JUDGES 13:2

(2) And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not.

Dan was one of the tribes of Israel. And this tribe lay near the Philistines' country. Jacob prophesied concerning this tribe, that Dan should judge his people. Perhaps this prophecy had its fulfillment in the person of Samson. Genesis 49:16.

JUDGES 13:3

(3) And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

If the Reader will connect what is here said of this angel, with what is said of him in verse 18, where the angel declares his name to be *Secret*, or as it might have been translated *Wonderful*: and then will call to mind what the HOLY GHOST hath said of the LORD JESUS, by his servant the prophet Isaiah, that his name should be called Wonderful; such views will leave the Reader but little room to doubt who this angel was. See Isaiah 9:6. And if the Reader will go further, and read the 22nd verse, he will then have a further evidence. For it appears that neither Manoah nor his wife considered this visitor as any other than as a created angel, until that he ascended in the flame of the altar, and then they knew that it was GOD himself: and under this impression the man cried out, We shall surely die, because we have seen GOD. Had he not been convinced that this was JEHOVAH, he would not have so expressed himself: for it was upon the authority of GOD's own words which the LORD had said before to Moses, that he grounded this assurance! *Thou cant not see my face, for*

there shall no man see me and live. Exodus 33:20. This view of the subject will open to us most precious information to guide through all the parts of it. I pray the Reader, therefore, to preserve it in remembrance. The angel introduceth himself to the woman's notice as demanding particular attention, not only from the seeming interest he took in what concerned her, but also in intimating that he knew her barrenness. It was a calamity to any of the Israelites to be barren. *Write this man childless; was one of GOD'S severe judgments.* Jeremiah 22:30. It is worthy observation, that as Isaac was a child of promise; so was Samson. And was he not in this, a type and figure of the promised seed? Paul found, great comfort in being of the class of the children of promise. Galatians 4:28.

JUDGES 13:4-5

(4) Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing*: (5) For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

There is somewhat peculiarly interesting in the law of the *Nazarites*. The separation, or the being sanctified, and set apart to the LORD, carried with it a matter of great moment. And hence Moses appropriates a whole chapter to this one subject. And it is worthy of remark, that at the close of that chapter the blessing of Israel is subjoined, which certainly is expressive of the united blessing of JEHOVAH in his threefold character of persons. See Numbers 6 throughout. See the Commentary also on that chapter. That the LORD had a peculiar eye of grace and favor to the Nazarites, is evident from the prophet, because the LORD takes to himself praise

that he had raised up, of Israel's young men, to be Nazarites. See Amos 2:11. But is there not, in all this, a striking reference to our adored Redeemer, who is uniformly distinguished as JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth? And were not all Nazarites types of him? Were they not intended to show their belonging to him and to his seed, who in the first days of the gospel were in contempt called *Nazarites*? Oh! how sweet to go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach! See Hebrews 13:13. Matthew 2:23. Acts 28:22.

JUDGES 13:6-7

(6) Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name: (7) But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

An interesting information to her husband. No doubt from the nature of the prohibition, both Manoah and his wife conceived somewhat wonderful of this child; and cheerfully wished that a child, concerning whose birth so much attention was to be shown, might be dedicated as a Nazarite to the LORD from the womb. Nothing can be more interesting, nor more devoutly to be prayed for by true believers in JESUS, than that their offspring should be early followers of the LORD as dear children. If my Reader be a parent he will outrun all that I might add upon this subject.

JUDGES 13:8

(8) ¶ Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

There is somewhat very striking in the prayer of Manoah. No doubt from the woman's account in the joy she had experienced from the interview with the angel, the husband desired to be made a partaker in the same felicity. Reader! how dead and insipid would be all earthly conversation, if we were conversant with the heavenly inhabitants. Dearest JESUS! grant us the sweet visits of thy grace, and let our conversation be more in heaven; then shall we be looking for, and longing for the day of thy coming. Philippians 3:20.

JUDGES 13:9

(9) And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.

GOD is a GOD-hearing prayer; and faithful to his promises. Before my people call is the promise, I will answer. And JESUS confirms the same, when he saith, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Compare Isaiah 65:24. with Matthew 21:22.

JUDGES 13:10

(10) And the woman made haste, and ran, and showed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day.

It doth not appear from the relation, that the angel bid her call her husband, but it may be supposed. So did JESUS to the woman of Samaria. John 4:16.

JUDGES 13:11-14

(11) And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I *am*. (12) And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do unto him? (13) And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. (14) She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe.

Certainly in all this we behold a lively type of the ever-blessed JESUS. He was himself holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; and a Nazarite indeed, in whom was no guile. And was not the mother of Samson, like the church of old, during the long expected season of the birth of JESUS, enjoined to holiness, and to touch not the unclean thing? Ye are an holy nation, a peculiar people. 1 Peter 2:9.

JUDGES 13:15

(15) ¶ And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

Every step in this delightful narration, becomes more, and more interesting. Perhaps the Reader will recollect, how in similar circumstances, Abraham tried to detain his heavenly visitor. Genesis 18:2-5. Reader, you and I can hardly enter into the full apprehension of the sweetness of those things. Since the SON of GOD finished redemption-work, and returned

unto glory, such open appearances have not been vouchsafed, of divine visits. But stop—are we not still more highly favored? Is not the HOLY GHOST come down to *dwell* in the hearts of his people; and is not that gracious promise fulfilled, that if any man love our JESUS, the FATHER will love him, and both will come and make their abode with him? Are these things so? Do the Holy undivided Three, truly visit the souls of the faithful? Oh! then may my soul know this, feel it, and truly enjoy it, and constrain the LORD to abide with me always, even to the end of the world. Dear JESUS! I would say, be not thou as a wayfaring man, that tarrieth but for a night; but do thou remember thy promise, wherein thou hast caused me to hope. John 14:24-26. Matthew 28:20.

JUDGES 13:16

(16) And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

It is not strange that *Manoah* should be unconscious who this angel was: for when our LORD JESUS CHRIST came in substance of our flesh, and in a more open display of his Person, when he came to his own, his own received him not. John 1:11.

JUDGES 13:17-18

(17) And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? (18) And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret?

Jacob felt the same desire, in the interview he had with the angel. Genesis 32:29. Reader! what a mercy is it, to you and to me, that that name, which is now so dear to his people, is

no longer secret. Now we know him in that lovely name of JESUS, a Saviour; the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and all the other precious appellations by which he comes home, revealed to our hearts: and which are as ointment poured forth. Matthew 1:21. Jeremiah 23:6. Song Of Solomon 1:3. Oh! thou precious EMANUEL; may I so know thy name, as to put my trust in thee. Psalm 9:10.

JUDGES 13:19-20

(19) So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and *the angel* did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. (20) For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground.

What a most interesting scene this must have been! It seems as if the man and his wife did nothing but look on. Yes, our faith can go no further. To lift a tool upon the altar is to pollute it. Exodus 20:25. JESUS is both the sacrifice, the rock or altar on which the sacrifice is offered, and the High Priest to offer. Well might they look on when the LORD did things so wondrously. There could be no longer a question who this was, when he ascended in the flame of the altar. Whether fire came down from heaven, or whether the LORD caused it to issue from the rock to consume the sacrifice, it is not said; but the acceptableness of the sacrifice could not be doubted, when the wonderful angel ascended with it before GOD. Reader, how very precious are such views, in type and figure, we meet with occasionally in the Old Testament, of that one grand and all-sufficient Offering which our LORD JESUS made by himself, under the New dispensation? And oh! how very, very refreshing to the souls of GOD'S people now, is the

consideration, that our dear LORD, as Mediator, gives a sanctity and sweetness to all the pure offerings of our hearts, in perfuming them with the odours of his blood and righteousness, and ascending in the flame of our devotions, which he himself, by his HOLY SPIRIT, hath excited; and carries them, as our High Priest, before the throne! Oh! may my soul never presume to draw nigh, but under the censer of this Great High Priest! And may my soul never cease to draw nigh, now I have such an High Priest and Advocate with the FATHER, who is the propitiation for my sins. 1 John 2:1, 2.

JUDGES 13:21-23

(21) But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD. (22) And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. (23) But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these *things*, nor would as at this time have told us *such things* as these.

The effect upon the minds of those persons was as might be expected. Never will the soul lay lower, than in the moment of receiving signal mercies. It is difficult to say, which to admire most, the fear of the man, or the faith of the woman. Nothing can be more admirably expressed, than the well-grounded confidence of the woman. Surely the LORD'S acceptance of an offering, must carry with it a conviction of love to the person offering? And never, at such a time as this, when there was no open vision, would the LORD have showed them such gracious things, had he not intended mercy. Reader! do not overlook the personal instruction this view of the subject brings. If you have ever tasted that the LORD is gracious: if you have been let into the sweets of GOD'S grace in JESUS: if in

times past you have been led to view the loveliness of JESUS, and have seen a suitableness and an all-sufficiency in Him for salvation: seek for that sweet office of the HOLY GHOST, I mean as the Remembrancer of JESUS, to live upon these things, when you cannot see them. Recollect, that though *your* views differ, JESUS is the same. Carry these things about with you, to help the mind in a dark and cloudy day. And learn to say, as the wife of Manoah did, *If the LORD had meant to kill, he would not have showed such things, neither have received CHRIST, the great sacrifice, at your hands.*

JUDGES 13:24-25

(24) ¶ And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. (25) And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson, like Shemesh, signifies a sun: probably typical of Him, who is emphatically called, the Sun of righteousness. Malachi 4:2. And perhaps in allusion to his great strength. For the sun is said to go forth as a giant to run his course: Psalm 19:5. The first indications of the strength which would afterwards be manifested in his life. What a lovely and engaging view is given of our adorable Redeemer, in his human nature, when in the midst of the Jewish doctors, he astonished every one with his questions and answers. Luke 2:46, 47. How very interesting is the dawn of early piety, and the love of GOD our Saviour in young minds. And what additional beauty it throws over the youthful countenance. Such most probable, was John, the youngest of all the disciples, whom it is said JESUS *loved*. John 13:23.

REFLECTIONS

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

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

evidence that thou art all in all, and goest up with thy people's intercession in thy dear name and righteousness; and then, like Manoah and his wife, I would fall with reverence of soul and body at thy feet, as the LORD my righteousness.

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

to thee, are all things; to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen.

CHAPTER 14

CONTENTS

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

JUDGES 14:1

(1) ¶ And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

As Samson was a type of the ever blessed JESUS, we may trace some things in his conduct which will best be explained by keeping our eye upon JESUS. Thus we are told in the fourth verse that Samson's going clown to the Philistines was of the LORD. Yes! the LORD overrules all Providences to his own glory and his people's welfare. So JESUS, taking upon him our nature, in the likeness of sinful flesh, became the groundwork for condemning sin in the flesh. Romans 8:3.

JUDGES 14:2-4

(2) And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. (3) Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people,

that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well. (4) But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

Certainly it is an unnatural alliance when grace and corruption join. For what agreement hath the temple of GOD with idols? And though it is an express command of our GOD to come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing; yet, what an alliance did the SON of GOD make with our nature, when he, who knew no sin, became sin for us? 2 Corinthians 5:21. Precious JESUS! oh let that alliance be productive of the glorious end proposed; that we may be made the righteousness of GOD in thee!

JUDGES 14:5

(5) Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

The young lion, roaring against Samson, is a figure of the accursed rage of the devil, against all the spiritual seed of JESUS. No sooner is a soul awakened from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, but Satan roars. While the young man in the gospel was coming to CHRIST, the Devil threw him down, and did tare him. Luke 9:42.

JUDGES 14:6

(6) And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

Carrying on the idea of Samson being a type of CHRIST, do we not see here an emblem of JESUS's triumph over the powers of darkness, when he was led up of the SPIRIT into the wilderness, be tempted of the devil. Matthew 4:1.

JUDGES 14:7-8

(7) And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. (8) And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

There is a beautiful instruction veiled under this. The honey in the carcase of the savage, may not unaptly represent the benefits which result to believers from Adam's fall, and the momentary triumphs of Satan. As no one would expect to find anything good in the carcase of a lion, so no one would suppose the LORD should, in the after stages of our warfare, bring good out of evil. But so it is: the malice of Satan ultimately produces glory to GOD, and good to his tried ones. It affords sweet food, the victories of our JESUS. And the trials must be among the *all things which work together for good to them that love GOD*. Let every tried soul think of this. Romans 8:28.

JUDGES 14:9

(9) And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

Is there not a sweet instruction here, in Samson giving of the honey to his father and mother? Every one that hath tasted

the sweets of salvation, is desirous to call others to partake. 'Oh! come hither and hearken, all ye that fear GOD, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul,' is the cry of all GOD's people. Psalm 66:16.

JUDGES 14:10-11

(10) ¶ So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do. (11) And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

There is always reason to suspect the kindness of false friends. Satan never more effectually deceives than under this cover. See his first proof of this, Genesis 3:1-5.

JUDGES 14:12-18

(12) And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments: (13) But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it. (14) And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle. (15) And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it* not *so*? (16) And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee? (17) And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people. (18) And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What *is* sweeter than honey? and what

is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

I include the whole relation of this event within the compass of one view. No doubt, there is a spiritual instruction contained in it, otherwise the HOLY GHOST would not have been pleased that it should have formed a part of the inspired volume. But we have to lament our blindness of discernment upon this, and many other instances, in the holy word. Evidently, however, we observe one thing in it, that the quarrel occasioned by it laid the foundation for Samson's deliverance of Israel, and the destruction of the Philistines. And did not the very temptation of Satan on our first parents in the garden, give birth to all the glorious consequences of our redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST?

JUDGES 14:19

(19) And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

I beg the Reader, not only in confirmation of what I said before, but also by way of keeping his eye on the whole history of Samson, as typical of some of the great outlines of redemption, to observe again in this place, that like our JESUS, this Nazarite was anointed with the SPIRIT of the LORD. Acts 10:38.

JUDGES 14:20

(20) But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

This is just as might have been expected. And is it not so now, in every age? Is not the friendship of the world enmity with GOD? James 4:4. And though JESUS hath so dearly purchased his church, and redeemed her with his blood; yet how often is she given to another, and in bondage.

REFLECTIONS

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

I view in the men of *Timnath* the baseness, treachery, and unprovoked anger of thine enemies! I behold nothing but perfidy and unfaithfulness in return for all thy favor, I see moreover, in this representation, not an unapt or distant allusion to the honey of thy gospel. How unexpected from such a quarter! How unsought for and overlooked! And what a riddle to the wisdom of this world, that GOD should have chosen weak things to confound the mighty. Oh! give me to eat of this honey, to be food to my soul, to recover from disease, to heal the wounds of sin. And however loathed by

many, yet make me like the bee, earnest to gather it for my daily food. And be thou to me, dearest JESUS, in all thy person, relations, and offices, sweeter also than the honey, and the honeycomb.

CHAPTER 15

CONTENTS

The history of Samson is continued through the whole of this Chapter. Several remarkable and surprising events are here recorded of his quarrels with the Philistines, his triumphs over them, the treachery of his enemies, his great thirst, and the LORD'S seasonable supply.

JUDGES 15:1-2

(1) ¶ But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in. (2) And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: *is* not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

I beg the Reader to observe with me, merely as a matter of history in this place, what an awful darkness there must be upon the human mind by nature, when a father is so lost and insensible to decency, as to make such a proposal. And if the Reader feels suitably on the occasion, it will serve to give strength to all the views we have in favor of the principles of our holy faith.

JUDGES 15:3

(3) And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.

If we consider Samson, not simply in his own personal character, but as acting in a public character, for the punishment of GOD'S enemies, the Philistines; this will serve to throw a light upon many circumstances in the history otherwise not so plain.

JUDGES 15:4-8

(4) And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. (5) And when he had set the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards *and* olives. (6) Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire. (7) And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease. (8) And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

I pass over the other considerations here noticed to remark the most interesting, namely, of the suitable punishment on the house of Samson's wife's father. The Reader will recollect the treachery of his wife to get out of Samson the riddle, was to prevent the threatened destruction of her father's house by fire; and now the LORD suffers the very ruin which she had studied to avoid to fall upon her and her house, from the instrumentality of the husband she had injured. Our blessed LORD sweetly explains, in a reference to his holy gospel, the wisdom of doing what the LORD appoints, and of leaving the

issue with him. *He that will save his life, saith CHRIST, shall lose it: and he that will lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it.* Mark 8:35.

JUDGES 15:9-13

(9) ¶ Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi. (10) And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us. (11) Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines *are* rulers over us? what *is* this *that* thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them. (12) And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves. (13) And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

I would not willingly or knowingly strain the pure word of GOD to bear a construction the HOLY GHOST had not in view; but I think, without violence to the passage before us, in these verses, we may see, some things which bear resemblance to the ever blessed JESUS. And especially, as Samson was, on many accounts, a type of JESUS, it is hardly possible to overlook the representation Samson here makes, of the apprehending of the LORD JESUS by the Chief Priests, and Elders; before his crucifixion. The men of Judah, were those who came to seize Samson, to deliver him up into the hands of the Philistines. And the Reader will recollect, that it was the Elders of Israel which bound JESUS, and delivered him up to the Romans. And as Samson quietly yielded himself up into their hands for this purpose, when he might, by his great

strength have conquered them, who doth not behold in this type of the Redeemer, our Almighty Samson, who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, when he might have smitten the host of his enemies to destruction for ever. Luke 12:52-54.

JUDGES 15:14

(14) *And* when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

But, if the former view of Samson, represents to us anything typical of JESUS, surely we see yet a brighter and a more striking evidence of it in this. When the SPIRIT of the LORD came upon Samson, he burst asunder the new cords. And when by the SPIRIT of the LORD, JESUS arose from the dead, how did he burst asunder the newly formed sepulchre, and loose the bands of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of them. Sweet and precious salvation! by which He hath secured the resurrection of the just.

JUDGES 15:15-17

(15) And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith. (16) And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men. (17) And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramathlehi.

Certainly there is somewhat wonderfully striking in this man's history, and the most instructive view we can take of it is, when it serves to lead our hearts to JESUS. And how hath the SON of GOD, by the simplest weapons in his gospel, brought down the force of the mighty to the earth! 1 Corinthians 1:27, 28.

JUDGES 15:18

(18) ¶ And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

The thirst of JESUS, on the cross, was no doubt peculiarly interesting. Samson's was from fatigue, and bodily necessity. JESUS' thirst seems to have been for the salvation of souls, for he had said in the evening before, that he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the day he should drink it new in his FATHER'S kingdom. Luke 22:18. There is somewhat highly instructive in this prayer of Samson's, in pleading past mercies, as the best argument for present. The Writer and Reader, may both learn from it, the success which followed, in GOD'S gracious answer, that we take the most effectual method to find the LORD merciful in what is to come, when we give him glory for what he hath done before.

JUDGES 15:19

(19) But God clave an hollow place that *was* in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived: wherefore he called the name thereof *Enhakkore*, which *is* in Lehi unto this day.

En-hakkore, means the well of him that cried.

JUDGES 15:20

(20) And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

Though we have no more recorded of Samson, yet his reign as a Judge in Israel, formed this period of twenty years.

REFLECTIONS

DEAREST JESUS! may I, in these views of Samson, which represent him as delivered up by his countrymen into the hands of his enemies, have my soul instantly directed to the contemplation of thee, and of thy voluntary surrender; when, in the accomplishment of redemption, thou gavest thy back to the smiter, and thy cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. And may my soul so view thee, in this unequalled mark of grace and condescension, as to have my whole heart interested in all that concerns thee. But oh! precious JESUS, while I behold thy matchless power, displayed in bursting asunder the bands of death, do thou manifest the same omnipotency, in breaking the bands of sin and death in me. LORD! burst the bands of Satan, the strong man armed, in my heart; loosen his hold upon my poor fallen nature, and bring me out of the spiritual prison, where he hath long kept my soul captive. And at length, when thou shalt break through, and come in the clouds to judgment, oh! raise my body, loosened from the bands of corruption, to glorify the triumph of my God and Saviour; that having in this life known the power of his resurrection by grace, I may in that life be among the risen to glory, through the alone merits and salvation of JESUS.

CHAPTER 16

CONTENTS

The close of Samson's history forms the subject of this Chapter. We have in it a melancholy proof of our fallen nature, in the renewed breakings out of lustful passions in Samson, and the sad consequence of them, in the loss of his eyes, when, after repeated disappointments, the Philistines got him into their hands. His recovery by grace, and the LORD'S merciful answer to his prayer, with his death: these are among the relations in this chapter.

JUDGES 16:1

(1) ¶ Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

What awful departures from GOD, we behold in men. Who should conceive, that a man so wonderfully distinguished of GOD, his birth so introduced, his life so singular, and in many points becoming so lively a type of Him whose whole nature was harmless, holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners; who should have thought that he should thus have fallen! Reader! let not such views stagger thee, nor for a moment tend to shake thy faith. Many characters the HOLY GHOST gives us in his sacred word, who prove the stock of corrupt nature from whence they sprung, and yet, in certain features of their lives, were appointed to shadow forth somewhat to represent the blessed JESUS. Indeed had not this been the case, there never could have been any type of the LORD JESUS at all. But as the apostle saith, *Every high Priest taken from among men is to be such as can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself is compassed with infirmities.* And yet we know that all these

high Priests, with all their ministrations, and all their sacrifices, had no other design, or meaning, but to typify the blessed JESUS. Hebrews 5:1, 2.

JUDGES 16:2

(2) *And it was told* the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

See Reader! how alive the enemies to GOD, and his people are, to wait for thy halting. Oh! that everyone who ventures to pursue uncleanness and the gratification of his corrupt passions, would in those Gazites surrounding Samson, behold a representation, how the accursed enemy of souls watches over the unguarded hours of sinners! Behold! ye adulterers, and adulteresses, you that drop asleep in the arms of harlots, ye captives to excess of wine, and abominable lusts; see what dangers you are exposed to, when you think all secure! 1 Thessalonians 5:3-10.

JUDGES 16:3

(3) And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put *them* upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that *is* before Hebron.

I pass over every other consideration, to call the Reader's attention to the lively representation here made of Samson's wonderful strength, and that of our divine Redeemer, in his victory over death, hell, and the grave. Did not JESUS, though the soldiers secured, as they thought, the grave, and the stone upon it sealed: did he not burst asunder all the bars, and carry them away before him? Was not our dear LORD, like

Samson, when they had bound him and nailed him to the cross, considered as the sure prisoner, which could not escape their hands? And yet, did he not, like Samson at midnight, just at the break of day, lead captivity captive, and come forth to the terror and confusion of all his enemies? Yes! thou dear Redeemer! thou hast indeed, not only come forth, from the supposed confinement of the grave, but thou hast for ever prevented thine enemies, and ours, from confining our bodies and souls, for everlasting destruction. The grave, into which the bodies of thy saints are put, is now an open grave, and by thy glorious resurrection, the everlasting power, and dominion of it, is done away. So that in thy triumph, all thy people now sing; *O death where is now thy sting; O grave where is now thy victory: Thanks be to GOD who giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.* 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.

JUDGES 16:4

(4) ¶ And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah.

Again we behold the sad breakings out of our fallen state. How justly doth the Psalmist (and every one taught of GOD may join issue in the same language), say for himself: *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of GOD before his eyes.* Psalm 36:1.

JUDGES 16:5-19

(5) And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven

hundred *pieces* of silver. (6) And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. (7) And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. (8) Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. (9) Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known. (10) And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. (11) And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man. (12) Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liars in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread. (13) And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web. (14) And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web. (15) And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*. (16) And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, *so* that his soul was vexed unto death; (17) That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man. (18) ¶ And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath showed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. (19) And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

I see no reason to interrupt the progress of the history through the several relations given, of this artful woman's persevering spirit to ruin Samson. But I rather pass on to the spiritual improvements the history furnisheth. And here we see to what a degree of folly, and presumption, sin reduceth the mind. Samson could not but know that, as a Nazarite to GOD, the unshaven head was as an outward sign, or mark, of a spiritual state. What madness, what presumption therefore, was it thus to tempt GOD. But Reader, mark, and as you mark the instance of Samson, learn not to be high minded, but fear. What an easy prey is man, with all his boasted strength, to any and every temptation, when the LORD for one moment withdraws his support. Oh! how sweet is it to have Paul's sentiments, and from the same spirit. I can do nothing by myself, saith he: but I can do all things, through CHRIST who strengtheneth me. 1 Corinthians 4:4. Philippians 4:13.

JUDGES 16:20

(20) And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

This is a very awful account: the LORD was departed from him, and he knew it not. It is said of Ephraim, that strangers had devoured his strength, and he knew it not: yea, grey hairs were here and there upon him, and he unconscious. Hosea 7:9. When the strong man armed keepeth the house the goods are in peace. Luke 11:21. Reader! think how deadened to divine things must that man's mind be, who is unconscious of the SPIRIT'S withdrawing his influences, feels nothing of the want of quickenings, and regards not the withering state of his soul! LORD! take not thine HOLY SPIRIT

from me, ought to be the daily earnest prayer of every one. Psalm 51:11.

JUDGES 16:21

(21) But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

Awfully let us remark the punishment suited to the offence; that is, I mean, not as it came from the hand of man, but from the correction of God. It was Samson's eyes which had become the great inlet to evil, when he first saw this harlot. The desire of the eye is one of those lusts of the flesh which the apostle marks among the daring transgressions. 1 John 2:16. But oh! how much more dreadful, had Samson's sins blinded the eyes of his soul! We hear no murmuring, no complaining, fall from the lips of Samson at the cruelty of the Philistines. No doubt through grace, he was led to see the divine justice in it, and *to accept the punishment of his iniquity*. Grace will always do this. For how unjust soever on the part of man, it was right and just on the part of God. So thought David in the *case of Shimei*, when he came forth in his distress to curse him. So let *him* curse, said David, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. 2 Samuel 16:10. But pause Reader! is there nothing here typical of JESUS? Did not the chief Priests, and Elders, when they had bound JESUS, and nailed him to the cross, mock, and insult the LORD of life and glory? Dearest LORD! how do all insults and injuries from man to man, sink comparatively to nothing, when we behold thine unparalleled sufferings; when the very

Judge that condemned thee, in the moment of passing sentence, declared thee innocent. Matthew 27:24.

JUDGES 16:22

(22) ¶ Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

Sweet are the renewings of the HOLY GHOST. Oh! how precious the returns of the Comforter, after a night of desertion!

JUDGES 16:23-24

(23) Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. (24) And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

Nothing can be more plain from the history, than that it was the artful intrigue of a woman which had been the instrument for delivering Samson into the hands of the Philistines; but yet a dunghill god must have the credit. To what a desperate state of ignorance, as well as sin, is the mind capable of arriving, when the glory of GOD, and his honor is not acknowledged. See an awful account of this by Paul, Romans 1:22, &c.

JUDGES 16:25-30

(25) And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. (26) And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean

upon them. (27) Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. (28) And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. (29) And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. (30) And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

How wonderful are all the ways and works of GOD! By what solemn and striking providences, doth the LORD carry on his designs in the world! Samson's triumph was greater in his death, than in all the victories of his life. But Reader! let us pass by the mere circumstances of the history, with even all the moral improvements it affords, to attend to the spiritual views it exhibits. And here surely, if anywhere, we are called upon to behold this Nazarite of the Old Testament, as holding forth evident marks of similitude to the glorious Nazarite of the New. Did Samson pull down the temple of Dagon at his death: and did not JESUS overthrow to the ground every false god, when he died on the cross, and when he ruined the whole empire of sin and Satan? Did Samson die voluntarily for the destruction of the Philistines? And did not our JESUS give his life, a willing ransom for the sins of his people? Herein indeed, they differed. Samson died to crush his enemies with him. But JESUS died for his enemies to have life. Did Samson by his death obtain a most decisive victory! And what victory more decisive than that of the LORD JESUS, who by his death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil,

and delivered them, who through fear of death, are all their life time subject to bondage? Did Samson with his two hands push down the pillars of the house: and were not the arms of JESUS stretched, forth on the cross, when he made the pillars of the earth to move at their centre, and the gates of hell itself to be loosened forever? Yes! thou precious Almighty Nazarite, thy death was distinguished with every wonder heaven could give in testimony to its importance. Herein indeed again, Samson's death differed from thine. He fell to rise no more. But thou in thy death didst open the path to everlasting life; and in thy glorious resurrection that followed, thou hast forever destroyed that dreaded foe of our nature. Oh! blessed LORD! may my soul look on this, and learn by thy SPIRIT'S teaching, *to rejoice with trembling*. While, as Samson's victory even in death, caused Israel to triumph over their enemies, so in the everlasting triumphs of the cross over the ungodly, (as in the instance of the Philistines), may my soul behold the sure destruction that awaits all them that know not God, nor obey the gospel of JESUS. For in that final hour when thou shalt come *to be glorified in thy saints, and to be admired in all that believe*; we know also that a tremendous judgment will take place on the enemies of thy truth, *who shall, be driven from thy presence with everlasting destruction*. 2 Thessalonians 1:9, 10.

JUDGES 16:31

(31) Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

It is worthy remark, how careful the Patriarchs and early believers were, to record the monuments of their sepulchres. No doubt from one, and the same cause: they all died in faith of the promised redemption. See Hebrews 11:22. 32, &c.

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I CANNOT dismiss the review of this very remarkable character, Samson, without once again, and before I take a farewell leave of him, desiring grace and the divine teachings of the HOLY SPIRIT, that I may look at him so as to profit. I would pause and consider, with what an air of importance his birth was introduced: how singularly the pretence of the LORD led him on through all the remarkable periods of his life: and what decisive tokens of the same Almighty presence and favor distinguished his death. Thus brought into the world, so solemnly set apart as a Nazarite to GOD: and so peculiarly distinguished from every other in all the events which befel him: it is impossible but to suppose that the divine intention concerning him, was to prefigure another. And to whom shall I direct my eyes, in order to behold the person represented, but to thee, thou holy blessed glorious Nazarite, whose whole nature was *purser than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than rubies, and brighter than polishing sapphire*. Thy birth indeed, blessed JESUS, was miraculous; and great were the predictions and preparations, made in the sacred word for thy coming. Anointed with the HOLY GHOST without measure, and solemnly set apart for thy FATHER'S service, when thou didst come thou wast at once brought into a display of the most triumphant exploits; not indeed of the destruction of the Philistines, but in thy victory over the enemy; when from thy

baptism thou wast led up of the SPIRIT into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Basely wast thou betrayed as Samson, by false friends, and like him delivered up into the hands of thine enemies. But infinitely surpassing him, though thine enemies nailed thee to the cross, and then insulted thy sufferings, thou hast, by that very death, fulfilled the whole council of JEHOVAH, put an everlasting end to sin, with all its dreadful consequences, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is to all, and upon all that believe. Here then, LORD, let me behold thee in thy death, and in the triumph of it. And beseech thee, thou gracious GOD of my salvation, that now thou hast by thy death spoiled principalities and powers, and made ashew of them openly, triumphing over them in it, that thou wilt mercifully go on by the preaching of thy gospel, under thy blessed SPIRIT'S influence, conquering and to conquer. Oh! may thy sovereign word be as the arms of Samson, to pull down all the strong holds of sin and Satan. Let that cursed foe be beheld by thy people, to fall as lightning from heaven. Let the foundation of every false god be thrown down, and the ruin of antichrist be brought to pass. Oh! let thy Kingdom come, thou dear Redeemer, and hasten the latter day glory. May that period soon arrive, when the nations of the earth shall own thy power, when every knee shall bow before thee, and every tongue confess, that thou art CHRIST, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 17

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The subject of this, and all that remains in the book of the Judges, puts on a different complexion from what went before. The Reader will recollect the title it bears: the transactions here recorded; where in those days when there was no king in Israel; when every man did that which was right, or pleasing, in his own eyes. And how right that was, the sad account here given doth but too plainly show. In this chapter we have, in the example of one house and family, a lively Feature of the Idolatry of the land. Micah sets up an image for his god, of silver stolen from his mother: and takes a vagabond Levite for his priest.

JUDGES 17:1-2

(1) ¶ And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah. (2) And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed *be thou* of the LORD, my son.

Observe how, out of the same mouth, when there is no grace in the heart, come cursings or blessings. It seems very plain that money was the idol of both. Hence the son robbed the mother, and the mother cursed the son. Alas! what a dreadful state is the mind of both parent and offspring in by nature.

JUDGES 17:3

(3) And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

It is not strange, that both parent and child should still pretend to retain a reverence for JEHOVAH, the GOD of Israel, when thus openly violating one of his express commandments. Exodus 20:4, 5.

JUDGES 17:4

(4) Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

It is worthy our notice, that in the midst of this pretended piety, the woman allowed but 200 shekels of silver for this dunghill god to be made of; whereas she had said originally, that she intended the whole eleven hundred. Reader! depend upon it, the same spirit runs through all carnal minds, branching out only in different directions. Some under the government of one corrupt passion, and some under another; but once departed from GOD, all are out of the way.

JUDGES 17:5

(5) And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

Here we read of many gods. And indeed, when the one true GOD be not thought enough, the corrupt heart will, if tempted thereto, multiply Him to thousands. An *Ephod*, was a garment. And a *Teraphim*, which is plural, means *many* images, under the pretence of consulting them as occasion

required. Observe, his son is the Priest, and himself the person to consecrate. *As with the people, so with the priest.*

JUDGES 17:6

(6) In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

The sacred historian very properly accounts for the whole of this sad defection in Israel; *in those days there was no king:* neither order, nor government. No ministry of GOD to tell men of their transgressions no magistrate to punish them. Reader! learn to set a proper estimate upon those two great blessings of the LORD, a standing ministry, to instruct men in the truths of salvation: and a well ordered government to protect those ministers. Remember: *rulers are not a terror to good works, but the evil. Romans 13:3.*

JUDGES 17:7-8

(7) ¶ And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there. (8) And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find *a place:* and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

The rambling conduct of this young man, manifests his real principles. The LORD had made all suitable provision for his Levites, while they remained in his service. But when idolatry is set up in Israel, a temporizing Levite who falls in with the corruptions of the people, can find no bread in GOD'S house.

JUDGES 17:9-12

(9) And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn

where I may find *a place*. (10) And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in. (11) And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. (12) And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

The sequel of this conference, too plainly marks the Levite's character. What an awful state must it be, in a Levite of GOD, to hire himself out in the service of idols; and what a pitiful maintenance it was after all. Bread just to keep him from starving, a coarse garment for every day, and a little better for the LORD'S day, and ten shekels of silver a year: that is about five and twenty shillings in value of our money. Oh! LORD! rather let thy true servants in the gospel of thy dear SON, be fed with the humblest fare, and clothed with the plainest garment; than go ever so costly in the wages of sin.

JUDGES 17:13

(13) Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

Is it not astonishing, that Micah should look for good from the hand of GOD, while he was thus doing evil? But alas! how doth sin harden the heart, and deceive the soul. So much so (saith the prophet) *that a man is not able to deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand*. See the whole on this subject. Isaiah 44:9-20:

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MY soul! pass over all lesser considerations in the perusal of this Chapter, to drop a tear over Israel's degeneracy, in setting up idols in their houses; and the corruption of the sacred order of the Levites, in acting as priests of the same. Is this Israel before whom the LORD GOD manifested such wonders, and to whom the LORD showed such distinguishing grace? *Tell it not in Oath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice: lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.*

Blessed be GOD! the day is come, the fountain is opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, when the LORD hath cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and in which the LORD hath promised, that the prophets and the unclean spirit shall pass out of the land. Oh precious JESUS! thou prince of the tribe of Levi, give us pastors after thine own heart, and let not thy faithful servants be obliged to wander to seek places; much less be content to prostitute their sacred order for a piece of silver, and for a morsel of bread. Oh! make them more anxious to win souls than to gain kingdoms. Let the salvation of sinners in thy blood and righteousness be the sole object of their work, and here may they labor night and day in thy word and doctrine. And do thou bless them, gracious LORD, in their ministry; and when thou the Chief Shepherd shall appear, may they obtain that crown of glory which fadeth not away.

CHAPTER 18

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The same melancholy subject of idolatry is the burden of this chapter. Certain Danites having called at the house of Micah, impiously consult the priest of Micah concerning their journey: being joined by others, they rob the house of Micah of his gods: and his priest, as might reasonably be expected, leaves the service of Micah to be priest to the robbers. Idolatry is long established among the children of Dan.

JUDGES 18:1

(1) ¶ In those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

The same preface introduceth this chapter as the former. No king, no government, no order. And what can the nation so circumstanced expect? How this tribe of Israel came to be so unprovided for in the general division of Canaan, is not said. Their father Jacob had prophesied of them, that they should be worldly-wise as the serpent. Genesis 49:17. And Moses declared them to be endued with the courage of the lion's whelp. Deuteronomy 33:22.

JUDGES 18:2-4

(2) And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valor, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there. (3) When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this *place*? and what hast thou here? (4) And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

It appears that this Levite was known to the Danites. But what a sad and disgraceful wretch, and how lost to shame, to acknowledge himself the hireling of an idolater, and the priest of an idol.

JUDGES 18:5-6

(5) And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. (6) And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye go.

And still advancing in iniquity, instead of recommending them to the GOD of their fathers, to give them the pretended oracle of a god of silver! Was there no GOD in Israel, that they should enquire of such a contemptible deity?

JUDGES 18:7-11

(7) ¶ Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no magistrate in the land, that might put *them* to shame in *any* thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no business with *any* man. (8) And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What *say* ye? (9) And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it *is* very good: and *are* ye still? be not slothful to go, *and* to enter to possess the land. (10) When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth. (11) And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

Is it not strange, that only 600 men went up armed on this occasion, when we know that the tribe of Dan when they first entered Canaan, were more than 64 thousand? Had sin and a

departure from the LORD thinned their numbers? A solemn question!

JUDGES 18:12-13

(12) And they went up, and pitched in Kirjathjearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahanehdan unto this day: behold, *it is* behind Kirjathjearim. (13) And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

Though they seemed to be in earnest in their intended conquest of *Laish*, yet we see how slow they moved, that even a second day's march only brought them as far as the house of *Micah*.

JUDGES 18:14-17

(14) ¶ Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do. (15) And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, *even* unto the house of Micah, and saluted him. (16) And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which *were* of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate. (17) And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, *and* came in thither, *and* took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men *that were* appointed with weapons of war.

What a banditti was Israel become? Had they had zeal for GOD'S honor, and destroyed those molten images, oh! what a noble spirit would this have been?

JUDGES 18:18-20

(18) And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye? (19) And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with

us, and be to us a father and a priest: *is it* better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? (20) And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

It is impossible sufficiently to detest the character of this time-serving Levite. But indeed, how shall he be just to man that is unfaithful to GOD. And that all this base and perfidious conduct was not the effect of constraint, is evident from hence, that it is said he was glad.

JUDGES 18:21-26

(21) So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them. (22) *And* when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that *were* in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan (23) And they cried unto the children of Dan And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? (24) And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what *is* this *that* ye say unto me, What aileth thee? (25) And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household. (26) And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

It is impossible to pity the deluded Micah, whose heart was so set upon idols. He confesses he had lost all in losing them. But alas! what loss could there be in them. Think Reader! what contemptible idols must those be, that could not protect themselves. And what a wretched resource must that man's be, which is thus capable of being lost. And yet even under the purest of all religions, even under the dispensation of mercy in JESUS, if any man lays stress upon anything of his

own, his frames, his feelings, his supposed attainments, as all these pray be taken away, wherein doth this man differ from Micah? Precious JESUS! thou only art the *one thing needful*, the everlasting good, the FATHER'S irrevocable gift, *the same yesterday, and today, and for ever*. Hebrews 13:8.

JUDGES 18:27-31

(27) ¶ And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people *that were* at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire. (28) And *there was* no deliverer, because it *was* far from Zidon, and they had no business with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* by Bethrehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein. (29) And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city *was* Laish at the first. (30) And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. (31) And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

I hasten to close the awful account of this tribe, for nothing can give a more horrible description of their degeneracy, than that as soon as they had conquered *Laish*, and settled themselves in their new city of *Dan*, they set up public idolatry. Whether this Jonathan was the Levite of Micah, and now called for the first time by his name, is not said. But I rather incline to think not. It is not probable, that the HOLY GHOST would close his character with the record of his *name*, who had thus become the wretched instrument of establishing idolatry in one of the tribes of Israel. Of all such little mention is made in the sacred word, for the most part *their memorial is perished with them*,

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BEHOLD my soul! what dreadful effects the fall of man *and* his apostasy from GOD, hath wrought in the human heart. Behold! how general and even universal that apostasy is by nature. Well might the prophet, contemplating the horrid picture, confess; *all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.* For though the different tracks, the different characters of men take lead into various bye paths; yet the bias and direction of every man's mind, in a state of nature, is all turning from GOD. And how very dear ought that rich dispensation of mercy which sought us in our lost estate to be, which brings back sinners from the error of their way, and turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the living GOD.

Precious JESUS! may it my portion to learn from hence, how much I owe to thee and to thy rich mercy, who, when running after the idols of any sinful heart, came and delivered me from this dreadful captivity. And no less to thy mercy, heavenly FATHER, do I desire to ascribe the great salvation, whose everlasting love made such ample provision for my recovery, in the complete redemption of thy dear SON! And thou Almighty SPIRIT, from whose effectual teaching, and in thy glorifying both the FATHER'S love and JESUS'S grace to my view, I am brought over from the dominion of Satan, and made willing to be saved in JESUS, in the day of thy power! LORD, let the cry of my heart evermore be like that of Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols!* In the LORD JESUS do I desire to rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness to make my boast. Thou art my GOD, and I will

prepare thee an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt thee.

CHAPTER 19

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Melancholy views of Israel's transgression still appear, and are prosecuted in their contents through this Chapter. In the former we have beheld the daring sin of idolatry; here we are presented with the horrid representation of the sin of murder. The concubine of a Levite forms the chief subject of the story: her abuse: her being murdered: and the Levites conduct upon it: these form the principle events here recorded.

JUDGES 19:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah.

The same preface opens this Chapter, no king in Israel. Reader! shall not you and I say JESUS is our king, our judge, our lawgiver, he will save us. Isaiah 33:22.

JUDGES 19:2

(2) And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Bethlehemjudah, and was there four whole months.

I think it probable, that though she is called his concubine, it meant his lawful wife; and indeed in the margin it is said so,

for how otherwise could she be said to have acted the part of an whore.

JUDGES 19:3

(3) And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.

The affection of this man to his adulteress wife, may serve to remind us of our GOD'S tenderness to us in our fornication to him. How sweetly the LORD speaks of it himself by the prophet. *They say* (said; the LORD) *if a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return to her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the LORD.* Jeremiah 3:1.

JUDGES 19:4-9

(4) And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there. (5) And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way. (6) And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry. (7) And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again. (8) And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them. (9) And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in law, the

damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home.

There is somewhat very interesting in family happiness. The LORD hath entwined the heart of man to man. And in the nearer connections of life, the knot is drawn yet closer. But as to all these creature enjoyments, simply as creatures, what the apostle saith should be ever kept in view, "That they that have wives be as though they had none: and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not:" for the transition from the house of joy to that of mourning, is but from one room to another. 1 Corinthians 7:29, 30.

JUDGES 19:10-12

(10) But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which *is* Jerusalem; and *there were* with him two asses saddled, his concubine also *was* with him. (11) *And* when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. (12) And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that *is* not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.

This *Gibeah* *was* a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and it was directly on the road towards *Shiloh*. The resolution therefore of the Levite appears to be very proper, for certainly there should seem to be more courtesy by right to be expected by an Israelite from a Benjamite, than from the Jebusites. But the sequel shows that this was ill-founded. Alas! how many are there professing the pure and merciful religion of the LORD

JESUS, whose lives need blush in the view of men of no religion.

JUDGES 19:13-15

(13) And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah.

(14) And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them *when they were* by Gibeah, which *belongeth* to Benjamin. (15) And they turned aside thither, to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for *there was* no man that took them into his house to lodging.

Probably in those days there were no public inns. But yet might not a Levite, and no doubt his dress indicated the order to which he belonged, have reasonably expected accommodation from every Israelite? The LORD had expressly pointed out that his Levites should have no inheritance with their brethren, because the LORD himself was their portion. But then this implied how much every true lover of the LORD would love a Levite! Joshua 13:33. But is there not in all this, somewhat that pointed to the Prince of Levites? Did not this intimate that JESUS was to be the inheritance of all his tribes? Dearest LORD! let it never be said of me, or any of thine, *I was a stranger and ye took me not in*. Matthew 25:43.

JUDGES 19:16

(16) ¶ And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which *was* also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Benjamites.

The sacred historian, as if to call our attention more immediately to this person, is careful to tell us that he was

only a sojourner in *Gibeah*. Is not this designed to remind us of Him, who when he came on earth to seek and save that which was lost was only a sojourner through our world.

JUDGES 19:17-21

(17) And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? (18) And he said unto him, We *are* passing from Bethlehemjudah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went to Bethlehemjudah, but I *am now* going to the house of the LORD; and there *is* no man that receiveth me to house. (19) Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which is* with thy servants: *there is* no want of any thing. (20) And the old man said, Peace *be* with thee; howsoever *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only lodge not in the street. (21) So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

While we pay the tribute of just praise, to the old man, and admire his generosity, let the Reader have the eye of his mind directed to him, of whom we read in the gospel, the good Samaritan, and in him behold the pleasing representation of that heavenly Samaritan, who when he passed by, literally found our whole nature exposed in the street, without home, and without shelter, and even worse than all this, made more than half dead by the enemy of souls! Blessed JESUS! do thou say to me, Peace be with thee, let all thy wants lie on me; and may my soul lie all night between thy breasts. Song Of Solomon 1:13.

JUDGES 19:22

(22) ¶ *Now* as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, *and* beat at the door, and spake to the master of the

house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

I would be led to hope, that the mirth here spoken of was sacred mirth. There is no real joy but the joy of the HOLY GHOST; and this is the kingdom of GOD. Romans 14:17.

JUDGES 19:23-30

(23) And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray you, do not *so* wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly. (24) Behold, *here is* my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing. (25) But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go. (26) Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord *was*, till it was light. (27) And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down *at* the door of the house, and her hands *were* upon the threshold. (28) And he said unto her, Up, and let us be going. But none answered. Then the man took her *up* upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place. (29) And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel. (30) And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak *your minds*.

The sad narrative of so detestable an action, and issuing from so detestable a cause, is enough to put to the blush our depraved nature. Who that reads it but must exclaim, LORD!

what is man! And when we read the early breakings out of this most unnatural sin, in the days of *Lot*; look at it again here; and connect with it what the apostle saith in his days; how ought our nature to be humbled, in beholding this, among the many sad consequences of the fall. Genesis 19:4, &c. Romans 1:24-27. But Reader! let us turn from this sad picture of our poor fallen nature, and behold the other part of the subject, though indeed, in doing it we only turn from one sad story to another, all originating from one and the same source, man's misery and ruin by reason of the fall. What a wretched conclusion did this woman terminate her life with, from running into adultery and leaving her husband. Behold the evidence of what the apostle saith, *the wages of sin is death*. Oh! that all such views may have this blessed influence on our hearts, to prize yet more that inestimable redemption, which is the alone security from the ruins of the fall; and lead our hearts yet nearer to JESUS, who thus tenderly speaks to his people, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help*.

REFLECTIONS

THOUGH the several contents in this chapter lead to the review only of the sin, and consequently the sorrow of our nature, yet my soul, if the contemplation of man's ruin by sin, prompts thy heart to admire and embrace yet more affectionately the glorious recovery by grace, and brings thee home to Him, who hath done away sin and all its real consequences by the sacrifice of himself, even this humiliating subject will form the foundation for greater praise. Yes! thou blessed JESUS, I see in thee, and thy great redemption-work,

the glorious scheme of salvation, prepared long before the fall, and in the fullness of time completed, for to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore perfect order among all the works of GOD. I behold the Almighty GOD and FATHER founding this plan of unequalled mercy, in the ancient settlement of eternity, and thou generously undertaking it when neither Levite nor Priest, nor righteousness, nor offering, could stand in the least stead to bring sinners to GOD. And what is it now in time, but the same everlasting righteousness arising out of JEHOVAH'S everlasting love, by which the salvation of thy church and people is secured forever. Hail! thou holy, precious, pure, and spotless LAMB of GOD! Oh may my soul find constant relief, and every suited encouragement, in reposing on thy righteousness, when at any time, in myself or others around me, I feel or see the sad consequences of a sinful state. LORD! I would lay low before thee, under a deep sense of sin, and this body of death I carry about with me, while taking refuge under the incense of thy merits, and seeking redemption in thy blood. Be thou to me, O LORD, all I need; *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: and may all my glorying be in thee, O LORD.*

CHAPTER 20

CONTENTS

The history in this chapter, like the two or three preceding, is full of distress, though the subject varies. From private calamities we are now introduced to the relation of public: and from an house, or family, the evil is extended to the Nation. Now we hear of the wars on account of sin. The story

of the Levites' wrongs is heard in the several tribes of Israel; they form a resolution to avenge them on the Benjamites: matters soon come to an issue: and a dreadful slaughter in consequence thereof is related in this chapter.

JUDGES 20:1-2

- (1) ¶ Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beersheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh.
(2) And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword.

The readiness of all Israel to assemble upon the complaint of the Levite, seems to say; the LORD had yet a seed to serve him. And no doubt, in the worst of times, this is, and must be the case. There is a sweet promise, to this effect, Isaiah 59:21. *Mizpeh*, was not far from *Shiloh*; so that it became a well appointed place, for the collecting Israel together from *Dan*, the most northern city; and *Beersheba*, the most southern of all the provinces.

JUDGES 20:3

- (3) (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell *us*, how was this wickedness?

If Benjamin had not been grossly sunk in wickedness, what a fine opportunity was here afforded to have sent in their supplication for pardon. But alas! sin hardens, and not softens, by repeated commissions.

JUDGES 20:4-7

(4) And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. (5) And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, *and* thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead. (6) And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. (7) Behold, ye *are* all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel.

I pass by the relation of the story itself, (for we had it before in the preceding chapter) to call the Reader's attention to the Levites appeal. What are, or ought to be the children of Israel? Moses had told them long before; *Thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy GOD*, Deuteronomy 7:6. Faithfulness to the GOD of their salvation, and the most brotherly love and attachment to one another, were implied in this honourable distinction. Nothing therefore could have been more admirably chosen, in the Levite, than to appeal to their feelings, under this high title.

JUDGES 20:8-11

(8) And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any *of us* go to his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into his house. (9) But now this *shall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah; *we will go up* by lot against it; (10) And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hundred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel. (11) So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

Oh! that all the tribes of JESUS were so consolidated in his cause, and so united to him, their great head, and to each

other as the members of his mystical body: what might not be expected in their zeal for the divine honour and glory!

JUDGES 20:12-13

(12) ¶ And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is done among you? (13) Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the children of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel:

This fair appeal common justice required. The wicked only are to be punished in his iniquity. And this with a view also, to stop the execution of GOD'S wrath. How lost therefore was Benjamin to refuse. But is there not in all this, the picture of human nature, hardened to its own ruin by sin.

JUDGES 20:14-18

(14) But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel. (15) And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men. (16) Among all this people *there were* seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair *breadth*, and not miss. (17) And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these *were* men of war. (18) ¶ And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first.

The disposition of the army of Israel, and then asking counsel from the LORD, is a sweet token for good. And, as the LORD appointed Judah to lead, who doth not see shadowed out in this, the early tokens of that war, which the LORD fights for his

people against sin and Satan; and JESUS, who according to the flesh, sprang out of Judah, going before, Hebrews 7:14.

JUDGES 20:19-25

(19) And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah. (20) And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah. (21) And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men. (22) And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day. (23) (And the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.) (24) And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day. (25) And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.

The apparent success of Benjamin, is a lively representation of the seeming success of Satan, in the holy war. How frequently are GOD'S people apparently worsted, and in the conflict, prompted to exclaim, Surely the LORD hath forsaken me, and my LORD hath forgotten me, Isaiah 49:14.

JUDGES 20:26-46

(26) ¶ Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. (27) And the children of Israel enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in those days, (28) And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to morrow I will deliver them into thine hand. (29) And Israel

set liers in wait round about Gibeah. (30) And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times. (31) And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, *and* kill, as at other times, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel. (32) And the children of Benjamin said, They *are* smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways. (33) And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baaltamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, *even* out of the meadows of Gibeah. (34) And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil *was* near them. (35) And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword. (36) So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside Gibeah. (37) And the liers in wait hasted, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew *themselves* along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword. (38) Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke rise up out of the city. (39) And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite *and* kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons: for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as *in* the first battle. (40) But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven. (41) And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil *was* come upon them. (42) Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and them which *came* out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them. (43) *Thus* they inclosed the Benjamites round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sunrising. (44) And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these *were* men

of valor. (45) And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them. (46) So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword; all these *were* men of valor.

Here we see that through the whole the victory was not doubtful. The LORD hereby taught Israel, who perhaps vaunted more upon the strength of their numbers, compared to Benjamin and Gibeah, than simply leaned upon the arm of JEHOVAH, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. And are not GOD'S people taught the same now, when at any time tempted to trust an arm of flesh?

JUDGES 20:47

(47) But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months.

I would not overstrain the holy word, to discover more than it is intended to convey: but in those six hundred men of Benjamin fleeing to the rock; may we not be led, at least, to reflect on the happiness, and safety of those who flee to the rock CHRIST JESUS, as a refuge from every evil.

JUDGES 20:48

(48) And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.

What an awful catastrophe doth the close of the chapter form: and all arising from one, and the same cause of sin! Oh! my soul, flee from the very approaches of sin, and have

no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: but may I come out from among them, and, touch not the unclean thing: then will he be the LORD my GOD; and I shall be one among the sons and daughters of the LORD GOD Almighty, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let me learn, from the unanimity of Israel in a just cause, and the blessing of the LORD GOD upon them, how much it becomes the Israel of GOD, to unite in the suppression of sin, and in supporting the interest of JESUS in the world. Oh! for zeal for him, and his blessed cause, who hath so loved me, as to give himself for me! Here, blessed JESUS, give me grace to unite in heart and soul with all thy holy army, and to be valiant in thy cause. And, ye soldiers of the LAMB! ye who wear the regimentals of JESUS, and profess to have put on his whole armour; let me speak to you, as the Levite did at *Mizpeh*; behold! ye are children of Israel! be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Never give quarter to Satan; but resist stedfast unto death, striving against sin; and count not your life dear unto yourselves. So that you may finish your course with joy, and having fought the good fight of faith may lay hold of eternal life.

And ye men of Benjamin, shall I call you? my poor brethren in sin and transgression, oh! cast down your rebellious arms at the foot of the cross; or flee, like the men at *Rimmon*, flee to CHRIST JESUS for shelter, while the opportunity of escape remains, and while the door of salvation is open. Sweet is the voice, and most precious the promise: *All that the FATHER*

giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.

CHAPTER 21

CONTENTS

This Chapter, which concludes the book of the Judges, gives the general conclusion also, of sin and its punishment in the sorrow and anguish of spirit it induceth. We have in it, the account of all GOD'S people mourning, concerning the ruin of Benjamin. They take counsel, how to repair the breach, made by it, in one of the tribes: and from the daughters of Jabesh-gilead, and Shiloh, give them wives, to build up their inheritance.

JUDGES 21:1

(1) ¶ Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.

There was no notice taken of this before, but it is very properly introduced here, for it serves to explain the distress of Israel, respecting the building up again of the tribe of Benjamin.

JUDGES 21:2-4

(2) And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; (3) And said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel? (4) And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

It is pleasing to remark, that though at this time, the interests of Religion appeared at so low an ebb; yet, the ordinances of worship were still kept up at *Shiloh*.

JUDGES 21:5-6

(5) And the children of Israel said, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death. (6) And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.

The importance of preserving a tribe, of the twelve Tribes of Israel, was an object, to which all Israel had regard. Perhaps the thing was from the LORD. So important is it, that even the New Jerusalem, is said to have their names on its gates. Revelation 21:12.

JUDGES 21:7-14

(7) How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives? (8) And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly. (9) For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead there. (10) And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children. (11) And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man. (12) And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan. (13) And the whole congregation sent *some* to speak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them. (14) And Benjamin

came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabeshgilead: and yet so they sufficed them not.

It should seem, that the vengeance taken of the men of *Jabesh-gilead*, was more with an eye to provide in this manner wives for Benjamin, than to punish them, for not coming up against *Gibeah*.

JUDGES 21:15-25

(15) And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel. (16) ¶ Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? (17) And they said, *There must be* an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel. (18) Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed *be* he that giveth a wife to Benjamin. (19) Then they said, Behold, *there is* a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly *in a place* which *is* on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah. (20) Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; (21) And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. (22) And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that* ye should be guilty. (23) And the children of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them. (24) And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance. (25) In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

I pass over the whole here recorded, to bring the sum, and substance into one point of view; it affords a melancholy picture, take it altogether, very humbling to our nature, and sadly descriptive of our apostasy from GOD. Wherein may we be said to differ from the beasts that perish? The destruction of the men of Jabesh, and the dance at Shiloh, were both to promote the gratification of sensual lusts and appetites. I conceive one improving thought may be gathered from this annual custom of sin and folly, at *Shiloh*, in the dancing of young persons. How little did they think of the ambush, laying in wait for them. How little do our unthinking youths, and even some of riper age, in their dancings and assemblies, consider what evil spirits are around them, to prompt them on, and stimulate them to sin! And is it not a question of great awfulness; have not many (like the daughters of *Shiloh*, in their dances, carried off by the lyers in wait), dropped suddenly dead in their midnight revels, and been hurried away, from the frivolous music of the dancing room, to the land of darkness, and shadow of death!

REFLECTIONS

May a gracious GOD, be pleased to follow up his own blessed designs, in recording the sad relations of Israel in this book, to, make both the Writer, and Reader of this Commentary upon it, wise, under his divine teaching, from what is written. If, Reader, the page of Israel's transgressions, in this book of the Judges, be so blessed of GOD the HOLY GHOST, as to prompt both your heart, and mine, to behold in it, what it really is, the history of all men according to nature, and unrestrained by grace: and, if the consciousness of the whole,

tends to endear JESUS, in all his Person, Offices, Relations, and Characters, as the only remedy for sin; and, if our hearts are led to him for salvation; then let us both bless the Great Author of our mercies, who hath given this, as well as *all scripture, by inspiration of GOD; and made it profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Amen.*

THE BOOK

Of

Ruth

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE Holy Ghost hath not thought proper to gratify our curiosity, in giving information from whose pen the book of *Ruth* hath issued. Had it been at all needful, no doubt the Church would have been made acquainted with it. But, that it carries with it marks of being written under his own blessed inspiration, and that he intended it for the perpetual instruction and comfort of the Church in all ages, there can be no question. Indeed, according to my view of things, the truest evidence that any Book bears his signature is, when his people are enabled, from his own precious teachings therein, to set to their seal *that God is true*. For, when at any time the Holy Ghost refreshes their minds with his word; when those sweet truths they read, in any part of the divine oracles, are made life and spirit to their hearts; this is what the Apostle says, *in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established*. And in the instance of this book of God when those blessed effects accompany the perusal, here are the *three* all agreeing together. The sacred word itself is *one*. The

Almighty Author of it is *another*. And the heart of the believer, in whom the word seals its authenticity, is a *third*.

The design the blessed Author of the book of *Ruth* had in giving it to the church, seems to have been directed for the display of the divine mercy, both in the world of Providence and of grace. And perhaps yet more pointedly, to lead unto Jesus.

The gracious superintending mercy of God over his people, in a way of Providence, is beautifully illustrated in *Ruth's* history. In her life, simply considered, as relating to the things of time and sense, connected with this world only, we behold the fullest proof of our dear Lord's promise displayed, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all things needful shall be added unto you*. *Ruth*, in leaving all that was near and dear to nature, to seek the God of Israel, and finding him, and all things *with* him, and *in* him, became a living testimony of this precious doctrine. But though I very readily and cheerfully allow that this, in a subordinate sense, might be among the gracious designs of the Holy Ghost, in causing the Book of *Ruth* to be written, and her history recorded; yet I cannot but believe that a greater and more important design was intended in giving this sweet morsel of sacred truth to the Church. Was it not to display yet more illustriously the wonders of his grace? And what can more illustriously display the riches of his grace, than the call of this poor *Moabitish* daughter to be among the fellow-heirs of the same covenant promises with Israel?

Independent of all other considerations, the Book of *Ruth* claims peculiar regard from the followers of the blessed Jesus,

in that Christ, after the flesh, sprung from *Ruth*; and thereby manifested his alliance to the Genthe as well as to the Jewish church, So that we may upon this occasion, as well as many oillier grand considerations connected with it, say with Paul, *Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes! of the Gentiles also.* And it is, I conceive, a very delightful consideration to the believer, to trace this connection even in the minutest point. For it is not the question, or enquiry, after *endless genealogies* (as an apostle terms it) but it is concerning him, who is in all characters and offices, dear to his people, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless file.*

I shall not presume, in this humble Commentary on the book of *Ruth*, which I here offer, under divine teachings, in aid to the Believer to be wise above what is written; and therefore will not venture to allegorize the several very interesting things contained in it, which certainly seem to lean that way. That there are very many beauties in scripture of this kind, no one, who is conversant in the word of God, will question, It corresponds so munch to the ancient method of instruction in the eastern world, that we might reasonably expect, in a gracious revelation from heaven, the great truths contained in it might, in accommodation to the capacities of men, be conveyed that way. And hence we find, not only the servants of the Lord Jesus, but the Master himself, adopted similitude and parable in their teaching. Whether *some* of the most interesting outlines in the book of *Ruth* be of this kind or not, I leave undetermined. But the Reader will perhaps be led to think, (and I wish him not to think otherwise), that I am strongly inclined to this belief, when I add, who among the

fallen race of Adam would ever have understood, unless the Holy Ghost had commissioned his servant Paul the Apostle to inform the Church of it, that the things concerning the history of Sarah's Isaac, And Hagar's Ishmael, *were an allegory.*

Reader! may the blessed Spirit of all truth guide me into all truth, while writing, and *you w*hile reading, this Precious book of God! May our hearts be mutually refreshed and comforted in all our researches, in the faith *which maketh wise unto salvation.* And may we be led into a saving acquaintance, and full assurance of understanding, to *the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Amen.

Chapter 1

CONTENTS

The book of Ruth opens in this Chapter with the relation of a certain family leaving Bethlehem in consequence of a famine, and sojourning in the country of Moab. The distressing events which followed: the death of the husband and his two sons; and the return of the widow, with one of her daughters in law, from Moab to Bethlehem. These are the principal things related in this chapter.

RUTH 1:1-2

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. (2) And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon

and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

It is not so very material at what period during the commonwealth of Israel the events here recorded took place, as it is to make particular remarks on the events themselves. And here the first thing to be noted is the famine which prevailed in the land. Famine was one of the *four* sore judgments of God, which the Lord had decreed to punish Israel with, when the land sinned by trespassing grievously, to break the staff of the bread thereof. Ezekiel. 14:13-21. And what rendered a famine of bread more peculiarly afflicting, and carrying with it a decided mark of a divine judgment, was, that this famine was in *Bethlehem*; for the very name of *Bethlehem* signifies the land, or house of bread. Reader! do not forget, that Bethlehem is the hallowed spot of the birth of thy Redeemer. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. See Matt. ii. 1. How awful must a famine be when it carries with it a testimony that it is a divine judgment! But how infinitely more awful must be a spiritual famine: not of bread, and of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And is not this the case with Bethlehem now? I mean the descendants of ancient Bethlehem, the Jews. The Lord by his servant Amos threatened this judgment. And for how many generations hath it been fulfilled? Precious Jesus! how sweet is it to my soul, that thou breakest thy bread to me in secret. How delightful is it to know thee to be the bread of life, which came down from heaven, of which whosoever eateth shall live forever! Lord! evermore give me this bread. See Amos 8:11. John 6:33, &c.

There is somewhat very striking in the manner in which the Holy Ghost hath introduced this man and his family. He is styled, *A certain man*. And his name is not less so: *Elimelech*, which is compounded of two words, *Eli* and *melech*, signifying my God, and king. *Naomi* means pleasant. *Mahlon* and *Chilion* conveyed very different ideas; the former intimating a sick and weakly one, and the latter a wasting. But the most remarkable circumstance was their removal from the house of God, to the idolatrous country of Moab. Alas! do we not see in this certain man and his family, our nature strongly pictured? Did not Adam, our first father, induce a spiritual famine by transgression, and entail sickness and disease upon all his children, so that our whole nature may well be called *Mahlon* and *Chilion*? And did he not leave the Lord, and his mercies, and ever since, in his poor, blind, and fallen race, have we not all by nature sought fulness in the Moabs of the world, and the idols thereof?

RUTH 1:3-4

And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. (4) And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

What miseries spring out of original transgression! When Elimelech left Bethlehem-judah, he, left it only for a little while, according to his intention. He meant to return again when the famine was over. Alas! when men leave God, neglect his ordinances, seek pleasure in the world, who shall calculate the end of such awful departures? Here are affinities with Moab unnatural, unscriptural alliances! Oh! how sweet is that precept of the Lord, and how full of mercy; *Come out of*

her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Revelation 18:4.

RUTH 1:5

And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

How reviving is the thought to the people of God, amidst the devastations and ravages of death, that Jesus ever liveth: and as he ever liveth, so he ever loveth his people. And doth he not say, in the soft whispers of his grace, *Am I not better to thee than ten sons?*¹ Samuel 1:8

RUTH 1:6

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.

Reader! may we not, without violence to the history, conceive this to be no unapt representation of the return of a sinner after his wandering from the Lord? Every man, like Elimelech, hath departed from the Lord by sin and transgression. The Lord in mercy sends afflictions alter us. There is a famine of ordinances, trouble, sickness, death. When these visitations are properly received and felt, and the heart by grace is humbled under them, the soul, like Naomi, *hears the rod, and who hath appointed it.* And then, like her, we are told that *the Lord is returned to Jerusalem in mercies. I will arise, and go to my Father,* is then the language of the soul. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet is it, when by sanctified afflictions the Lord *hedges up our way with thorns,* or unsettles the nest we had made for ourselves, amidst the *Moabs* of the world Luke 15:13 Hosea 2:7

RUTH 1:7

Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

Here we may learn that resolutions formed in grace lead to practice. Had Naomi simply sent forth a wish to return to Bethlehem, when she heard that the Lord had visited his people, and yet never put that wish into effect, she would have resembled the hearers by the wayside. But effectual grace leads on to effectual practice. It is founded in divine strength, and will be carried on in the same. See that sweet resolution in the word, Psalm 121:16.

RUTH 1:8-9

And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. (9) The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account of the parting of Naomi and her daughters-in-law. Even on the score of natural feelings it is not without affording much instruction, in teaching us how those that are allied in the bonds of nature, conscious of being alike exposed to all nature's sorrows, should soften each other's burthens in a mutual regard. But the subject riseth much higher, when beheld in a way of grace. It is evident from the sequel of the history, how exceedingly Naomi longed for both her daughters-in-law to be proselytes to the true God, and to leave the dunghill gods of Moab. Parting therefore from them, when they might return to everlasting ruin, it was this which aggravated the pang of separation. Reader! is there nothing in all this that you can

make personal? Hath it been told you how the Lord hath visited his people, and are you, from long having wandered away, now returning to the God of salvation? And do you not feel the pang of sorrow, in the view of your unawakened relations? Do you not wish them to go with you to Jesus? and is not the language of your heart towards them, *some, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.* Micah 4:2. Psalm 34:3.

RUTH 1:10

And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

There is something captivating, even to natural affections, in the first view of religion. Nature, as in the case of these two *Moabitish* daughters, could not but feel a desire to be among God's people. But alas! though nature feels, and is compelled to allow, the superiority of grace, yet the mere feelings of nature, originating only in nature, can never rise above its source. When the spring ceases to flow, the streams dry away.

RUTH 1:11-13

And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? (12) Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; (13) Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

They who attend only to the mere letter of the history, will discover nothing more in it than the affectionate feelings of a tenderhearted woman, in the necessity of separating from those she held dear. But they who look deeper than the surface of the history, will behold in it the finer feelings of an awakened soul, interested for the everlasting welfare of those whom the Lord had made dear to her in the ties of nature; that they might be brought nearer in the bonds of grace. There can be no doubt, but that Naomi, all along, coveted that her daughters should be her companions to the house of God. She knew how gracious Israel's God was, and that in his house there was bread enough and to spare. But in her zeal for their salvation she judged it prudent to set before them the difficulties in the way, that hereafter they might not turn back. If the Reader would behold a brighter example of the same kind, he may view it in the person of Jesus. Luke 14:25-27.

RUTH 1:14

And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

What a striking evidence is here, in these two characters, of the wonderful difference between nature and grace. While both Orpah and Ruth felt *the* tender affections, and were melted at Naomi's discourse, with *one* it operated no further than the momentary impulse, but like the early cloud, or morning dew, Soon vanished away; with the *other* it fastened like a nail, in a sure place. And thus, Reader, is the effects of the blessed gospel of Jesus, in all the congregations where the word is preached every Lord's day. It may affect, it may strike the mind of all, and even carnal men, like the wayside

hearers, may receive *the* word with seeming joy; but some, like Orpah, will kiss and depart; and others, like Ruth, without the kiss, will feel their souls cleaving unto it. So that the same word is *to some a savour of life unto life; and to others a savour of death unto death* Reader! it is a grand and important question, In which class are *you* found?

RUTH 1:15

And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

This verse throws a light upon the real design Naomi had in view, in all her discourse, when seemingly persuading her daughters-in-law to go back. For when she talked of the gods to which Orpah was returned, nothing can more decidedly shew how much she desired Ruth to follow the true God of Israel; however it might at first view appear that she recommended Ruth to follow her example.

RUTH 1:16-17

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God: (17) Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

In what sweet and engaging language hath the Holy Ghost been pleased to convey to the church, the pious and unalterable resolution of this poor Moabite. No doubt Naomi had brought her well acquainted with the history of the God of Israel; and very many precious things she had learnt concerning the Lord's care of his people. But Reader! had this been all, Ruth's resolution would never have been what it

was. Doubtless from an higher power, her mind was constrained into the love of God; and hence, from this one source, the firmness of her principles derived their strength. And may not, ought not indeed, every true believer in Jesus, to feel the same firmness of attachment? Where Jesus goeth I would go. Where Jesus lodgeth I would lodge. His people are my people. His God and Father, is my Father and God in him: and both in life and death would I be with him. Death, indeed, must have parted Ruth and Naomi; but the dying day of thy people, blessed Jesus, is the real wedding-day, in which. the marriage supper of the Lamb is consummated in heaven, Lord! help me to cleave unto thee, for thou art *my* life. May my soul say to Jesus, as *Ittai* did to David, 2 Samuel 15:21.

RUTH 1:18

When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

An oath for confirmation (saith an Apostle) is to them' an end of all strife. Ruth had solemnly protested the firmness of her resolution of accompanying Naomi; and this the other accepted, as a timing now settled. My soul! how ought I to blush in the 'recollection, that neither the word nor the oath of Jehovah hath at times been found of such sufficient validity with me as to quiet my Foolish doubts and fears, concerning the infinite security of the redemption of Jesus! Reader! hath it been *your* experience also? Hebrews 6:16-19.

RUTH 1:19

So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is this Naomi?*

Such is the surprise whenever a sinner is brought home to Jesus! It excites the wonder and astonishment of man, in beholding the mighty change wrought by sovereign grace. And as we are told that angels rejoice in heaven over the recovery of every poor sinner from the power of sin And Satan to the living God, think, Reader, What a moving of the heavenly city is there above, when Jesus brings home a soul that he hath rescued from Moab, of the wanderers from Bethlehem? Is there any thing yet more surprising? Yes! how astonished shall you and I look in upon ourselves, and all around, if God in his infinite mercy, and from the riches of his inexhaustible grace, should bring us home from those regions of sin we now inhabit, to surround the throne of God and the Lamb!

RUTH 1:20-21

And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. (21) I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

Such language is suitable to a sinner. It is the highest evidence of grace, when the soul is led to see the hand of God in our afflictions. And oh! how very precious is it when the soul can say, "I went out full in creature-comforts, creature-confidences, creature-dependencies; but my God hath stripped me of them all. Call me no longer therefore *pleasant*; but let my name be *bitterness*." How delightful are those preparatory works of God the Holy Ghost in the heart! And Reader, depend upon it, when your soul and my soul are thus emptied of all that we once named pleasantness, then are we prepared for that precious gift in Jesus of the new

name, and the white stone, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. Compare Isaiah 62:2. with Revelation 2:17, 3:12.

RUTH 1:22

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitish, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

All souls, both Jew and Gentile, when brought home to the Lord, will always find it a harvest-day whenever they return. *This day* (saith Jesus to Zacchaeus, in the day of his conversion) *is salvation come to this house*. Luke 19:9. Oh! precious day, when the Lord makes the sinner willing *in the day of his power*. Psalm 110:3.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, in the review of what is written in this Chapter, and see what reference it bears to thy spiritual state And circumstances. Is there not, by nature, a famine induced in the hand to all the fathers race of Adam, when, before the soul is quickened to the use of any of its spiritual faculties, it neither feels the sense of its lost and famished state, nor hath any spiritual appetite to the bread of life, which came down from heaven? And hast not thou, my soul, hike Elimelech and all his household, left the land of bread 'to seek among the husks of the world the gratification of thy sensual appetite?

Oh! thou merciful Lord God, how gracious hast thou been to my soul, when hedging up my way, and inducing disappointment and afflictions in the creature, thou hast again inclined my heart to return to the Lord God of my salvation!

Oh! how gracious hath it been in thee, Lord, to visit *thy* people again with spiritual sustenance, when by sin and disobedience we had called forth a dearth of such rich provisions! Shall I not hasten back to my Father's house, convinced, as I am, that the world, like Moab, affords no resting place to dwell in. Shall any persuasions of others, or fears of my own, keep me from this purpose? Dearest Jesus! to whom shall I go but to thee, thou art both the bread of life, and thou only hast the words of eternal life; thou art the very Bethlehem of thy people, and in thee I shall find enough to live upon forever! Like Ruth, may it be my most determined resolution, to go where thou goest, and to know nothing among men but thee. I would forget my own people, and my father's house, and both in life and in death, desire none in comparison of thee. And though my flesh and my heart faileth, yet thou art and wilt be the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.

Chapter 2

CONTENTS

As the history advanceth in its progress, the several particulars of it become more interesting. In this chapter we are introduced into the acquaintance of the hero of the subject, Boaz: and informed how Ruth became first brought acquainted with him. The events of a day are circumstantially related, and the consequences of it, in Ruth's conduct during the season of the harvest follow.

RUTH 2:1

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* Boaz.

As the main hinge upon which the whole of this sweet history turns, considered in a spiritual and typical sense, is centered in the character of *Boaz*, here spoken of, it will be proper, in the opening of the chapter in this place, to attend particularly to what is said of him. Boaz by name signifies *strength*. And he is said to be a rich kinsman's of Naomi's husband. Now it is a point which should never be lost sight of through the whole of this history, that the self-same word which in this place is rendered *kinsman*, is in some other scriptures rendered *Redeemer*. The original word is *Goel*. Thus for example: If the man have no (Goel) kinsman to recompense the trespass. So it is rendered Numb. v. 8. So again in this same book, chap. 3:12. I am thy (Goel) near kinsman. But in the book of Job,

chap. 19:25, the same word is rendered Redeemer. I know that my (Goel) Redeemer liveth. So again in the book of the Proverbs, chap. 23:11. For their (Goel) Redeemer is mighty. So likewise in the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. 47:4. As for our (Goel) Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name. And what is the evident conclusion from the comparative view of all these scriptures, but that the Goel-kinsman of our nature is one and the same person, the Goel-Redeemer of his people: of whom Boaz, in whom is said to be strength, is a lively type. Moreover, he is said to be the kinsman of Elimelech. And may we not, without violence to the sacred text, consider this *certain man* (as Elimelech is first called in the opening of the Book of Ruth), a lively type of our whole nature, to whom the Lord Jesus is indeed both our kinsman and Redeemer; being in his humanity bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and in his Godhead our Redeemer, mighty to save, the Lord of Hosts is his name. And as it is a subject of the most interesting nature, to trace the affinity after the flesh of Boaz with the Lord Jesus, as well as to view him as the type of Jesus, I detain the Reader to make a further remark concerning his pedigree. And if the Reader will consult the opening of the Gospel by St. Matthew, he will there discover how that our Lord after the flesh sprung from Boaz and Ruth; and thereby manifested his connection both with the Jewish and the Genthe church. See Matt. 1:5. Hence, thou blessed Jesus, I may truly say thou art the Goel, the kinsman Redeemer, of thy people! thou art of our family, for thou didst take our nature upon thee, when thou becamest man for our sakes. And surely thou art a mighty man of wealth, for in thee dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and in thee

are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:9, 3.

RUTH 2:2

And Ruth the Moabitish said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

Reader! if we apply this passage in a spiritual sense to the state of the soul (and I see no reason why we may not) it will open a subject both pleasing and profitable. When a sinner is brought by the Holy Ghost out of the world, as Ruth was out of Moab, though the world promiseth plenty of enjoyments, and a fulness of all sensual pleasures, yet the poor in spirit desires rather to glean of the bread of life, even though but in the smallest portion of the ears of corn, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. But then the desire of the awakened soul is also to glean after him in whose sight is found grace. And in whose sight but Jesus can sinners find grace? In the field of his word, his scriptures, his ordinances, there is plenty indeed to glean; and if the Lord Jesus gives grace, he will give the soul to find and inherit substance, and he will fill their treasures. Proverbs 8:18-21.

RUTH 2:3

And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech.

Are not these reapers similar to the ministering servants of Jesus, who while gathering fruit for the Lord, leave sweet gleanings for the people that come after them? But Reader! do not overlook what is said concerning Ruth in this verse, that unknown to her it was her hap to light upon the field of

Boaz. To her indeed it appeared casual, but not so in reality. Most graciously doth the Holy Ghost direct sinners to Jesus; and not only leads therein *to* Jesus, but brings them in his own time and way acquainted *with* Jesus. John 16:13, 14.

START

RUTH 2:4

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

What a beautiful picture is here given of the simplicity of ancient times, in the pious salutations which passed between Boaz and his servants. What an evident proof it affords, that both were hiving under divine influences. Oh! how exceedingly to be desired, that such was the usual salutation between masters and servants in the present day! How lovely that house, that family, that service, which is endeared to one another in the several members of it, and cemented in God's blessing. There is another charming instance of it recorded in Psalm 129:5.

RUTH 2:5

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel *is* this?

The enquiry of Boaz so immediately concerning Ruth, may serve to teach us how very early the eye of Jesus is upon airy and every poor stranger that comes under the ministry of his word, to glean instruction in the fields of salvation. Yes! Reader, depend upon it, however any poor sinner may fancy himself overlooked, unnoticed, or unknown, his case, as well as his person, become the immediate object of attention in

the view of Jesus. How doth the Lord wait to be gracious; and even before his people call, to answer. Isaiah 30:18. and 65:24.

RUTH 2:6-7

And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: (7) And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

There is a great beauty, in this relation, and yet more real religion. if the Reader will please to consult Leviticus 19:9, 10, he will discover the law of God concerning the poor gleaner. So that the servant of Boaz, if necessary, justified the permission he had given Ruth to glean in his master's field by this law. But is there not a spiritual illustration of this report of Benz's servant to his master concerning Ruth, yet far more interesting? Are not the stewards of God's mysteries supposed to encourage gleaners to traverse over the field of scripture, and attend to the ministry of the word? And are they not supposed to gain all possible information concerning the spiritual state and circumstances of their followers in the ministry, and then in prayer And praise to spread the whole before the Lord? Oh! how truly lovely is it to behold the faithful servant in Jesus' house, imitating his divine master; and when having in public ministered in the word, in private to know that he spreads all the wants of his people before the throne: *When Jesus had sent the multitudes away he went up into the mountain apart to pray.*

Matthew 14:23.

RUTH 2:8-9

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: *(9) Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.*

How sweet and precious are all the tokens of Jesus to his people! Doth he not, as in the case of Boaz to Ruth, speak personally to every one of them? Is it not Jesus himself that doth in reality speak when his word comes home with power to the heart? And is not this the longing desire of every truly awakened soul? *Let me hear thy voice, The companions hearken to thy voice; cause me to hear it.* Song 8:13. *My sheep (saith Jesus) hear my voice, and they know my voice. A stranger' will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.* John 10:3-5. But this is not all. Jesus bids the poor seeker not to glean in another field. No, blessed Lord! there is no other we need to glean in, nor any other in which the true bread of life can be found, *There is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Acts 4:12. But in Jesus there is all fulness, all-sufficiency. Bread for the hungry, and water for the thirsty. We may go therefore to the earthen vessels which the ministers hold the sacred treasure in, and *draw with joy from the wells of salvation.* Isaiah. 12:3.

RUTH 2:10

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I *am* a stranger?

How surprising are 'the first manifestations of the Lord Jesus to the heart of the sinner! While the poor creature, under the convictions of sin, is approaching with a mixture of great fear and little hope, to hear Jesus speaking in the ministry of his word, and by the sweet constraining tokens of his grace, to discover that his case is known, and that the Lord hath mercy *in* store for him. And still more, if possible, in the distinguishing grace which the soul feels, as shewn to a poor Genthe stranger. Oh! how very low will the soul lie in the dust of the earth, under the deepest self-abasement, crying out, *How is it, Lord, that thou hast manifested thyself unto me and not unto the world.* Reader! do you know any thing of these precious soul-transactions in your own case and circumstances? John 14:22.

RUTH 2:11-12

And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. (12) The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

Might I be permitted to paraphrase those gracious expressions with an eye to the rich mercies of Jesus, I humbly conceive that the language of our dearest Lord to a poor sinner seeking his face, might be supposed to breathe a tenderness like this. It hath fully been showed me, all the state and circumstances of those awakenings by my grace in thy soul I have long known and viewed the struggles you have encountered. The death you have experienced in your first husband, to whom you were wedded in a covenant of

works: and the workings of grace, in prompting you to leave and forget your own people, and your father's house, to cast yourself wholly on the sovereignty of my salvation, and to come to a people you knew not before, to be espoused to Christ; these are things with which I am fully acquainted. A full satisfaction shall be given thee, And thou shalt not be disappointed of thine hope. Oh! how inexpressibly sweet and precious is it to the mind of every poor seeking sinner, when Jesus thus speaks peace, and satisfies the desires of the soul! But how strange doth it seem to the heart, that in the moment when we fear that our case is overlooked, and that neither our person, nor our cries, attract the divine attention, Jesus gives us to understand, that every secret desire, every tear, every sigh of the soul, he hath been a witness to, and knows us better than we do ourselves. That of Nathaniel is a delightful instance in point: See John 1:48-49.

RUTH 2:13

Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

Such, Reader, will be the invariable consequence in the soul's view of grace. Never doth a soul lay lower before God than when the Lord is comforting that soul with the manifestation of himself. See Job 42:5, 6.

RUTH 2:14

And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched *corn*, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

The Lord Jesus delights that his table should be filled. He commands all seeking souls to come at mealtime to his ordinances. He hath made *a feast of fat things* in his holy mountain, and there the souls of his people may delight themselves in fatness. And how sweet is it to see, that while his people sit beside his ministers, Jesus himself reacheth to them their corn and meat in secret. *They have* (as he had when upon earth) *meat to eat that others* (even disciples) *know not*. And they not only eat and are full, but leave abundance for others, *Eat O friends*, (is the call of Jesus) *drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*. Song 5:1. Precious Redeemer, though thy people eat and are full, thy fulness is not diminished, neither is thy table ever empty.

RUTH 2:15-16

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: *(16)* And let fall also *some* of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.

There is a great beauty in this scripture, still viewing it spiritually. When a soul is risen up from the table or ordinance of Jesus, it is only to follow up one means of grace after another. Believers are continually gleaning, wherever they are, or however they are occupied. In the market or in the house, as well as in the temple, like *Enoch, they walk with God*. Reader! do *you* find this in *your* experience? But what a beautiful and endearing trait of character is it in our Jesus, that he commands his servants to let his people glean, even among the richest sheaves of grace; and from his abundant fulness, there shall he handfuls scattered every where, as if to surprise poor sinners with the abundant riches of his grace.

Grace shall exceed all things, even sin and our undeservings: for so saith the apostle — Where *sin abounded grace doth much more abound*. Romans 5:20.

RUTH 2:17

So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

So do all laborers in the vineyard remain in their employment until .the evening of their day; and when the even of life is come, *the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, call the laborers*. Blessed Jesus! grant, when the evening of my day is come, and thou commandest me to return, that I may be of that happy number, whom the voice from heaven pronounced to be blessed. See Revelation 14:13. It is evident how diligent Ruth had been, for an *ephah* is not less than between three and four pecks, forty *omens*: see Exodus 16:36.

RUTH 2:18

And she took *it* up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

Believers love to spread abroad the savor of Jesus' name; and, as the apostle speaks, *are ready to distribute, and willing to communicate*. 1 Timothy 6:18.

RUTH 2:19

And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day *is* Boaz.

The enquiry of Naomi, and the pious acknowledgment of the Lord's hand in Ruth's success for the day's labour, suggests to us a most useful examination, which believers in Jesus should always make at the close of the day. Where hath been my gleanings to day? In what part of the field of scripture have I wrought? Hath Jesus indeed taken knowledge of me, and hath my soul eyed him? Do I know his name so as to lean upon him, and put my whole trust in him? Psalm ix. 10.

RUTH 2:20

And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

How very sweet and interesting is this even as an history, considered in' the way of God's providence. There was but one man in Israel by right of inheritance, as the Goel-kinsman of the decayed house of Elimelech, that could repair their broken circumstances, and redeem their mortgaged land. And the Lord in his providence sends Ruth, who was altogether unconscious of all this, into the very path by which this blessing might be accomplished. But how infinitely more precious And interesting is the subject, when viewed spiritually, and in a way of grace. There is but one man under heaven which can repair our desolate ruined state of nature, by redemption of our long-forfeited inheritance, and he is indeed our next kinsman, for he hath married our nature for this very purpose. Precious Jesus! am I indeed conic, unconscious as I was at the time of my ruined state by nature, out of the country of *Moab*, a poor awakened Gentile, to glean in thy fields? Hast thou eyed me and took pity on me in my lost estate, *for thy mercy endureth forever?* Hast thou

commanded thy servants, the ministers of thy gospel, to suffer me to glean in thy fields of truth and to rebuke me not; and even to let fall handfuls of the bread of life on purpose for me? Have I indeed wrought under thy eye, and in thy *favour*, and found an *ephah*? Is this the man, even the Lord of the country, the God-man Christ Jesus; unto whose cornfields I am come? O blessed be Jesus JEHOVAH! who hath not left off his kindness to dead sinners, whom he hath quickened, nor to the living, whom when quickening he hath called!

RUTH 2:21

And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

Delightful thought! Jesus not only gives plentifully and suitably to his distressed relations, but he enjoins them to come again and again, and not to go to glean in the fields of another. *He that overcometh* (saith Jesus) *shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.* Rev. xxi. 7. We need not go elsewhere. We have all and abound. *Blessed* (saith the apostle) *be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* Our persons are accepted in Jesus, and all grace must flow in him and from him. Hence it is, perhaps, with this view, that Jehovah in a covenant relation is called *El-Shaddai*, that is, *God all-sufficient*. A sufficiency to live upon to all eternity. So that all blessedness is wrapped up in this one comprehensive mercy of our Jesus.

RUTH 2:22

And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, *It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.*

Believers in Jesus are sometimes called virgins, for their chaste and close adherence to him, as well as also for the singleness of their affection to his person, And the inviolable purity of their doctrine. See Song 1:3 Revelation 14:4. It is well, therefore, for all such to be found nowhere else hut in the society of true believers. 'That is a sweet direction to every enquiring soul, who 'wishes to know where Jesus feeds, And where his people are to be found. Song 1:7, 8.

RUTH 2:23

So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

It is one of the most important precepts of the gospel as well as the law, *cleave unto him* (that is, the Lord) *for he is thy life.* Deut. xiii.

4. And certain it is, that if Jesus be our chief joy he will have our chief company. We shall stand fast by him and his people, and not be found in the field of the world, nor seeking our comfort from carnal pursuits. From one harvest to another, and from one full moon to another, if the Lord be our portion the Lord will be our delight.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter. Are we not, hike Naomi and Ruth, returned out of the country of Moab, brought by divine' grace to seek sustenance in the land of Bethlehem? And have we not, hike them, a kinsman of our first parent, a mighty man of wealth indeed, whose name is Jesus? Yes, dearest Lord! let it be our hap to glean in thy fields, for all the world beside thee is but us a wilderness. All other sustenance is but as the husks which the swine do eat. And wilt thou not, dear Lord, though we are strangers, eye us when we seek to glean in thy pastures, and bid thy servants, the ministers of thy word, to drop suitable supply to our need? Conscious of our nothingness and poverty, we have reason indeed, like Ruth, to come with trembling and with apprehension. And should our Lord but graciously condescend to speak to his servants, Oh! what holy joy with it afford, that One so great, so glorious, should regard creatures such as we are. Surely the most becoming language of our hearts must be, like Ruth: *Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger.* Oh, Lord! let a poor Gentile, whom thou hast taken into thy church and family, find grace in thy sight: and let thine Holy Spirit give to me such strength, that I may never glean in other ground, nor seek comfort from other resources. No! blessed Jesus! there is enough in thee to live upon forever. Oh! may I abide in thee, and keep fast by the companions of my Lord's service. And let thine eyes be upon me from harvest to harvest, and from one end of the year even to the other end of the year, until the whole of thy dispensations concerning thy church on earth are ended: and then may it be my lot, with *all, the ransomed of Zion, to return with songs and*

everlasting joy upon our heads; then s/tall we obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow an4 sighing shall/lee away.

Chapter 3

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The history is prosecuted through this chapter, and of consequence in its progress and drawing nearer to a close, becomes more and more interesting. Naomi gives instructions to Ruth how to conduct herself in her deportment towards Boaz. According to the laws of Israel, Ruth had a claim upon Boaz to do the kinsman's part and marry her. Naomi directs her towards the attainment of this great end. This chapter relates also Ruth's obedience to Naomi's direction, and the noble behaviour of Boaz towards her.

RUTH 3:1-5

Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? (2) And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. (3) Wash thy self therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. (4) And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. (5) And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

If there were no other evidences in the whole history of the Book of Ruth, to lead to the conviction that the grand scope of it is of a spiritual signification; the circumstance here related, together with what follows in consequence thereof, would incline me to this opinion. To persons not conversant with Jewish customs, and especially if ignorant of the Jewish

laws, in reference to that grand point, the expectation of the Messiah, Naomi's advice to Ruth, and the deportment of Ruth in obedience to that advice, must appear highly reprehensible and indecent. But if the Reader, before he prosecutes this chapter any further, would pause, and consider what the Lord appointed Israel concerning the marriage of widows in relationship; neither the conduct of Naomi nor Ruth will be found indecorous or improper, but agreeable to the written law. Let the Reader first, therefore, be told, that with an eye to what God had promised concerning the redemption of our fallen nature, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*: every Jew, unconscious from what womb this child should be born, became extremely solicitous to have a numerous offspring: and the going childless was considered as one of the most awful punishments of heaven. *Write ye this man childless, (saith the Lord) a man that shall not prosper in the earth.* See Jeremiah 22:30. Hence the distress of Jephtha: Judges 11:34, 35. I would desire the Reader, when he hath made his own remarks on this part of the subject, to go on and consider yet further, how the Lord himself, as if to encourage this laudable desire of children among his people, with an eye to the Messiah, appointed certain laws to keep up the stock of families. Thus the precept ran, *If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.* And observe what follows: *And it shall be that the first-born which she beareth, shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.* See Deuteronomy 25:5-10. And if the Reader

will consult the whole passage, he will see that the object was considered so important, that the refusal subjected the man which objected to do the brother's part to an opprobrious name in Israel. I do not detain the Reader in this place, with adding the sweet spiritual truths which arise out of it, in reference to our blessed brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, these will meet us in their proper place, before we close our observations on this chapter. But what I am chiefly desirous of at this time, in opening the view of Ruth's conduct and Naomi's advice, is to remove from the mind of the Christian Reader every idea of indelicacy and improper behaviour in Naomi's counsel to Ruth. It is worthy remark, that this law was considered so universally binding and so sacredly attended to, that it was not lost sight of in the days of our blessed Lord. See Matthew 22:23, 24.

RUTH 3:6

And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.

After the former observations I have made concerning both Naomi and Ruth, I conceive it would be superfluous to add any further considerations, by way of justification of their conduct. Neither would I detain the Reader from attending to what is infinitely more important, in the view of the subject considered in a spiritual light. May we not then behold in Ruth, the representation of every poor sinner, brought as she was, from the ignorance of Gentilism into an acquaintance with the God of Israel, and seeking grace and favour with the Lord Jesus: and will not every one of this description, when under a sense of sin, and the ruined state of our poor fallen nature, desire to be united to Jesus, when we have learnt that

he is our Kinsman-Redeemer, and nearly allied to us, by reason of his taking upon him our flesh for the purposes of salvation'Psalms 9:10.

RUTH 3:7

And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

An ordinary Reader might be tempted to conceive unfavorably of Joaz from this account; but the expressions here used concerning Boaz, favour no such ideas. It should be recollected, that in the seasons of harvest in those warm countries, it was very common to sleep in booths and tents, to avoid the excessive heat. Boaz doing this in his corn chamber, corresponded to the same. And that he had committed no excess in his supper seems evident from what is said soon after, that he *blessed the Lord*. Indeed the expression, that his heart was merry, means no other than that his heart was *cheerful*. The Chaldee paraphrase translate it that his heart was *good*, meaning that he was cheerful in his own mind, and thankful to the Lord for the plenty of his harvest.

RUTH 3:8-9

And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. (9) And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman.

It is for the most part midnight in the soul, when first the Lord Jesus is revealed to the heart of a poor sinner. Here, as in the former instance, we have the most decided evidence, that the

subject is intended to be spiritual: for we find the Lord expressing his covenant love And redemption unto his people, under the very figure here made use of, when having described our lost estate, under the similitude of an infant cast out to perish from its birth, the Lord saith, *I spread my skirt over thee, and thou becamest mine.* Ezekiel 16:8.

RUTH 3:10-13

And he said, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter: *for* thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. (11) And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman. (12) And now it is true that I *am thy* near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. (13) Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

The generosity and greatness of mind in Boaz, to condescend to the situation of this poor creature, is not more to be admired in the history, than the obedience also which he thereby manifested to the law of God. Boaz knew that the law of God had made provision for such cases; and as such, he took no shelter under the disparity of circumstances, but declared himself ready to do the kinsman's part, if him that was nearer of kin, and therefore had a prior claim, refused to do it. And though, no doubt, the first and principal motive which operated upon the mind of Boaz in this concern, was obedience to the divine law, yet he very graciously remarked to Ruth, that her attachment to the family and house of Israel, in leaving all the relations of Moab, and the gods of the place, since her husband's death, were such evidences of her

virtue, that this weighed much upon his mind, and was well received by all the city of his people. These are very interesting points, simply considered as an history, and deserve to be noticed. But when the Reader hath paid all due attention to them on this account, I would call upon him to remark with me, those far more important points, which strike us in the passage, considered in their spiritual signification. When a poor cast-off sinner is brought by the Holy Ghost into an acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, hath beard of his grace, and lies down at his feet, desiring to be covered with the skirt of his mantle, the Son of God takes immediate notice of the poor creature, and as he knows all his state and circumstances, intimates for the poor creature's encouragement, that he is not a stranger either to his wants or desires; and promiseth, in the assurance of the covenant-engagements of his Father, that he will perform the Kinsman-Redeemer's part. Perhaps the nearer kinsman here alluded to, might mean the angels, which in one sense, considered in the scale of *creature* existence, might be said to be nearer. But of these there could be no help, for the Lord Jesus is introduced by the prophet, as saying, *I looked and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me.* Isaiah 63:5.

RUTH 3:14-15

And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. (15) Also he said, Bring the veil that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and she went into the city.

Following up this sweet history in a spiritual point of view, how beautiful And interesting every event in it appears. Awakened sinners will lie at the feet of Jesus until the morning, in which grace shines in upon their souls, and Jesus hath given them an assurance of his love. And yet how often in their rising up, though every thing tends to assure them that they have been with Jesus, do they seem, from the remains of doubt and! unbelief in their hearts, to come forth as in the dark, and before the twilight hath given the soul a glimpse of the Redeemer's presence? And doth not Jesus say to all his people in the personal manifestations of his love, Let it not be known what I have showed thee! At least, they cannot communicate to others, all the gracious things they have seen and known of Jesus. They have *bread to eat*, which others know not of: and *a stranger cannot intermeddle in their joy*. But, Oh! what a fulness of grace cloth Jesus in his visits dismiss the praying soul with! This is, indeed, strengthening the believer with strength in his soul: not only as much as they can carry, but sometimes their cups running over. But, Reader, do not overlook the expression, that as Boaz measured out to Ruth of his bounty; so Jesus imparts the graces of his Holy Spirit. Of him only can it be said, that *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*. John 3:34. But of all others even the highest and most plentifully supplied servants of Jesus, *unto every one is given. grace, according' to the measure of the gift of Christ*. Ephesians 4:7.

RUTH 3:16-18

And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. (17) And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. (18) Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter

will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

Still spiritualizing the history of Ruth, we may remark on these verses, how strikingly they set forth the assurance seeking souls ought to have, so that it is impossible any of the praying seed of Jacob should ever seek the face of God in vain. When a poor awakened sinner hath been with Jesus, sought his face, implored his favour, and determines by grace to hang on him and his great salvation, until the Lord shall answer in mercy: as to Israel at the sea, the direction is, *Stand still and see the salvation of God*. We may in every instance, and upon every occasion, consider that prayer as good as answered, which is asked in faith; founded in grace; and is resting upon covenant promises. And I do not know any passage in the whole bible more interesting, considered in reference to the person of *the* Lord Jesus, and his love and attention to his people, than this; in which Naomi saith: *the man will not rest until he have finished the thing this day*. A word which every true believer may use. The God-man Christ Jesus will not cease; doth not even now in glory remit one moment his priestly office, in the carrying on, and completing that redemption *in* his people, which on earth he finished *for* his people; when by righteousness he justified them, and by the one offering of himself once offered, he perfected forever them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14. Lord! help both Writer and Reader to believe *the record which God hath given of his Son!* 1 John 5:10-12. And there is one circumstance more in those precious words, considered as applicable to the person of the God-man Christ Jesus, which I could wish ever to keep in view myself, And which I would affectionately recommend to every hover of Jesus: namely, that the seeking

soul is not more earnest for a speedy issue in his treaty with Jesus, than the Lord Jesus himself is. Reader! it is equally true in the case of every humble follower of Jesus, as in the instance of Boaz and Ruth, and may be said with equal truth and confidence, the God-man will not rest, until he have finished the thing, in this day of salvation. And what a relief would such a thought bring in every dark and trying hour, if cherished with full faith and affection under the influence of the Holy Ghost in the heart, that the soul is not more desirous to win Christ, than Christ to reveal himself to that soul, and to form himself there the hope of glory.

Reflections

My soul! In the perusal of this chapter, I would say to thee, as Naomi did to Ruth, Shall I not seek rest for thee? And can there be any rest on this side the grave, but in Jesus? is he not the *rest wherewith the Lord will cause the weary to rest, and is he not the refreshing!* And as an encouragement to go to him, may I not say as sine did: *Is he not of my kindred? Hath he not married our nature: united it to himself, and become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh?* And can I go to one nearer and dearer than he? And doth he not hold a constant feast in his harvest seasons? And are they not in his church perpetual? Oh! for grace to anoint myself, and the sweet washings of the Holy Spirit, that I may go forth and lie low at his feet, and seek from the blessed condescensions of his love, that he may spread his skirt of righteousness, and his garment of salvation, over me, and betroth me to himself for ever, *in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-*

kindness, and in mercies: yea betroth me unto himself in faithfulness and that I may know the Lord

And, dearest Jesus! give me grace while I wait at thy feet, that I may lie passive until the morning. Oh! for the lively actings of faith to believe what my God hath promised, and that he will do the kinsman's part, for he hath said it. He is the Holy One of Israel, and all the saints of God have borne testimony to his faithfulness. Help me, Lord, to believe under every event: to trust and depend upon thee, how discouraging soever circumstances may seem. And do thou, blessed God, grant me such a degree of faith, that I may be enabled to make an application of thy general promises to my own particular circumstances: and if needful, hike the patriarch, *against hope to believe in hope:* and like him, to *be strong in faith, giving glory to my faithful God.*

And Holy Spirit, of all truth! as thou art the glorifier of Jesus, do thou by thy blessed influences, SO glorify the Lord Christ to my view, that I may behold in him the very Saviour my soul stands in need of, And in myself may I behold the very circumstances which renders Jesus so suitable a Saviour for me. Oh! for thy constraining grace, to fix my soul firm in this most unquestionable truth, that my desires for Jesus are not more earnest, when those longings are at the highest, than the desires of Jesus are for me. The God-man, my husband, brother, friend, will not rest, until he hath finished the thing he hath begun in righteousness. *He will save; he will rejoice over me with joy. He will rest in his love: he will rejoice over me with singing.* His name is Jesus: he is, he will be Jesus. *he will save his people from their sins.*

Chapter 4

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This Chapter concludes this eventful History of Boaz and Ruth: and a most interesting conclusion, even in this point of view only, it forms. But in the higher relation of a spiritual tendency, it comes home infinitely more strongly recommended and endeared. The relationship of Boaz, and his claims to Ruth in consequence thereof, the chapter opens with, and the marriage which follows, under the auspicious blessings of the people of Israel, are recorded. And, as if to direct the Reader to the consideration of a much more important subject veiled under the history, the sacred historian closes the book with the genealogy of Boaz, leading from Pharez (the son of Judah, Jacob's son) unto David, and consequently from David to Christ.

RUTH 4:1-2

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. (2) And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

It appears to have been the custom in Israel to settle all points of law at the gates of the city: perhaps, that all going by might attend if they pleased. It was therefore an open court. Hence the Psalmist describes the happiness of the man that had his quiver full of bows, in a plentiful progeny. And he saith, such shall not be ashamed, when *speaking with the enemies in the gate*. Psalms 127:5. To this spot Boaz came

attended by the elders, and called the other kinsman, which had a prior claim in the mortgaged inheritance of Elimelech's family. There is a great beauty in the expression, *Ho! such an one!* turn aside. The gospel call is, *Ho! every one.* But when the Holy Ghost makes that call personal, like the young man of the prophet's to Jehu, it is delightful indeed. See Isaiah 55:1. 2 Kings 9:5.

RUTH 4:3-6

And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which *was* our brother Elimelech's: (4) And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy *it* before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*: but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: for *there is* none to redeem *it* beside thee; and I *am* after thee. And he said, I will redeem *it*. (5) Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. (6) And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem *it*.

If I do not greatly err, the chief point in the whole history turns upon this hinge. And if so, it will serve to throw a light upon the subject all along intended from it, in introducing under this endearing part of his character, by the representation of Boaz, the Lord Jesus Christ as our kinsman-Redeemer. Behold it in this light, and we see Jesus assuming our nature for the purpose of redemption.

We view him going forth from everlasting, as the great covenant head of his people. And when he saw our ruined nature, and every one of the stock of Adam totally unable to redeem themselves, much less to save his brother, then

Jesus, moved with compassion; resolved to undertake their cause. Angels durst not venture on redemption-work, for this would have been to have marred their own inheritance; therefore his own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with him.

In the law of redemption there were several things included which became necessary for the complete recovery and happiness of our ruined nature, and which none but our (Goel) kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, could be competent to perform. He was, as Boaz proposed to the nearer kinsman to do, not only to redeem the mortgaged inheritance, but he was to marry the widow of the deceased kinsman, in order to raise up seed unto his brother. That our original birthright was lost is evident from our ruined and impoverished state. Our first father, deceived by Satan, sold his inheritance by tasting the forbidden fruit; and never could any of his own fallen seed have been found in circumstances sufficiently affluent to ransom it. But yet it must be recovered; and therefore the year of jubilee, which was typical of redemption by Christ, sent the insolvent home again to his possession. Jesus our brother, and Goel-Redeemer, then accomplished redemption. See Leviticus 25:23-28.

But the redemption of the mortgaged inheritance was connected also with the marrying the widow of the deceased brother, and to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And this the Son of God did, when in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law. Galatians 4:4. Hence, by virtue of this mystical union, a foundation is laid for the marriage of believers with him,

and that our nature, purified and made clean by this union, might recover its lost fruitfulness, without which it would have been for ever barren and dead before God.

Neither was, this all. Though it be not noticed in this book of Ruth, there were *two* other grand offices belonging to our Goel-Redeemer, which the law enjoined, and which none but Jesus could perform. The *one* was, to ransom the poor brother who had not only lost his inheritance, but was in bondage also. And the *other* was, to avenge the blood of his slain kinsman on the slayer. Concerning the *former*, the, law enjoined, *If a sojourner or stranger was rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger; after that he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brethren may redeem him.* Leviticus 25:47, 48.

Blessed Jesus! were we not sold in the loins of Adam, when the enemy sojourned in Paradise, and our unhappy parent sold himself and all his posterity? Were we not brought into bondage, slaves to sin and Satan, and justly exposed to the anger of the broken law of God! And didst not thou, dearest Redeemer, as our brother, redeem us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us? Galatians 3:13.

And concerning the *latter*: here again, blessed Jesus, we behold thee the avenger of the blood of thy slain kinsman; for when the devil, who was *a murderer from the beginning*, (John 8:44.) murdered our whole nature in Adam; and no avenger could be found equal to the vast work of taking vengeance on the manslayer, then didst thou, because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, thyself likewise take part of the same, that through death thou mightest

destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:14-15. And then was that sweet scripture literally fulfilled. Deuteronomy 19:11, 12. These are all sweet and interesting views of the Lord Jesus. And though I do not take upon me to say that all, or either of these things, are shadowed out in this scripture, yet I hope I may be forgiven for introducing them in this place, at the subject itself, without doing violence to it, seemed to lead that way.

RUTH 4:7-8

Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a testimony in Israel. (8) Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

This was an ancient custom, as we read, Deuteronomy 25:7-9. Spiritually considered, none but Jesus could undertake it. Had he declined it, and drawn off the shoe of offering to any other, what being in all creation could have been found to have put it on. Yes, precious Jesus! thou, and thou only couldst undertake it, without finally marring thine own inheritance: for *though thou wert rich, yet didst thou for our sakes become poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich*. And now, having accomplished redemption through thy blood, God our Father hath highly exalted thee, and given thee a name which is above every name, that *at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*. Philippians 2:9, 10.

RUTH 4:9-10

And Boaz said unto the elders, and *unto* all the people, Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. (10) Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye *are* witnesses this day.

There is a great deal of force in these expressions considered spiritually, and with an eye to Jesus. He hath purchased *all* that was Elimelech's; all that was our original inheritance in Adam. Angels are witnesses of the blessed conditions in the covenant. The same sons of God which shouted for joy at *creation*, sang glory to God in the view of *redemption*; and are to grace our Lord's return, we are told, when *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all that believe*. Oh! dearest condescending Jesus, hast thou indeed purchased all that belongs to us? Didst thou bear our sins, and carry our sorrows, and in all our affliction wast thou afflicted! Witness, ye angels of light, the unequalled love of our Jesus! Oh! for grace to love him who hath so loved us.

RUTH 4:11-12

And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephrath, and be famous in Bethlehem: (12) And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

It is easy to gather wherefore, in this blessing, the wives of the Patriarch Jacob are mentioned rather than those of Abraham or Isaac. Sarah had but Isaac in the covenant; and

Rebekah but a Jacob. Her other son Esau rejected the blessing. Whereas Rachel, and Leah, were mothers to several of the tribes of Israel. Pharez, who descended from Judah, was the progenitor of the Bethhemites.

RUTH 4:13

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

The sacred writer justly ascribes the fruit of the womb unto the great Author. So saith the Psalmist, Psalm 127:3

RUTH 4:14-15

And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. (15) And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy* life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

It was a very common thing in Israel, to offer pious salutations upon any auspicious events, and especially when the hand of the Lord was seen in them. That is a sweet instance, Luke 1:42, 45

RUTH 4:16-17

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. (17) And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The names in scripture are for the most part significant. It was the custom among God's people (and a very gracious one it was) for parents to name their children after some remarkable providence. Perhaps with this intent, that every time they looked upon their child, or heard him named, they

might have their memory refreshed in the recollection of that special mercy. Thus Hannah's Samuel was so called, because it was an answer to prayer. 1 Samuel 1:20. Places also have furnished our memorandums of God's mercies. Jacob's Bethel and Hagar's well, are eminent instances of the kind. Genesis 28:19. 16:14.

RUTH 4:18-22

Now these *are* the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, (19) And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, (20) And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, (21) And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, (22) And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

There can be no doubt (for it seems to carry with it a decided evidence), that as the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to chose the book of Ruth with this genealogy, tracing back the pedigree of Boaz from Pharez the son of Judah, and carrying it forward to David, very Plainly the intention is, to shew our Lord's descent after the flesh from him: for *our Lord sprang out of Judah*. And as the Holy Ghost in the opening of Matthew's gospel, hath yet further followed up this genealogy his gracious design is manifest therein. But with what pleasing acknowledgment and holy joy, ought we of the Genthe church, to behold the junction of the Genthe with our elder brother the Jew in this genealogy. Reader! is it mint a matter of heartfelt satisfaction, to trace our alliance with Jesus among the poor Gentiles of the earth, when we see that Boaz sprung out of Rahab, and Obed from Ruth; both aliens by nature, *from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise*. Surely! we may well exclaim, in the contemplation of such marvellous grace, *What hath God wrought*; See Matthew 1:1-5.

Reflections

AND now, my soul, before thou takest thy leave of this sweet book of God, pause over it, And review again, and again, the many, very precious things, contained in it, for thy edification, comfort, and delight.

I behold, O Lord, thy gracious providences strikingly exemplified, in this history. In a land of *Bethlehem* itself, the house of bread, thou turnest it into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. And when our poor fallen nature, as in the case of this certain man Elimelech, had heft thee, and wandered into the world of sin And transgression, by which death entered into the world, and ruin followed: it was thou, by thy preventing mercy going before, didst again visit the land in favor, and incline the hearts of the people, by thy grace, to return to the Lord, that he might have mercy upon them, and to our God, that he might abundantly pardon.

And do I not behold in the history of this poor Moabitish damsel, the astonishing proofs of thy grace? What but almighty, sovereign, free, And unmerited grace, could incline the heart of thy poor sinner, to leave her country, and the gods of Moab, to join herself unto the people of God in Israel? What but the sweet drawings of the Lord Jehovah could prompt her to leave her father, and all that sine had, to go forth like Abraham, into a land that she knew not. Holy Father! was not all this the effect of thine everlasting love wherewith thou lovest the objects of thy grace, as thou didst behold them, in thy dear. Son, before the foundation of the world! Blessed Jesus! was it not, because thou didst set thy

love upon Ruth before all worlds, and sine was the purchase of thy blood and righteousness, in the counsel of peace, from all eternity! Holy Spirit! didst thou not know her person, and was not thy gracious influences pledged to call her to thyself, and to reveal the Father's love, and the Redeemer's grace, to her heart, when in the economy of redemption, thou didst undertake to make sinners willing in the day of thy power. Oh! may my soul feel interested in the same precious discoveries of grace! And since I see in so striking an instance, that the Father hath given the heathen to his blessed Son for an inheritance, and that he might be the Father's salvation unto the ends of the earth; may this view of the call and conversion of Ruth, so often as I shall peruse this sacred history, comfort my soul, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, with the assurance, that God also *to the Gentiles hath granted repentance unto life*. And O Lord! grant that I may be the happy partaker of it.

But principally, and above all (if any thing upon earth can be more interesting) Lord, head us to see in Boaz, the man of Bethlehem, the God-man, Christ Jesus, pointed out, my Goel, my Kinsman-Redeemer, my husband, friend: performing the kinsman's part, redeeming our mortgaged inheritance, marrying our' nature, uniting believers to himself, rescuing our souls from everlasting bondage, and avenging the blood of our souls on the cursed enemy, who by his snares ruined us; Yes! dearest Jesus! thou art all this, and infinitely more. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. Thou givest us grace by thy Holy Spirit, to seek thy fields and ordinances, and enablest us when there to glean among the sheaves. Thou commandest thy servants, the ministers of the bread of

life, to let fall handfuls for our souls to gather. Thou spreadest thy skirt over us, and marriest us to thyself, and we become thine. Oh! for grace to abide by thee, and never, never to seek another field to glean in, nor by creature confidences to forget our enthe dependence upon thee. Be thou all in all to our souls: for in thee all fulness dwells, and all the Father's love and Spirit's grace come to our souls in and through thee. Thou art such a Saviour and Goel-Redeemer as our souls need; and are we not, blessed Jesus, sinners suited for the display of the riches of thy grace to be manifested upon? Here, therefore, may our souls fix, cleave unto thee, and abide in thee, for thou hast betrothed us to thyself, until, at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven, we are brought home to dwell with thee for ever, Amen.

THE FIRST BOOK OF *SAMUEL*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IT is not certain, that Samuel was the author of this book, which bears his name, though, probably, he might be the writer of that part of it which contains so much of his own life and ministry, which is prosecuted to the end of the twenty-fourth Chapter. But it is certain from this very cause, that neither the close of this first book of Samuel, nor the whole of the second book could be his. The general title therefore given to it in our Bibles, should seem to be the more proper: otherwise called *the first book of the Kings*. But, (as I have before remarked in the general observations, introductory to the perusal of either of the books of the sacred volume), it is not so material to us in the present hour, to be informed *who* the person was, the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to appoint as a scribe, for committing his truths to record; as to discover in the book itself, the blessed marks and well known characters, that it was written under his immediate inspiration. When the Reader is himself illuminated to know the SPIRIT'S testimony, and can plainly read that testimony in the sacred writings; these are the grand things to be attended to, and the *imprimatur* of the HOLY GHOST, which is to be looked for. And in these points, both the first and second books of Samuel, carry with them the fullest assurance.

In point of time, the history contained in the first book of Samuel, relates to the annals of the world about eleven hundred and fifty years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And the history itself comprizeth a period of about fourscore years.

I would earnestly beg the Reader to look diligently, as he passeth through the perusal of this book of GOD, for sketches and outlines of the blessed Jesus. And yet more earnestly, rather than lean to his own understanding, beg the enlightening grace of the HOLY GHOST to open to his view the several sweet tokens here given of the Redeemer. Depend upon it, here is a great deal contained in it, that hath peculiar reference to the LORD JESUS. GOD never left himself without witness, concerning the promised seed, in any one age or period of his Church. The apostle Peter in his sermon to the Jews, expressly assures us of Samuel's ministry concerning JESUS: *All the prophets (saith he) from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.* Acts 3:24. And when we find that memorable promise of JEHOVAH, delivered to Eli, and which is recorded in this book of Samuel, in which GOD pledged himself to raise up a faithful Priest that should build him a sure house, and walk before his Anointed for ever: (Chap. 2:35.) Surely there is enough in this blessed book of GOD, to convince us of the grand, and important things contained in it, to call up our most earnest attention, and to prompt the mind to be looking out for New Testament mercies, covered under an Old Testament dress.

Oh! thou, who hast given all scripture by inspiration, and hast directed it, and made it profitable, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; do thou blessed SPIRIT of all truth, direct both the Writer's and the Reader's mind into the truth, as it is in Jesus; that we may

know the things which are freely given unto us of God; that what is written, whether in the law of Moses, or in the Prophets, or in the Psalms, concerning JESUS, may be opened to our understandings, that we may understand the scriptures, which will make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

This Chapter opens with an account of Samuel's family; of his father Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, particularly. The distress of his mother, by reason of her being childless; the temptation of her adversary on this score: her earnest prayer to GOD; Eli the Priest taking notice of her fervor in prayers and mistaking for drunkenness, what he saw of her wrestling in prayer with God, reproves her; Hannah satisfies Eli, and obtains his good wishes, that the LORD might hear and answer her petition: Hannah is blessed of GOD, with a son, and Samuel is born; offerings are made in consequence thereof, to the LORD, in Shiloh. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

1 SAMUEL 1:1

(1) ¶ Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

Perhaps the pedigree of Samuel is here noticed, by way of manifesting the particular tribe of Israel, to which he belonged.

1 SAMUEL 1:2

(2) And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

The having more wives than one, never did, nor ever can produce happiness. That it was from the lustful affections of our fallen nature, and not of divine authority, is evident from what our LORD said upon it: *that from the beginning it was not so*. Matthew 19:8. And moreover, as marriage is a beautiful type of the mystical union between Christ and his Church, this sweet order is broken in upon by such means. See Ephesians 5:25–33.

1 SAMUEL 1:3

(3) And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there.

This is the first time, as far as I recollect, that we meet with this title of *the LORD of Hosts*, in the word of GOD, JEHOVAH SABBAOTH. It is a very precious one to GOD'S people, and the believer finds great comfort in it, when he calls to mind at any time, amidst the hosts of foes he hath to encounter, that his GOD in covenant, is the GOD of all the armies of heaven, and of all the inhabitants of the earth, and that he governeth them according to his will. Daniel 4:35. The tabernacle of the LORD was set up in Shiloh, and this explains the cause wherefore the pious Israelites went up yearly to Shiloh. Joshua 18:1.

1 SAMUEL 1:4-5

(4) And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

(5) But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

It is not very easy to form a clear opinion what those portions were, which Elkanah gave to his family upon those occasions. Probably it was a custom in the families of Israel, when in their yearly visits to the tabernacle, to testify their fellowship and communion with one another in this way by gifts, when assembling to enjoy communion with God.

But be those portions what they might, Hannah's was peculiarly marked, as being worthy, more distinguished, or better than the rest. Probably to testify that notwithstanding her barrenness, she was not the less lovely in her husband's eyes. Sweet thought, suggested to the Reader in this scripture! JESUS loves his church under all her weaknesses and barrenness. His love is the result of his own free grace, not her merit. And oh! what a worthy portion doth he give to his poor, empty, unprofitable, and barren followers! Dearest JESUS! he thou my portion, for thou alone art worthy. In thee, my soul will possess all things!

(4) And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

(5) But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

Observe how Satan takes occasion to harrass GOD's afflicted ones. How he doth misconstrue the LORD's dealings, and tempt poor exercised souls to fret, even though the affliction is of the LORD. That the LORD had shut up the womb of Hannah, should have been enough to have reconciled her to the dispensation. But Reader, where shall you and I look for an example of one, who when the LORD appoints a trial, can readily and cheerfully adopt this language, *I know O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* Psalm 119:75.

1 SAMUEL 1:7

(7) And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

It should seem that the exercises of poor Hannah's mind, were most severe when she went up to this annual feast. Yes. Whenever the HOLY GHOST more graciously calls forth the soul into devotion, then the enemy most powerfully besets the soul with his temptation, either by himself, or his agents. And as the enemy attacks most in those holy seasons, so do our own corruptions bestir themselves most at this time, from within. Paul groaned under this, when he said, *I find then a law that when I would do good evil is present with me.* Romans 7:8.

1 SAMUEL 1:8

(8) Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

I should be led to conceive, that the abstinence here spoken of concerning Hannah, did not refer to her daily, ordinary food; but the feast of the sacrifice. It was the custom in Israel, not to partake of the LORD'S feast, in certain seasons of mourning. See the case of Aaron: Leviticus 10:16–20. compared with Deuteronomy 26:14. And is not the christian's feast at the altar of commemoration of JESUS, to the same amount? As it is a feast *upon* a sacrifice in which the believer receives it, in token that he is accepted in the beloved, and hath found peace with GOD, in the blood of the cross; like the early church, every true partaker is supposed to celebrate the holy supper, as is recorded, from house to house, eating their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart. See Acts 2:46, 47. If we spiritualize the speech of Elkanah to Hannah, in this verse, and view the words as the language of JESUS to his church, how precious are they. Surely He is dearer than a

thousand: for he hath given us in himself, a name better than of sons and daughters. Isaiah 56:5.

1 SAMUEL 1:9

(9) ¶ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

It is more than probable, that Hannah moved by her husband's remonstrance, or what is yet more likely still, awakened by grace in the heart, from an higher authority than her husband, had been won over to partake of the feast of sacrifice. And as this sacrifice had wholly an eye to JESUS, perhaps his blessed SPIRIT awakened her to devotion. You may always mark it down as a most unquestionable truth, that whenever the LORD is about to visit, and bless any of his people, he pours out, sooner or later, a spirit of grace, to incline them to prayer.

1 SAMUEL 1:10

(10) And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

The HOLY GHOST hath been very particular, to mark the earnestness of Hannah's soul, in prayer. Reader! you will not overlook I hope, who it was that, being in an agony, prayed more earnestly. Oh! thou precious LAMB of GOD! how lovely art thou, in every renewed view! Luke 22:44.

1 SAMUEL 1:11

(11) And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

GOD is pleased, sometimes, that we should be particular in our askings. See Isaiah 45:11. John 16:24. The dedication of this man-child, which Hannah prayed for to GOD, as a Nazarite, perhaps was taken from Hannah's knowledge of the story of Samson. There was some similarity in the cases. Samson was a child of promise, and Samuel a child of prayer. See Judges 13.

1 SAMUEL 1:12-13

(12) And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. (13) Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

The great earnestness Hannah used in prayer, called forth the attention of Eli. No doubt it must have been very earnest. Her whole soul was convulsed and engaged in it. And her wrestling was like that of Jacob; *I will not let thee go except thou bless me*. See Genesis 32:26, compared with Hosea 12:3, 4.

1 SAMUEL 1:14

(14) And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

It, is worthy the Reader's remark, that when the HOLY GHOST was poured out with such a fulness of power, on the minds of the apostles, at the day of Pentecost; the lookers on, had the same thought as Eli, here had, that the apostles were full of new wine. Oh! for such an effusion of the blessed SPIRIT upon my soul, that my whole frame might feel this precious warmth, as one beyond himself. Acts 2:13.

1 SAMUEL 1:15-16

(15) And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. (16) Count not

thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

How evidently was the mind of Hannah under the gracious influence of the SPIRIT; and how meek an answer did grace enable her to make, to the unjust charge. Reader! Depend upon it, nothing can induce this, but the sweet teachings of GOD THE HOLY GHOST. If you or I at any time, are enabled to subdue our angry passions, or curb our unruly lusts, it is by the Spirit alone, that *we mortify the deeds of the body*. Romans 8:13

1 SAMUEL 1:17

(17) Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou has asked of him.

Observe, how her meek answer wrought upon the mind of Eli. *A soft answer turneth away wrath*. But in all this, as in every other instance, how doth the matchless example of Him, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, meet our observation in every direction. 1 Peter 2:23.

1 SAMUEL 1:18

(18) And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.

Reader! I do beg you to remark the blessed effects of prayer, on the mind of Hannah. After she had poured out her heart in prayer to GOD, she went her way, and her countenance was no more sad. Such should be the uniform conduct of GOD'S people. When I have committed my cause to Him, faith should act with firmness, in the assurance that believing I shall receive. Luke 11:9, 10.

1 SAMUEL 1:19

(19) ¶ And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

Doth not this pious family set an example to every traveller? You see they would not set out upon their journey until they had first asked a blessing on their journey. See Jacob's conduct on this occasion: Genesis 28:20, 21. The LORD's remembrance of Hannah, is a short, but expressive account of his mercy. The prophet Malachi uses a beautiful figure, when he calls it a book of remembrance. Malachi 3:16.

1 SAMUEL 1:20

(20) Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

I would have the Reader to notice in this verse, the expression, *when the time was come about*. There is a time to favor Zion. We are in haste for all we ask. But the LORD's time is the best time. The LORD waits this time to be gracious. If the Reader would mark this in his memorandums, it would be of great use to him, in waiting the LORD'S answers to prayer. Isaiah 30:18. Samuel signifies *asked*. So that Hannah called the child by this name, to remind both him, and her, that being thus given in answer to prayer, every motive of gratitude demanded his being dedicated to the service of the great Giver. Reader! if you and I were thus to name our blessings, which the LORD bestows upon us in answer to prayer, should we not have many that we might also properly call our *Samuels*?

1 SAMUEL 1:21-23

(21) *And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. (22) But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until*

the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. (23) And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

I only detain the Reader with one observation on these verses, which is just to remark, that while ungodly mothers may find reproof from Hannah's conduct, in that her absence from the house of GOD, in her nursery, was only for a season, in order that she might better rear this child for GOD's service for ever; whereas carnal parents stay away under pretence of family concerns, and neither go themselves nor send their little ones to his worship. Pious mothers may here learn how, when their detention at home is with an eye to the future glory of GOD, Hannah's example becomes their pattern. Paul's advice is worth regarding, in this instance particularly. 1 Timothy 5:14.

1 SAMUEL 1:24

(24) And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.

It is not certain at what age Samuel was first presented. The weaning here spoken of, doth not perhaps mean from the breast only: but as he was to be the LORD's servant, Hannah weaned him as much as possible from her over affections. Creature comforts should all be so weaned, by those who would find suitable room, for the great Creator's love.

1 SAMUEL 1:25

(25) And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

The offerings were costly. Here was the sin-offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offering, all presented. It was the custom in the Church of GOD, to make dedications with sacrifice. See Psalm 1:5.

1 SAMUEL 1:26-28

(26) And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. (27) For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: (28) Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

With what humbleness did Hannah remind Eli of the past, in order that she might praise the LORD yet more for the present. *Lending* her child to the LORD is a more suited term, than *giving*. For what have we to give, that are but tenants of a day? Reader! it is sweet to observe, that though all the gifts of our GOD to us, are but as things lent, and which the bountiful giver may recall again whenever he pleaseth; yet there is one precious, blessed Gift he cannot, he will not recall, and that is, his CHRIST. Every other gift we may lose. But GOD our FATHER gives us JESUS to have, and to hold for ever. Oh! precious, precious Gift! Precious, precious Giver! Some have thought that what is said here, in the close of the chapter, that *he worshipped the LORD there*; means, that the child Samuel is the person spoken of. No doubt a child so wonderfully distinguished, as his after life shows, might from his very earliest years, and under such godly parents, be taught to pray. O that parents would teach their little ones, with the first dawn, of apprehension, to lisp out the praises of JESUS! Is it not out of the mouth of babes, and sucklings the LORD ordaineth strength? Psalm 8:2.

REFLECTIONS

How sweetly the HOLY GHOST teacheth the Church in the history of all characters, the universal taint which marks our poor fallen nature! Elkanah, though a pious man, cannot be content without breaking the order of GOD, in a double marriage. And Hannah, though a partaker of grace, must have a child, or she is a woman of a sorrowful spirit. Oh! how fully doth GOD the SPIRIT teach us, by such views, the necessity of redemption by JESUS. Dearest Redeemer! we humbly feel our need of thee, and earnestly pray to be interested in thee. LORD! without thee, and thy righteousness, what are the best of men, but sin and corruption!

See Reader in this verse of Hannah's petition, the blessed effects of prayer! What cannot prayer accomplish! Prayer can shut up, and open again the windows of heaven. For *Elias* we are told, was a man of like passions with ourselves; and yet at his cry, so the LORD answered. *Hannah* was one also partaking of human infirmity. And yet the LORD proved himself a prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering GOD. Oh! for faith, to plead with GOD in JESUS'S name, nothing doubting, and our LORD JESUS hath said, that *all things we ask believing we shall receive*.

I detain the Reader with one observation more, in the dedication of Samuel to the LORD, to remark the sweetness, and graciousness of pious parents making a solemn surrender of their little ones to the LORD. To whom shall we commit them, but to Him from whom we have received them? May not every pious parent say; 'All cometh, LORD, from thine hand, all is thine own, and of thine own do I give thee'. But how is this subject heightened to the soul of the believer, in the recollection that such was the unequalled love of the FATHER to a lost world, that he gave his only begotten SON, to the end, that all that believe in him should not perish, but

have everlasting life: Oh! for ever blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

We have in this Chapter, the song of Hannah in her devout thanksgivings to the LORD, for her Samuel. She had dedicated the child to the LORD's service, and then closes the subject with praise. Besides this, the Chapter contains an account of the increase of Elkanah's family: of the sin of Eli's family; a man of GOD sent to reprove Eli: the threatened death of Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in one day: the gracious promise of GOD's raising up to himself, a faithful Priest, and the degraded state of the house of Eli.

1 SAMUEL 2:1

(1) ¶ And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

There is a great deal of the spirit of prophecy, as well as the spirit of prayer and praise, in this hymn of Hannah's, and therefore demands our attention the more. Though it is called a prayer, yet it contains subject also of information to the Church. The special mercy Hannah had received, gives occasion to her, to comfort the people of GOD in all ages with an assurance of the LORD's mercies to others. But principally I would call upon the Reader to observe, how much gospel is contained in it, and how evidently the HOLY GHOST must have been shedding his sweet influences upon the mind of Hannah, when speaking as she doth in this verse, of rejoicing in GOD's salvation. Is not this plainly referring to the LORD JESUS? Did

not the dying patriarch say the same? Genesis 49:18. And is not JESUS expressly called, JEHOVAH'S salvation? Isaiah 49:6.

1 SAMUEL 2:2

(2) *There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*

I pray the Reader not to overlook the great warmth of devotion, expressed in those words. The unspotted holiness of JEHOVAH, calls forth we are told, the unceasing adoration of the blessed. Hannah first celebrates this glorious perfection of our GOD, which plainly proves that one, and the same SPIRIT operated upon her mind, and their's. And here by the way, Reader, is a plan opened to your heart, to see whether the same SPIRIT operates upon you. The song of saints and angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, is of the holiness of JEHOVAH. None but redeemed souls can rejoice in it. Devils and spirits of darkness know that JEHOVAH is holy, but cannot love him for it. But his people rejoice in this glorious perfection, because in the holiness of their surety, the LORD JESUS, they see this holiness glorified, and their redemption eternally secured. I would have the Reader also consider, and then, as the blessed SPIRIT than instruct him, judge for himself, whether Hannah when calling JEHOVAH a Rock, did not evidently allude to JESUS, who in all the eventful journies of Israel, through the wilderness, was the Rock that followed them, and whom the Apostle decidedly declares to have been Christ. Compare Exodus 33:21, 22. Exodus 17:6: Numbers 20:8–11. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

1 SAMUEL 2:3

(3) *Talk no more so exceeding proudly: let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*

If the Reader looks closely to this, and the past verse, he will perceive, that Hannah is engaged to celebrate several of JEHOVAH'S divine perfections. First his holiness; next his Power; then his wisdom; and next his Justice. Reader! it is delightful to contemplate the astonishing perfections of GOD, as they are in himself. But it is doubly so, when we contemplate them, as all pledged in covenant engagements, ready upon every occasion, to be brought forward into exercise, for the blessing and security of his people.

1 SAMUEL 2:4-5

(4) The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. (5) *They that were* full have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

Some have thought, that Hannah is here triumphing over *Penninah*, who before insulted her. But I conceive, that Hannah's mind was soaring to an higher subject. It is the triumph of the Church of JESUS over all her adversaries, that she had in view. And here is large scope for the illustration of these precious truths. The vows of the carnal, in their own strength, are broken. The full in their own righteousness, are sent empty away. While on the contrary the LORD satisfieth the hungry with good things; and poor barren souls are satiated with the bread of life.

1 SAMUEL 2:6-8

(6) The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. (7) The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. (8) He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

These are all so many beautiful repetitions of the same important doctrine, in asserting GOD's sovereignty over all things, both in the kingdoms of providence, and of grace. And it is sweet when the heart finds a cordial assent, in all the circumstances of our own warfare. Reader! what can afford more solid joy, than the contemplation of the LORD JESUS, in the character which John saw him in, and which corresponds to what is here said: He hath the keys of hell and death. Revelation 1:18.

1 SAMUEL 2:9-10

(9) He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. (10) The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

These are very precious expressions, and all evidently referring to the mercies of the gospel. Here for the first time, we meet with the title of the LORD JESUS, as the Anointed of the FATHER: one of the most lovely, and distinguishing characters of the Redeemer; the Messiah, that is, the sent, the Sealed, the Anointed. Reader! it is the peculiar joy, and triumph of the followers of the LORD JESUS, that he is the CHRIST of GOD. And what a sweet thought is it, that our CHRIST is GOD'S CHRIST. Our chosen is GOD'S chosen. Our HOLY ONE, is GOD'S HOLY ONE. So that JEHOVAH, and the sinner here join issue, and meet together. Hannah certainly knew this, and under the full triumph of it, positively declares that the LORD will keep the feet of his saints. And if the feet, surely, the heart, the head. And well must they be kept, whom the LORD keeps. Oh! precious assurance, founded in a precious anointed Redeemer. But this is not all. While the LORD keeps his people, his, and their adversaries he will destroy. JESUS is our King, and all enemies shall he put under his feet. So that

here is assurance, that the same Anointed LORD, will save his people, and utterly consume his foes. So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD! was the close of Deborah's song, as it is here prophesied in the close of Hannah's song: while them that love him, shall be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might. Judges 5:31.

1 SAMUEL 2:11

(11) ¶ And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

While Elkanah returns to his home with his family, the child Samuel is left under the ministry of Eli. It is sweet and interesting to behold the early introduction of children into GOD's service. This was the commendation of Timothy, 2 Timothy 3:15.

1 SAMUEL 2:12

(12) Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

I beg the Reader not to overlook the expression, *they knew not the LORD*; that is, they knew not the LORD in a way of communion and fellowship. They knew him in the outward hearsay account of their Maker, but not in a way of grace. And what an awful account doth the LORD himself give of all such ministers, in the day of judgment? See Matthew 7:22, 23.

1 SAMUEL 2:13-17

(13) And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; (14) And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. (15) Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man

that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. (16) And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force. (17) Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

I include all these verses within one point of view, and a sad view they exhibit of the horrible state of the sons of Eli in their conduct before the LORD. Alas, alas! what a wretched mind must these young men have possessed, by which their sin was not only great before the LORD, but even the minds of the people were led away thereby to abhor the offering of the LORD. I would have the Reader observe, how the LORD speaks of such awful characters, Malachi 2:8, 9.

1 SAMUEL 2:18-19

(18) But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod. (19) Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

As *Rameh* was not above ten or eleven miles from *Shiloh*, probably more frequent communication took place between Samuel and his parents. The HOLY GHOST only takes occasion in this place to remark how Samuel was annually clothed from the attention of his mother. The linen ephod he wore was the distinction of the Levites.

1 SAMUEL 2:20-21

(20) And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. (21) And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

How much those gain, who give unto the LORD! Solomon's observation is well founded; *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD: and look what he hath given, he will pay him again.* Proverbs 19:17.

1 SAMUEL 2:22-24

(22) Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (23) And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. (24) Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress.

It doth not appear that Eli himself was concerned in this evil of his house. No doubt, he had educated his sons in the knowledge of the LORD. Perhaps he was too much relaxed in the discipline of his family; and his reproofs were not so sharp as they ought to have been. But Reader! do not fail to recollect, that grace is not hereditary. From what follows in the latter part of this chapter, it should seem that Eli did not enter into the full view of the enormity of his children's transgression. We do not hear of any prayers, or cries, he sent forth to GOD to reclaim them.

1 SAMUEL 2:25

(25) If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

What a sweet verse is this, abstracted from the family of Eli, and applied to the case of Christians in general. Who shall intreat for the sinner? I answer, JESUS; for so saith John, "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." Precious Redeemer! thou art both our Advocate and Propitiation; our Judge and Saviour. Thou art all we stand in

need of, for the transgressions of our nature. I John 2:1, 2. Observe, how sin hardens the heart, in the case of Eli's sons. The LORD had given them up to a judicial blindness. Oh! for grace to all poor sinners, to offer up continually that prayer of the Church, "From all blindness of heart, good LORD deliver us!"

1 SAMUEL 2:26

(26) And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

How the mind of the Reader is relieved again and again in this melancholy account of Eli's sons, in the relation that is given by the HOLY GHOST, of the progressive state of Samuel in the ways of the LORD. Reader! doth not this bring to your recollection what is said here of Samuel's LORD. See Luke 2:52.

1 SAMUEL 2:27

(27) ¶ And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

Observe with what a solemn introduction the man of GOD is here mentioned; and what a most awful message he brought. Probably the revelation here spoken of, of the LORD's appearance to his father's house, referred to the general deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt; or if any thing more personal or particular was alluded to, it might have been the LORD's appearance to Aaron, the great Father of the Levites. Exododus 4:27.

1 SAMUEL 2:28

(28) And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

Aaron was very eminently chosen and set apart to the priestly office; and hence became the object of envy. See Numbers 16:8-11.

1 SAMUEL 2:29

(29) Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

It should seem to be more than probable from hence, that though Eli did not himself commit the sin of profanation here charged upon his sons, yet he winked at it, and partook in the plunder. For otherwise he could not be said to have made himself fat with the chiefest offerings of the people. Be this, however, as it may, certain it is, from the severity of the reproof the man of GOD had in commission to deliver to Eli, the hoary priest was not so zealous as he ought to have been for the honor of GOD; but, instead of disgracing his children, and removing them from their office, he contented himself with merely making a mild expostulation. Alas! how doth nature and natural feelings blind the eye to the steady regard of GOD's glory and honor.

1 SAMUEL 2:30

(30) Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Certain it is, that in the first grant of the priesthood to Aaron the grant was conditional. And it is remarkable, that Eli was descended from Aaron's youngest son, *Ithamar*, and not *Eleazar* his eldest. But no notice is taken in the sacred history, how it had been transferred from the family of Eleazar to that

of Ithamar's family, as in the case of Eli it must have been done. But I conceive that an infinitely higher object the HOLY GHOST hath in view, in the expression contained in this verse, and that it is meant to convey the total abolition of the Levitical dispensation, by the introduction of the gospel in the LORD JESUS. He is indeed the great High Priest, who hath duly honored his FATHER'S righteous law, and as such, JEHOVAH is engaged to honor him. And all his sons are thereby made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. Sweetest JESUS! thou art a priest for ever, and of an everlasting priesthood. And thou makest the offerings of thy people precious, in thy salvation; for thou art both the priest, and the offering, and the altar, which sanctifieth the gift.

1 SAMUEL 2:31-33

(31) Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. (32) And thou shalt see an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which *God* shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. (33) And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

These are awful denunciations, and are accompanied both with an awful signs and commencement of the threatened visitation. To lose both sons in one day; and that Eli himself should be the witness of this visitation, is a proof that all the other threatened evils would in their season surely come. See chap. 4:17. And what a sad catalogue was to follow? None of the race of Eli should be long lived; there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever: that the family of Eli should see an enemy in GOD'S habitation: perhaps unhallowed men exercising the priestly office: those of Eli's family, which were permitted to live, should be but for a reproach; perhaps by living in a scandalous manner: and that so far from being in

the exercise of the priesthood, which had it been well conducted, would have been perpetuated in Eli's family, the lowest offices of the servants to the priests, should be eagerly sought after by his posterity to keep them from starving. Behold, Reader! the awful consequences of sin. See in the sad examples of Hophni and Phinehas, that when the kindest gifts of the people would not satisfy them; their posterity shall want a morsel of bread. See that awful scripture thus strikingly fulfilled, in visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. Exodus 20:5. Perhaps this visitation on Eli's family was, beside lesser instances, more strikingly shown in the days of Solomon, when *Abiathar*, who was among the descendants of Eli, was turned out of the Priest's office. 1 Kings 1:42, 49.

1 SAMUEL 2:34-35

(34) And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. (35) And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

Amidst all the dreadful denunciations, on the family, and posterity of Eli, what a precious scripture, what a precious promise, comes in here, to give comfort to the mind? I cannot think as some have thought, that this scripture had its accomplishment in the person of Zadok, and that the anointed, before whom this faithful Priest is said to walk, meant David king of Israel. Surely, Reader, none but the ever blessed JESUS could merit the title of faithful Priest. Neither could any be considered as the truly anointed of GOD, but He to whom the SPIRIT was given without measure, and who was indeed anointed to be, at one and the same time, the Prophet, the Priest, and the King, of his peopled. If any difficulty should seem to arise in the Reader's mind, how JESUS

could be this faithful Priest, and yet walk before himself, as it were, in his other character, as the anointed of JEHOVAH; this objection is at once done away, by only considering how impossible it would be to prefigure him who fills all offices, unless by such means. Hence Joseph, who in all the grand events of his going down into Egypt; being cast into prison, exalted at the right hand of Pharaoh, and made Governor over the whole land; in all these, and numberless other features of character, he most strongly typified the LORD JESUS: yet Judah, who as strikingly pointed to the LORD JESUS, in his sweet office of Intercessor, is, in that same history, represented as interceding with Joseph. We must never, therefore, stretch any part of the sacred word so far, as not to remember the impossibility of representing divine things, by human, otherwise than in part. No doubt, in all the holy volume, JESUS is the sum, and substance. To him every type refers; every sacrifice points: in him all the promises are completed: and every prophecy is explained, JESUS is the Alpha, and Omega, of all; or, as Paul speaks, CHRIST *is all, and in all*. Colossians 3:11.

1 SAMUEL 2:36

(36) And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

REFLECTIONS

READER! Stand still, and fully contemplate the character of Hannah, and observe, how the harp which was before hung on the willow, is now strung and sounded to the praise of JEHOVAH. See, how her note is changed. And the countenance which was before sad, is now lighted up in praise, and thanksgiving. And in remarking the blessed effects of grace, in this woman's experience; do not overlook the principal fea-

ture of it, in that her song of joy is not merely directed to praise GOD for his gift, but to praise the great Giver. She doth not dwell upon the loveliness of her Samuel, and celebrate, as a fond parent might be supposed to do, the features of his body, or the promising features of his mind. But her whole soul seems to be swallowed up in adoring the GOD and giver of her Samuel. Oh! how delightfully doth she hold forth the holiness, the faithfulness, the goodness and wisdom of a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering GOD: and how sweetly she triumphs in the assurance of having this GOD for her Rock, and as the horn of her salvation. Reader! do not overlook that this precious covenant GOD is the believer's GOD in JESUS, in all generations. He is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. And why should not you and I find the same confidence? Oh! for grace to adopt the same assurance of faith, and in the contemplation of all his rich mercies in JESUS, to cry out, with one of old, *For this GOD is our GOD, forever, and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.*

While the sad contrast to Hannah's song, in the awful example of Eli's family, should fill our minds with suitable reflections, and call forth prayer to be kept from all presumptuous transgressions; let us, from lamenting the wretched and corrupt state of all Levitical and Priestly ministrations, direct our thoughts, and call forth our warmest affections to JESUS, that faithful priest of GOD our FATHER, the Mediator of a better covenant, founded upon better promises. Yes! thou clear Redeemer, thou art indeed the faithful priest our GOD promised to raise up. Thou hast done all, according to what was in thine and our FATHER'S heart, and in his mind. And GOD our FATHER hath built thee a sure house forever. Oh! grant, thou great Melchisedeck, that we, whom thou past made kings and priests to GOD and thy FATHER, may walk before thee, the LORD'S anointed, forever. And give us to

rejoice that we have such an High Priest, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And while, as in the instance of *Eli*, we perceive that none among the sons of Aaron, whose race is mortal, and whose stock corrupt, can be exempt from sin: though the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

In this Chapter we have related to us the call of Samuel, in an extraordinary manifestation of the LORD to him by night in the temple. What the LORD said to him; his fear of communicating it to Eli: Eli's demand of Samuel to be informed of it: Samuel's faithful relation of it: Eli's solemn resignation in consequence thereof to GOD's will. Samuel in the close of the Chapter is said to be established in the Prophetical office.

1 SAMUEL 3:1

(1) ¶ And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

Reader! do not fail to remark, that while the sons of Eli were so worthless, this child, unconnected with Eli, attended diligently in his service. How often have we seen, and still see, in life, that while those who have all the advantages of a pious education, and pious examples, nevertheless neglect and despise the whole; others, without such advantages, come forward and improve. Oh! Reader! learn to value grace above all accomplishments. Rather, blessed JESUS, would I have thy favour in the lowest station, than without it to dwell

in the palace of the great. How precious must have been, in those days, the slightest tokens of GOD'S favour in his holy word. And ought not that blessed word of GOD to be very precious now? LORD! give me grace to esteem it more than my necessary food. May it be my study all the day. And may my eyes prevent the night watches that I may meditate therein. Psalm 119:97. 148.

1 SAMUEL 3:2-3

- (2) And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;
(3) And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

The smaller lamps, which were lighted for common use, no doubt like other common things, were extinguished when their ministry came no longer necessary. But the lamps before the altar were never suffered to go out. To intimate, no doubt, that neither the fire of JESUS'S sacrifice, nor the light of the HOLY GHOST'S grace, were ever to cease their efficacy. Leviticus 24:2.

1 SAMUEL 3:4

- (4) That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

It appears, that in this first call of GOD; Samuel was unconscious who it was that called: He knew not the voice. So is it frequently with the first manifestations of grace to the heart. When a sinner first hears the word of GOD, by the ministry of his servants, though the LORD'S power accompanies the word, and the poor creature discovers more in it than he ever did before; yet, still he is unacquainted with the cause of its being more interesting than before, and only fancies that it is the peculiarity of the word, or the very striking nature of the sermon which he had heard, or the

Providence with which he might be visited. His mind is arrested, but he doth not yet discover the cause.

1 SAMUEL 3:5

(5) And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

Under the first impressions of the call, Samuel concluded that it must have been Eli, and therefore ran to him. But, when the aged Priest told him that he did not call him, Samuel was easily reconciled, and returned to his slumber. And doth not the sinner do the same, under the first impressions of grace, very frequently? Elihu describes it; when he saith, *God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not.* Job 33:14.

1 SAMUEL 3:6-7

(6) And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. (7) Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

This last verse explains wherefore Samuel was unconscious who it was that called him: *he did not yet know the LORD.* But how very precious are the first views of GOD! How delightful, when the visions of GOD begin! Here might Samuel look back, in the after stages of life, when any circumstances of trial, or trouble should arise, and say, Did the LORD my GOD call me, when I was a child; did he reveal himself to me then, when I had no consciousness of the LORD, and will he leave me now? Is he not the same GOD still; and is not his mercy towards me the same? Reader! if there be similar circumstances in your life, will you not make, through grace, the same use of them?

1 SAMUEL 3:8

(8) And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

How gracious is the LORD, in repeating his calls. How numberless are the calls of his grace, in the experience of his people! Eli is taught before Samuel, that these repeated calls, must be from the LORD. So the ministers of GOD, are sometimes better enabled to explain, than the LORD's people themselves, how the LORD is dealing with them; and therefore, when at any time, souls are first brought under the awakenings of the SPIRIT, they would do well to consult some faithful minister, and communicate to him, what their minds feel.

1 SAMUEL 3:9-10

(9) Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. (10) And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

Samuel thus instructed, is now prepared to make answer, to the call of GOD, when that call should be renewed. I would have the Reader remark with me, *two* things in these verses. *One* is, that the LORD now calls Samuel by name twice, Samuel, Samuel. As if, after the first discoveries of his love, his manifestations are fuller, and larger. And the *other* is, that though Eli commanded Samuel to say, Speak LORD, for thy servant heareth; Samuel omitted the word LORD: perhaps, Samuel hesitated to call the Person speaking JEHOVAH, until he was more fully convinced that it was JEHOVAH. This glorious incommunicable Name of JEHOVAH, all the seed of Israel were taught from their youth, to be very cautious in the use of: and

never were allowed to use, but upon the most solemn occasions.

1 SAMUEL 3:11-14

(11) ¶ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. (12) In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. (13) For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. (14) And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

This information in its consequences, to young Samuel, was not so much what became interesting to him, as to the house of Eli. But yet, we consider what is said of Samuel's sons, in the after history of his life, who walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment; perhaps, the impression of this first vision to Samuel, was designed to leave a suitable effect upon his heart. See Chap. 8:3.

1 SAMUEL 3:15-18

(15) And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. (16) Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I. (17) And he said, What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. (18) And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

These verses are very interesting. Let us admire the modesty of Samuel, who, though the LORD had thus began to manifest his revelations, it did not prompt him to be lifted up above the ordinary office of a door-opener. No! Divine favors always

tend to induce humbleness of soul. Whenever the LORD exalts a soul, depend upon it, that soul, will be lower in the dust before GOD. See Abraham's conduct in this particular: Genesis 17:3. The pious resignation of Eli deserves also to be noticed. Though this tremendous judgment was thus pronounced upon him and his household, yet he bends before it. It is the LORD that hath said it, and that is enough. Eli hath nothing more to say. Perhaps Eli viewed it as a temporal judgment: and therefore, the more readily bowed down before it; hoping that it would act as a correction, according to that sweet promise: *if then their uncircumcised hearts he humbled, and they accept the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my Covenant.* Leviticus 26:41. See another similar example in the case of Aaron's sons, when the LORD consumed them. Aaron held his peace. See Leviticus 10:1-3.

1 SAMUEL 3:19

(19) ¶ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

While looking at Samuel, in his progress towards the prophetic office, I would desire the Reader, not to lose sight of a greater than Samuel, on whom the SPIRIT was to rest without measure. Of Him it is also said, that JESUS *increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with GOD and men.* Yes! the manhood of the LORD JESUS, was in all points, in the sinless state of his nature, such as ours: for it behoved him to be in all things, made like unto his brethren. Luke 2:52. Hebrews 2:17.

1 SAMUEL 3:20-21

(20) And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established *to be* a prophet of the LORD. (21) And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Successive revelations, follow the effectual calls of GOD's grace. JESUS hath promised his gracious manifestations, to his people; and the FATHER'S with him. Reader! it should be the very earnest enquiry of believing souls, to search for those precious tokens of divine love. John 14:23.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD pause over this delightful Chapter, which the HOLY GHOST hath graciously caused to be written for the edification of the Church; and in the call of Samuel desire to bless GOD for all the early manifestations, which the LORD hath been pleased to make to his people.

Who can venture to call in question the work of GOD, upon the heart of his people, when in the instance of a child like Samuel, we see that works so strikingly manifested, and at a time, when the rich partaker of this unspeakable grace, knew not the LORD, and was unconscious what grace meant. Let any Reader compare the striking dissimilarity, between the hoary Eli, and the young child Samuel: And then let him determine, (for to his own decision I leave it) what but grace, could have made all this difference.

If the Reader be among the youthful part of mankind, let him reflect upon the blessed manifestations here recorded, to have been made to Samuel. And are you not anxious, I would say, my youthful friend, to enjoy the same? Do you not feel the rising prayer, in the soul; LORD, *manifest thyself to me!* if not in a way so splendid, yet at least in a way so gracious, as to Samuel, that I may be a partaker also, of the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS!

And let not the most aged of my Readers close the book, and take leave of this Chapter, without first having dropped the

knee in *prayer*, or *praise*. In *prayer*; if so be, that no evidences of the renewed life be found in his own experience; that the same GOD, who called Samuel, would, though at the eleventh hour, call him; and in *praise*; if the LORD hath manifested himself, as in the case of Samuel, to his soul, otherwise than he doth to the word.

Blessed LORD! help my soul to praise thee, under the humble hope and assurance, that thou hast called me out of darkness into this marvellous light, and translated me from the power of Satan, into the kingdom of thy dear SON; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

This Chapter folds within its bosom heavy tidings for Israel in general, and Eli's house in particular. In a battle between the Philistines and Israel, the Israelites presumptuously, and without taking counsel of the LORD, bring the ark of GOD into the camp. The Philistines are again conquerors; they take the ark of GOD: the two sons of Eli, according to the LORD's declaration, are both slain. Tidings coming to Eli of those events, the old man falls from his seat, and dies; and his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, in the premature labor of child-bed, dies also. Such are the woeful contents of this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 4:1

(1) ¶ And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

By the word of Samuel coming to all Israel, is meant, no doubt, to show that the LORD had commissioned him, as his servant, that whether the people would hear, or whether they would forbear, they should know that there was a prophet of the LORD among them. Ezekiel 2:5.

1 SAMUEL 4:2

(2) And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

This spot of Ebenezer, where the Philistines pitched their army, was made memorable in the after battles of Israel. About twenty years after, here it was that Samuel set up the stone of help, and called it *Ebenezer*. And doth not our God now sometimes, and not unfrequently, make that very spot memorable where afflictions and soul-searching situations first begin? The heavy slaughter in this battle of the army of Israel, by the uncircumcised Philistines, loudly testified the LORD's displeasure at the sin of his people. The LORD had said, that if they despised his statutes, and abhorred his judgments, he would set his face against them, and they should be slain of their enemies; and here we see it, Leviticus 26:15. 17.

1 SAMUEL 4:3

(3) And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

What an awful character is man, void of the teachings of divine grace! Had Israel been humbled under the mighty hand of GOD, and had the elders of Israel, with prayer and supplication, consulted the ark of GOD, instead of

presumptuously bringing the ark out of the sacred spot where GOD had appointed it to be placed, all might have been well. But by this daring act, unauthorized of GOD, and as it should almost seem, in defiance, (from the expression, *wherefore hath the LORD smitten us?*) they evidently manifested that punishment, instead of humbling, had hardened their minds. Reader! if under divine visitations, instead of flying to JESUS, we take up with the mere profession of the religion of JESUS, and trust in the form of Godliness, void of the power of it; wherein do we differ from them?

1 SAMUEL 4:4

(4) So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

One might reasonably have thought that after the message of the man of GOD to Eli's house, no Israelite would any more have put confidence in the ministry of his two sons, much less expect a blessing from GOD, when such profane hands were employed in bringing up the ark of GOD. But *evil men, and seducers (saith an apostle) shall wax worse, and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* 2 Timothy 3:13. Reader! pause with me over this passage, to remark, that when GOD ceaseth to punish, depend upon it destruction is at hand. If Ephraim is let alone, it is because he is joined to his idols. Hosea 4:17. Reader! I charge it both upon your heart and my own, to keep in view with the most solemn remembrance, that in all our troubles and visitations, we look out for the hand that smites, and watch over the heart that is smitten, for improvement under it. Doth the affliction, be it what it may, make me more prayerful? Am I more humble? more submissive? is JESUS more precious? Put it down as a never failing maxim, that no affliction is truly sanctified, until these

effects are induced. Precious JESUS! do thou, in all our visitations, graciously make this the issue.

1 SAMUEL 4:5

(5) And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

How different this carnal joy from joy in the HOLY GHOST?

1 SAMUEL 4:6-9

(6) And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. (7) And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. (8) Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. (9) Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

The view here given of the enemies of GOD, may serve to teach us how exceedingly, even in carnal minds, the awful dread of danger is incorporated in their very nature. Reader! be assured of this one thing, ungodly men feel conviction at times of their being wrong, and are compelled to give their evidence of it, though they are not brought over to the interests of GOD and of CHRIST. Sweet thought of encouragement to the believer, in the midst of all the prosperity of sinners. See Asaph's conclusion on this point. Psalm 73:1-20.

1 SAMUEL 4:10-11

(10) ¶ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. (11) And the ark of

God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

The awful event of the captivity of the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts which dwelleth between the cherubim, furnisheth for solemn contemplation such an interesting subject as must not be hastily passed over. The Psalmist hath recorded this sad history in the after ages of the church, and assigned at the same time the causes of it. *Israel provoked GOD to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. Wherefore the LORD greatly abhorred Israel, and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies hand.* Psalm 78:58-64. This passage throws a light upon our present subject. No wonder the LORD forsook *Shiloh*, when the ark in Shiloh was profaned, and both priests and people had forsaken the LORD in Shiloh. No wonder that the LORD in the correction of his people should suffer the enemy to triumph so far, when his love could not triumph in the recovering of them. Is it not time when mercies cannot reclaim, that severities shall be used? Reader! let you and I pause over this history. Doth not the LORD speak in it and by it, to all his backsliding children in the language of his prophet: *Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel.* Jeremiah 7:12. But while we awfully attend to this dark side of the subject, let us not forget to view the bright side also. Though GOD did remove or cause to be removed, the ark which was a symbol of his divine presence, he did not remove himself which that ark represented. Though the church in that age or any other age of corruption like it, may lose the ordinances of JESUS; blessed be his holy name, his church cannot lose him. If Shiloh be without the ark, the church of the LORD of Shiloh shall never be without its LORD. *Lo! I am with you always, (saith our JESUS) even unto the end of the world.* This is a

refreshing thought to my soul, Reader, in the present moment of writing. GOD in mercy grant, if it be his holy will, that the golden candlestick of the gospel may never be taken out of its place. But if his wisdom hath so appointed, the candlestick is but a moveable in his house, the house itself like mount Zion standeth fast for ever. The church of our JESUS shall remain; where his name shall be known, and where his praise shall be sung, *as long as the sun and moon endureth, from one generation to another.* Psalm 72:5-17.

1 SAMUEL 4:12-18

(12) ¶ And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. (13) And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out. (14) And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. (15) Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. (16) And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? (17) And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. (18) And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

I bring all these verses into one and the same point of view, not only for shortness sake, but also from their connection, This messenger of evil tidings is marked by the HOLY GHOST as a Benjamite; for though all Israel were deeply involved in this ruin, yet the Benjamites which possessed Shiloh were, if possible, more so than any. For now they had lost the ark forever, after a possession of nearly 350 years. For though

the ark itself was indeed soon after brought back to Israel from the land of the Philistines, yet it never after rested in Shiloh. Zion now became the hallowed spot, in the tribe of Judah. No doubt in allusion to him, and as typical of him who was the sum and substance of the ark, and who was to spring out of Judah. So is this event celebrated in Psalm 78:67-69. The character of *Eli* in this account next claims our attention. What a sad close to a long life, after a period of nearly an hundred years, and forty in his government. Whether he died in the faith I do not venture to judge, as the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to be silent on this head concerning him. If he did *not* how doubly awful is the thought, that after ministering in holy things so long, he himself should be a cast away. One of the most solemn passages in GOD'S word, as it respects the ministers of the sanctuary, and enough to make the ears of every one of the sacred order that heareth it to tingle is, that sentence of the LORD JESUS: *Many (not a few) shall 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 mine done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* Matthew 7:22, 23. And if Eli did die in the faith, (which from the several circumstances of his greater anxiety for the safety of the ark, than the life of his children, one might charitably be led to hope he did), yet in what a trembling manner did he go out of life, and as a child put to bed in the dark. Oh precious JESUS! keep thy redeemed ones from darkening their prospects of thee, by leaning to creatures of any kind. Make us always to remember the rod is in the covenant. Let an eye be plucked out or a right arm cut off, if either would tend to rob thee of thy glory, and our souls of their comfort. Psalm 89:30-35.

1 SAMUEL 4:19-22

(19) ¶ And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. (20) And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*. (21) And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. (22) And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

The affliction of Eli's house did not end with Eli's death. His daughter-in-law *Phinehas's* wife, is added on this occasion to the list of the dead. I should hope from the relation given of this woman, though her name be not mentioned, that she was a partaker of grace. Her chief sorrow was the loss of the ark of God. This is evident from calling her child *I-chabod*, that is, the glory is departed. Surely had she not loved God's glory, the departure of it would not have been so sensibly felt, to have induced such eventful consequences.

REFLECTIONS

THOUGH I have incorporated several suitable thoughts as they seemed to arise from the several verses in the Chapter opening before me; yet I have not said all that might be said by way of devout reflections in the perusal of it, nor superseded the necessity of adding more. Various are the improvements this chapter affords, and under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching, many are the precious practical observations which ought to result from it.

Who is there that beholds the ark of GOD as the symbol and token of the divine presence, and of the covenant engagements of our GOD in the person of his dear Son, but while reading in this chapter the just judgments of GOD upon

his people in the loss of the ark, must feel deep concern for the transgressions of the people in all ages, and especially in the present day of infidelity, and the many crying abominations of the land. Did the LORD give up Israel of old for their sins into the hands of their enemies; and are his people Israel now more secure from his judgments? Was there just cause for this awful dispensation then, and is there no cause for a similar visitation now?

You that are the people of GOD! do you not feel yourselves deeply affected in the contemplation of the spiritual miseries that seem to be hanging over his church? Doth not our JESUS speak, as he did once to the church of *Ephesus*; *Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place*. Oh! should our eyes be brought to see the gospel taken from us: the sun going down upon our ordinances, and all our precious sabbaths and gospel feasts cut short: might we not, like the daughter-in-law of Eli, write, *I-chabod* upon all that would then remain, when the glory was departed.

Ye parents of tenderness, and masters of houses and families, mark in Eli's mistaken indulgence the dreadful consequence of honouring our sons or our households before GOD, and by a sinful compliance with the corrupt desires and irreligious dispositions of those about us, make shipwreck of the faith and of a good conscience. If we set not up religion in our houses; if we neglect both by precept and example to lead our little ones to the ark of GOD's presence in his house of prayer; if our servants or our children make themselves vile and we restrain them not? Oh! think of Eli, behold the melancholy close of his life, and be assured that GOD will not pass over the iniquities even of his people.

But chiefly, ye ministers of my GOD, be very jealous for his honour who hath so honoured you, as to appoint you for watchmen on the walls of Zion. *Cry aloud! spare not! lift up your voices like trumpets, and show the people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins.* Be very jealous for the ark of GOD's sake. And oh, thou dear Redeemer! do thou, for to thou alone the glorious work belongs, do thou ever dear, ever precious JESUS, continue to us thy presence, thy love, thy pardoning, renewing, reviving, quickening, strengthening, and confirming grace. We would say in the language of thine own most holy word, to the holy undivided Three which bear record in Heaven, *Arise, O LORD, into thy rest: thou and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout for joy.*

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

This chapter relates to us the history of the ark of GOD while in captivity. The Philistines for a short space rejoice over their spoil. But this joy is turned into sorrow. GOD visits the Philistines with plagues, till at length they are constrained to call a council in order to deliver them from what at the first they considered a great triumph.

1 SAMUEL 5:1-2

(1) ¶ And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. (2) When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

What the Philistines design was in bringing the ark into the house of their idolatrous GOD, is not so easy to determine. Whether it might be to give honor to Dagon, as they did in the case of their conquering Samson, or whether it might be

that they intended to unite the ark of GOD with Dagon as the joint object of adoration, it is impossible to say. Strange, that the human mind should have sunk so low by the fall, as ever to give into the idea of worshipping the dunghill deities of a man's own making. But the HOLY GHOST by his servant the apostle, gives us the satisfactory reason of it. Romans 1:22-25.

1 SAMUEL 5:3

(3) And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

Had the men of Ashdod only considered this as a supernatural work, instantly they must have seen in it the finger of GOD.

1 SAMUEL 5:4-5

(4) And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him. (5) Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

The repetition of this judgment, and with yet more decided marks of a supernatural power, ought to have arrested their minds. Alas! we see so far from this, that they now proceeded to the consecration of the very floor, because that Dagon had fallen upon it. Reader! we sadly overlook the gracious design of the HOLY GHOST, in causing these records to have been made and transmitted to us, if it doth not lead both you and me to the conviction of the universal condition of all men by the fall, in gross blindness and ignorance; and that it is the grace of GOD which makes all the difference between them and us. 1 Corinthians 4:7.

1 SAMUEL 5:6-7

(6) ¶ But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof. (7) And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

It is not very easy to say, what this disease which is called Emerods was. The Psalmist in referring to this history, saith, that the LORD smote his enemies in the hinder parts, and put them to a perpetual reproach. Psalm 78:66. But be the disease what it might, certain it is, that it was very heavy upon them, and that they considered it as a judgment on account of the ark.

1 SAMUEL 5:8-12

(8) They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*. (9) And it was *so*, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts. (10) Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people. (11) So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. (12) And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

Is it not strange that men's minds should be so far convinced by GOD's judgments, as to see GOD's hand in their afflictions: and yet should not be led further humbly to enquire the cause

and seek relief. Alas, Reader! the history of this disease of the mind in the blindness and ignorance induced by the fall, is not confined to the Philistines. Elihu tells us in the book of Job, that *by reason of the multitude of oppressions the oppressed are made to cry: but none saith, Where is God my Maker?* Groans and cries even to Heaven, shall go forth and go up, but not to the God of Heaven. Blindness still reigns and ever must reign, until GOD who commands the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in the heart. The world by wisdom knew not GOD. See Job 35:9. 2 Corinthians 4:6. 1 Corinthians 1:21.

REFLECTIONS

How very precious it is to observe, the attention which GOD hath over his own cause. Though Israel is sunk so low as to be supine and inattentive to the attempt of recovering the ark, yet GOD will be jealous of his own honor. Reader! do you not see a sweet instruction veiled under this? When the poor sinner bound in Satan's chain is fallen asleep, and is unconscious of his impending ruin; neither sends forth a cry for help; nor is aware that he needeth that help; then it is that the eye of JESUS is upon him, undertakes himself his cause, and goeth forth to his deliverance. Oh! blessed JESUS, how very precious is it to my soul to observe that thy grace, like the dew of Heaven, *waiteth not for men, neither tarrieth for the sons of men.*

And here also while poor dispirited sinners are thus taught that our GOD will maintain his own cause and deliver his people out of captivity; woe unto the oppressor, when our GOD ariseth to judgment! Secret punishments will be their lot in this life, and an open display of his anger in that which is to come. *The wrath of man shall praise him, the remainder of wrath will he restrain.*

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

As it was impossible not to take interest in whatever concerned the ark of GOD, the contents of this Chapter becomes very pleasing, in that it relates to us the conduct of the Philistines in sending away the ark of GOD. The great joy of the men of Bethshemesh in beholding the return of the ark. The presumption of the Bethshemites in looking into the ark, is punished by the LORD: they send to the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch the Ark. These are the contents of this Chapter.

1 SAMUEL 6:1

(1) ¶ And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

We ought to pause over this verse, and reflect on the state of Israel, deprived of the ark of the covenant of the LORD of Hosts, for no less a period than seven months. No doubt many a pious Israelite felt it, and lamented it in secret. And many of those who went up to Shiloh to worship GOD in public, openly deplored the vacancy in the tabernacle. Ah! how precious are our gospel mercies, in that we have not simply the outer tokens of GOD'S presence, but the spiritual manifestations of him whom the ark prefigured, always present, *wherever two or three are gathered together in his name*, Matthew 18:20.

1 SAMUEL 6:2

(2) And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

That which was a blessing to Israel became a snare to the Philistines, and the very ark which the LORD'S people longed to

posses again, the LORD's enemies longed to be freed from. So is the gospel, a savor of life unto some, and of death unto others. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.

1 SAMUEL 6:3-9

(3) And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you. (4) Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords. (5) Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. (6) Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? (7) Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them: (8) And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go. (9) And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us: it *was* a chance *that* happened to us.

There is somewhat very remarkable in this account. It is plain from what is here said, that the Philistines were well acquainted with Israel's history, in the Egyptian bondage and overthrow of Pharaoh. And it is as plain also that they had ideas, (and which they must have gathered from the law of Moses) of the doctrine of trespass-offerings. Alas! how many are there in the present hour, that possess an head knowledge of the glorious truths of the gospel, but who, like both the Egyptians and Philistines, remain for ever strangers

to the heartfelt influence of them. The experiment they made, by way of ascertaining the certainty that their affliction was from GOD, for taking and detaining the ark, was suited to the genius of the day, and hears an apt correspondence to carnal minds in all ages. But we must not confine such things to the mere carnal world of unbelievers only; GOD's people have been found to seek signs, by way of gaining conviction. Such for instance, as Abraham's servant, and Gideon the son of Joash. Genesis 24:12, &c. Judges 6:36, &c.

1 SAMUEL 6:10-12

(10) ¶ And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: (11) And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods. (12) And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.

Behold! when GOD works, how wonderful are his works. He ruleth over the minds of men. Here are GOD's enemies, and the enemies of his church and people, obliged to send home his ark *without money and without price*: nay, with gold and costly offerings of their own, to beg the acceptance of the very ark again, which seven months before they brought away in triumph, and no doubt concluded that Israel would give half their kingdom for its ransom. But this is not all. GOD ruleth over the instinct of beasts also. For here are the mulch kine going away from their young, unaccustomed to the yoke, without guide, or driver, or direction, and yet instinctively, as it were, travelling on with their burden to the distance of eight miles at least, neither once missing their way, nor seeking food: and though *lowing* as they went, by which they intimated their wish for their young, yet never once growing restive, or attempting to turn back to their own home, until

that they had accomplished the service to which they were yoked. What but GOD himself, could have caused such influence? Well might the Prophet exclaim: *This also cometh from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.* Isaiah 28:29.

1 SAMUEL 6:13

(13) And *they of Bethshemesh were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*.

Is there not a similarity here to that of the Jewish shepherds in the field of Bethlehem, to whom the first tidings were brought of the incarnation of our JESUS? Luke 2:8-14.

1 SAMUEL 6:14

(14) And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

Whether the overruling providence of GOD directed the ark to this spot out of respect to Joshua, whose name corresponds to JESUS, or whether it was because of this great stone typical also of JESUS, I do not presume to say; but from the promptness of the sacrifice instantly offered by the Bethshemites, and the joy beyond *the joy of harvest*, in leaving their reaping to engage in this holy service, it may serve to teach us how much pious men of Israel longed for the return of the ark. Oh! Reader! if you have ever known the preciousness of our JESUS; and if you have ever known the absence of your beloved; you will better conceive, than I can possibly express, what kind of joy of the soul that is, when after a long night of JESUS's absence, you have heard his voice, and beheld him again *leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills*, Song Of Solomon 2:8.

1 SAMUEL 6:15

(15) And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

Probably some Levites were in the neighbourhood, and were therefore instantly sent for, as it was their office to minister to the ark of the LORD. It is somewhat singular, that the over-ruling providence of GOD should have directed the ark to Bethshemesh. For though Bethshemesh, strictly speaking, was in the portion of Dan, yet was it belonging to Judah. And ever after this period the ark rested in Judah. This event is celebrated in the Song. The LORD refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high places, like the earth which he hath established for ever. Psalm 78:67-69.

1 SAMUEL 6:16-17

(16) And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day. (17) And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

Is the Reader astonished to see such over-ruling events of the GOD of Israel's power, so exactly corresponding to the Philistines proposal, verse the 9th, (in which they had said, they should know thereby, that it was Israel's GOD that had done them so great evils): and yet no greater or better conviction wrought upon their minds? Doth the Reader wonder at this? Alas! doth not every day's experience demonstrate the same in the world at large? Is not the world frequently overawed, and frequently compelled to confess,

from what is going on around them, that this hath God wrought: and yet how indisposed their minds are truly to honour him.

1 SAMUEL 6:18

(18) And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both of* fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.

This stone of memorial was made similar to others of GOD's people; Jacob's Bethel and Gideon's Oprah. But were not all these considered, yet more particularly in faith, with an eye to JESUS? that stone which GOD had laid in Zion. Isaiah 28:16.

1 SAMUEL 6:19

(19) ¶ And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.

In order to have a right apprehension of the sense of this verse, we must consider in the first place, the sin of the Bethshemites in looking into the ark. If the Reader will consult the scriptures of GOD upon this point, he will see that the ark was made as a token of a meeting place between JEHOVAH and his people. See Exodus 25:8, 9. That Aaron never was permitted to approach within the veil but once in a year, on the great day of atonement, and this not without blood: evidently teaching thereby the sanctity to be observed towards the ark. See Leviticus 16:2, 3, 4-13, &c. And we have authority from the apostle Paul to explain all this, in reference to the LORD JESUS CHRIST; the HOLY GHOST (he tells us) thus signifying: See Hebrews 9:1-13. From this view of the subject, we immediately learn in what the sin of the men of

Bethshemesh consisted; namely, presumptuously drawing nigh to GOD without an eye by faith to a Mediator. See the awfulness of such an approach, represented in another place. Exodus 19:16 to the end. Concerning the numbers stated in this verse, that GOD smote of the people, fifty thousand and threescore and ten men; if it be read, (and which without violence to the original it might be read), he smote of the fifty thousand of the people, threescore and ten men; then it will follow, that only seventy persons perished for this presumption of looking into the ark, out of the fifty thousand of the men of Bethshemesh. *Josephus* is of this opinion.

1 SAMUEL 6:20

(20) And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

If this question of the men of Bethshemesh be the humble enquiry of souls under divine visitation, the question is gracious indeed: and in a gospel sense it may be thus answered. None but souls who approach this Holy LORD GOD in the holiness and sin-cleansing blood of the Mediator. But in him and his all-sufficient righteousness, the poorest sinner hath boldness to enter within the vail by his blood. See Hebrews 10:19-22. But if the question was the language of displeasure, perhaps it was like that of David upon a similar occasion, in the instance of Uzzah. 2 Samuel 6:6-9.

1 SAMUEL 6:21

(21) And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

Kirjath-jearim means the city of woods: and it belonged to Judah. It was one of the cities of the Gibeonites originally, see Joshua 9:17. Alas! for the men of Bethshemesh, had they known the preciousness of the presence of him whom the ark

represented, how reluctantly would they have parted with the ark. We meet with a yet more striking instance of ignorance and blindness in the *Gergesenes* in the days of our LORD, who having given such a decided demonstration of his power and GODHEAD in the dispossessing of devils, the whole city besought him to depart out of their coasts. Matthew 8:34. Precious JESUS! how sweet the thought! that neither my ingratitude for all thy mercies, nor all my neglect of thee, which seemed to wish thy departure from me, hath provoked thee to leave me. No, dear LORD! thou wilt never leave me nor forsake me.

REFLECTIONS

THINK my soul, how awful the state of Israel was during the seven months GOD was pleased to punish them for their transgressions, in depriving them of the ark. Truly awful indeed, is the condition of all men who live without GOD, and without CHRIST in the world. But chiefly ye people of GOD, whose backslidings make barren your ordinances and leave them but as the mere shell and carcase of religion. Let such determine what it is to visit ordinances, and find not the GOD of ordinances. To have the *form*, but not the power of godliness. Oh! for the unceasing presence of GOD in CHRIST, in the assemblies of his people.

But behold my soul in what is here represented of the bringing back the ark, how the LORD works when as he saith himself, *I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies*. It is all of divine grace. Not our merit, not our exertions, not our prayers, not our labours; but thy right hand and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, O LORD, are the sole cause for which thou savest and redeemest thy people, for thy name's sake.

Precious JESUS! thou everlasting ark of thy church and people, thou art eternally fixed in Zion. And oh! how divinely reared for the security of my soul. Never, like the men of *Beth-shemesh*, would I presumptuously look into the secret things which belong unto the LORD our GOD. But with an eye unto thee and all thy suitableness, and all-sufficiency for the sinner's security, would I come unto thee in the way appointed. Surely, blessed JESUS, thou art thyself the very throne of grace, the very ark and mercy-seat, from whence all tokens of salvation come, and in whom JEHOVAH is accessible to all the humble requests of my soul. In thy blood and righteousness I find the removal of guilt, and the confidence of justification. In thy dear person I have all I need, both for security and comfort. Thou art my dwelling place whereunto I may always resort. LORD JESUS! cause me never to lose sight of thee in all my approaches. *In thy name would I rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make my boast; for thou art both the ark and the glory of our strength, and in thy favor our horn shall be exalted.*

CHAPTER 7

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The events recorded in this Chapter are much more pleasing than what hath been said of Israel a long time before. Here is an account of the men of Kirjath-jearim fetching the ark and placing it in an house. The Israelites are represented as mourning after the LORD. The history of Samuel is renewed, his government, and victory over the Philistines. He set up the stone of help between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it Ebenezer in token of GOD's help and his blessing again of Israel.

1 SAMUEL 7:1

(1) ¶ And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

This verse leads us to remark the different conduct of the men of *Kirjath-jearim*, to that of the men of *Beth-shemesh*. JESUS is a sweet savor to his people, and a precious chief corner-stone to them that believe. But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient. 1 Peter 2:6-8. Reader! may it be your happiness and mine, as Eleazar the son of Abinadab received the ark into his house, to receive JESUS whom the ark typified, into our hearts, and that He may be formed there, *the hope of glory*.

1 SAMUEL 7:2

(2) And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

It is difficult to explain this verse, or to account for what we read in it. Was it possible for Israel to remain so long satisfied with the want of the ark, that it should continue in the private house of Eleazar without altar and without sacrifice? Where was Samuel all this while, and how could his gracious soul brook all this. I beg the Reader however not to overlook what is said from this long absence of the ark; all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. No doubt the LORD poured out of his HOLY SPIRIT upon Israel, and then Israel felt the sweet influences of grace. As it is said that *all* Israel lamented after the LORD, some have thought that the blessed effects from this outpouring of the SPIRIT, was not unsimilar, though not in an open display of it, to that of Pentecost. Reader! it is a precious token of GOD'S favour for good, when after the want

of ordinances, the SPIRIT of grace is given to lead sinners to lament after them.

1 SAMUEL 7:3

(3) ¶ And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

The Reader must rejoice in the introduction of Samuel again in this place, as from his appearance there is great reason to hope good. Probably, though Samuel had continued his ministry, yet it was so little regarded, that we find from his now persuading them yet more earnestly than ever to put away their idols, they had set up the general practice of idolatry in the land. Alas! what is the history of faithful ministers when their ministry falls to the ground, in the unfaithfulness of the people.

1 SAMUEL 7:4

(4) Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

Baalim is plural, meaning several GOD'S. Ashtaroth is singular and feminine, and therefore means but one, and that a she goddess. Is this Israel the beloved people of GOD who are thus led away to these filthy and dumb idols?

1 SAMUEL 7:5-6

(5) And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. (6) And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account, because here we see Samuel as the type of JESUS in his mediatorial character as the intercessor. Oh! how sweet and refreshing it is to view even the most distant shadows of him whose glorious office as the advocate and intercessor, is the sure hope and confidence of his people in all ages! Psalm 110:4. The ceremony of pouring out water before the LORD, probably carried with it the idea of real sorrow and weeping of the soul by reason of transgression.

1 SAMUEL 7:7-9

(7) ¶ And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines. (8) And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. (9) And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it for* a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

It should seem from this relation, that while Israel was unarmed and engaged in their devout services, the Philistines came upon them; and that Samuel in consequence thereof, was determined to trust to sacrifice and prayer more than to the sword. He engaged the LORD of hosts on his side, and the LORD as in several instances before fought for Israel, while Israel held their peace. But Reader! do not fail to remark how the prophet did it. By sacrifice and prayer! was not this with an eye to JESUS? Was not the sucking lamb typical of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world? And was not the unceasing prayer of Samuel a representation of his eternal priesthood, who ever liveth to make intercession for sinners? Precious JESUS! how satisfying the thought, how refreshing the consideration, that every sacrifice, every offering under the law, and all the prayers of thy servants, derive their

efficacy wholly from thy one all-sufficient sacrifice, by which thou hast *for ever perfected them that are sanctified*: and by thy all prevailing mediation, by which alone all our persons and all our prayers find acceptance in the beloved!

1 SAMUEL 7:10-11

(10) And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. (11) And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Bethcar.

There is a sweet promise of our covenant GOD, and here, as in a thousand other instances, it was instantly fulfilled. *Before my people call* (saith God) *I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.* Isaiah 65:24.

1 SAMUEL 7:12

(12) Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

This spot between *Mizpeh* and *Shen*, was rendered the more memorable because this was the very spot where 20 years before the Philistines had defeated Israel. See chap. 4:1, 2. Reader! how many *Ebenezers* have you and I erected of deliverances and mercies? Alas! if we cannot point to very, very many, it is not because our gracious GOD hath afforded no remarkable occasions for them; but because they have passed by unnoticed and disregarded from our ungrateful and unworthy minds. *How much owest thou unto my LORD?* is a question, I would pray for grace to put to my soul in the close of every day and night.

1 SAMUEL 7:13

(13) ¶ So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

The ministry of Samuel was so much blessed, that the Philistines dared not invade Israel all his days. We learn that the passover was observed during the government of Samuel, though the ark was not with them. See 2 Chronicles 35:18.

1 SAMUEL 7:14

(14) And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Whether *Ekron* and *Gath* were included in this recovery of the lands to Israel, is not said; but it may serve to show us the influence and power of Israel at this time, for even the Amorites dared not disturb the peace of Israel; *When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* Proverbs 16:7.

1 SAMUEL 7:15-17

(15) And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. (16) And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. (17) And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

This account of Samuel's administration is but short, but it is highly honorable. His annual circuit for the looking into things himself, shows his great vigilance; and the altar he built unto the LORD, proves his gracious intercourse with Heaven. No doubt, as Samuel was a child of prayer, his manhood was eminently distinguished by a life of prayer, and that his great influence and authority arose from the intimate communion and fellowship he had with GOD. The HOLY GHOST hath ranked

him among the worthies of faith, and given us thereby authority to say, that it was *through faith that he subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises.* Hebrews 11:32, 33.

REFLECTIONS

REMARK, my soul, in the perusal of this Chapter, the first renewings of grace in the blessed fruits and effects of it; all hearts, like those of Israel, then will go forth in lamentations after the LORD. There will be no real enquiries, no heart-searching sorrow, though ordinances may be restrained, and even the ark of the divine presence be away, even to twenty years continuance, as in Israel, until the LORD pours out the renewings of his SPIRIT. But when this precious gift is dispensed, then the soul looks unto him whom it hath pierced, and will mourn. Oh! most holy FATHER! of thine infinite mercy bestow this blessing, this covenant promise on my soul: lead me by thy gracious influence unto the precious JESUS, that the goings forth of my desires may be unceasingly after him and to him, who is indeed the ark and the mercy-seat, the offering and propitiation for sin.

In beholding Samuel as praying for the people, offering the stinking-Lamb, and crying for Israel, unto the LORD, I would pass over the servant, to view in him the shadow of his master; and would behold in him the typical representation of thee, thou blessed JESUS, for thou art the sum and substance of all the shadows of thy ministering servants. They offered all by faith, and had an eye in all their offerings to thee, who art, in all the ages of thy church, both the sacrifice and High Priest, the golden altar and the ark, on which all offerings are made. However veiled in covering under the darker dispensation of those ages before thy coming, yet so much of gospel every rite contained, that the holy men of old could,

and did, see enough in those sacrifices made under the law, to behold by faith thy person and righteousness, with all the glorious circumstances of redemption secretly and mysteriously included. Yes! dearest JESUS! in all ages thy faithful ones knew thee, loved thee, lived to thee, were strong in thee, and in the power of thy might! Be thou to me, therefore, holy Saviour, all and in all, in every word of thy sacred scripture. Oh! give me to see and unceasingly to live in the same blessed privileges. In thy dear person, righteousness, love, grace, and power, may I know myself to be eternally secure: so that no Philistines may any more come into the coasts of thine Israel. Like Samuel, on JESUS the rock of ages, would I build an altar of earth to JEHOVAH, *In* him would I offer all my offerings. *Through* him would I make all my poor presentations. *From* him and his all-perfect sacrifice would I seek acceptance; and *to* him, with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, would I ascribe all the praise.

CHAPTER 8

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This Chapter contains rather the dark side of Israel from the former. Samuel growing old, and his sons not closely copying after the example of their father, discontent broke out among the people. They ask for a king in imitation of the nations around them. The thing displeaseth the LORD. Samuel remonstrates with the people. They are obstinate. Samuel promiseth their request shall be complied with. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

1 SAMUEL 8:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

It should seem from calculation, that Samuel could not at this time be above sixty years of age. But it is probable he had worn fast, and brought on premature old age in the service and zeal of GOD's government. It forms a sweet reflection in the close of life, if when strength is consumed, that *that* strength has not been spent in the service of sin. But here, Reader, as in every other instance so in this, what a lovely view doth our JESUS afford, whose day of life ended at a little more than thirty-three! *I must work* (said that lovely one) *the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.* John 9:4.

1 SAMUEL 8:2-3

(2) Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were* judges in Beersheba. (3) And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

Behold, Reader, in these instances, that grace is not hereditary. The most pious of men cannot convey the least portion of the HOLY GHOST to their children. Oh! thou dear Redeemer! how hast thou hereby taught us the infinite importance of an union with thee! Holy FATHER! remember thy promise to our JESUS, and be it according to thy words: *pour thy SPIRIT. upon his seed, and thy blessing upon his offspring.* Isaiah 44:3.

1 SAMUEL 8:4-5

(4) ¶ Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, (5) And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

If my views of this scripture be right and just the request of the elders of Israel for a king did not arise from the age of Samuel, or the unworthiness of his sons; for in this case, they

would humbly have prayed that Samuel would dismiss his sons and appoint other Judges. But desiring a king was a wicked encroachment upon the sovereignty of the LORD. God was their king: Samuel and his sons were only deputies.

1 SAMUEL 8:6

(6) But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

I beg the Reader to remark with me, the resource of Samuel in prayer. Here, Reader, let you and I lodge all our concerns, A throne of grace is always open to us, and JESUS ever liveth to make intercession. Where should distressed souls go with their complaints but there? Hebrews 4:14-16.

1 SAMUEL 8:7-9

(7) And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. (8) According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. (9) Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

Those verses throw a great light on the scripture-history concerning Saul. The reign of Saul between the government of Samuel and David: plainly shows that what the LORD said by the prophet *Hosea* concerning this man, was in judgment: *I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.* And this was added to the LORD's declaration, in which he had said, *I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities?* Hosea 13:10, 11.

1 SAMUEL 8:10-18

(10) And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. (11) And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots. (12) And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. (13) And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers. (14) And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even* the best *of them*, and give *them* to his servants. (15) And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. (16) And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. (17) He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. (18) And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

Reader! may not you and I spiritualize this passage? What are all our lusts and corruptions arising from the body of sin and death we carry about with us, but like the galling authority which is here described? I know not what your feelings are: but I know in my own, that these corrupt passions of my unrenewed part, (for such is the body after all the work of grace upon the soul) are continually dragging down the soul, and like the chariots and horsemen here spoken of made me cry out continually, as holy Paul did being burthened. Romans 7:24.

1 SAMUEL 8:19-20

(19) Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; (20) That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

That this spirit of rebellion was not against Samuel and his sons, but (as I said before) against GOD, is here somewhat

more plain. For they speak of their king fighting their battles. Had not GOD fought their battles all the way along from Egypt to Canaan? Nay, in the preceding chapter is it not related, that the LORD thundered from heaven upon their enemies? Chap. 7:10, 11. Besides, GOD had promised them a king in his own time and way, and one whom he should choose. And no doubt David was that one, and therefore in allusion to this, is called *the man after GOD's own heart*; that is, as the shepherd and king of his people. But both GOD's choice and GOD's time are to be waited for, See Deuteronomy 17:14, 15.

1 SAMUEL 8:21-22

(21) And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. (22) And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

I beg the Reader to remark with me this striking feature in the character of Samuel; his constant intercourse and communion with GOD. Samuel was a *child* of prayer; for his mother called him Samnel, being *asked of* GOD what the word Samuel signifies; but Samuel was a *man* of prayer also. And why should not you and I? Did Enoch; did holy men of old walk with GOD? Had they clearer views of GOD the FATHER than we have now? Did they know more of the gracious way to the throne than we? Oh! thou dearest JESUS! did thy servants of old know thee more by faith, before that thou hadst finished redemption-work, than thy people know thee now? Be pleased, dearest LORD, to quicken our souls to the more earnest, to the more frequent, drawing nigh to thee: and let these holy men of old shame our cold hearts, if thy love cannot warm them, to blush, that patriarchs and prophets should so far exceed thy disciples now, when we know that we have a throne of grace always open: a FATHER of

mercies and of great consolation always to fly to, and one to trust in, whom the FATHER heareth alway, and who is the propitiation of his people!

REFLECTIONS

AMIDST the growing age and infirmities of all GOD'S faithful servants, though we see Samuel and all the holy men and prophets going the way of all flesh, what a sweet and soul-reviving thought is it, that our JESUS liveth for ever! Yes! thou precious Holy One of Israel, thou ever livest; and because thou livest, we shall live also. Triumph my soul in this well-founded confidence!

And here, LORD, let me learn, from the rebellion of Israel in desiring a king, when thou thyself wast the gracious king of thy people, let me learn how prone the heart, even of thy people, is to rebel against thee. Oh! ye wretched, misguided, unhappy sons of men, who by deeds, if not by words, are continually saying: *We will not have this man to reign over us.* Think, I charge you, ere it be too late, whether he hath not a right to govern, who, as one with the FATHER IS GOD; and as Mediator, hath all power in heaven and in earth. Is not every creature his, both by creation and redemption? And shall not every knee *bend before him, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER!* Oh! kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way. Acknowledge him now for your lawful king and sovereign, before he comes in the clouds as your just Judge. *If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

As for my soul, let angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, let all heaven and earth bear witness for me, that I desire no other king, neither will I know any other but he that

is a Priest upon his throne. Do thou holy, blessed, royal LORD JESUS, reign in me, and over me, and establish, and preserve, and maintain thy rightful kingdom in my soul, against all there enemies, my lusts and corruptions, as well as the world, and the powers of darkness. Oh! do thou bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of our Christ! Do thou manifest thyself to my soul, in all thy sovereignty, grace, and goodness, in thy kingdom, both temporal and spiritual. Do thou pardon my sins as a king; do thou rule over my affections as a king; do thou bestow all needed grace as a king; do thou bless, protect, restrain; subdue, regulate and dispose of all things concerning me as a king, the glorious, gracious king which our GOD hath set in Zion. And by thus living under thine own kingly influences here below, mine eyes continually beholding the king in his beauty; in that tremendous day, when thou shalt come to take away all things that offend out of thy kingdom, my soul will find a growing confidence in thy salvation. For sure I am, since none but JESUS is king, he who hath borne my sins will not plead against me in judgment. The language of my heart, will be like the church of old; *the LORD is our judge: the LORD is our Lawgiver: the LORD is our King; he will save us.*

CHAPTER 9

CONTENTS

In this Chapter the sacred historian first brings us acquainted with Saul, whom GOD had previously determined to appoint king of Israel. By an overruling providence, Saul, who was in pursuit of his father's asses which were lost, is led to Samuel. And Samuel, privately admonished of GOD, gives Saul the first intimation of the LORD's design concerning him.

1 SAMUEL 9:1-2

(1) ¶ Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name *was* Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. (2) And he had a son, whose name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

The pedigree of Saul is first set down, and afterwards the portrait of his person is pencilled out. It is worthy the Reader's observation in the very first outlines of Saul, that while his person is thus set off to the greatest advantage, not a word is said of the qualities of the mind. Dearest JESUS! in the days of thy flesh it is said of thee, that *thy visage was marred more than any man, and thy form more than the sons of men*. LORD teach me from hence not to judge by outward appearance. *The kings daughter is all-glorious within*. Isaiah 52:15. Psalm 45:13.

1 SAMUEL 9:3-5

(3) ¶ And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. (4) And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not. (5) *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us.

It is truly instructive to remark, how the LORD in his Providence overrules and accomplishes the greatest designs from the slenderest means. The wandering of the asses laid the foundation for Saul's seeking them; and his not finding them, again paved the way for bringing him near Samuel. Thus the LORD sometimes worketh without means, and

sometimes with means; but it is sweet, in the after stages, to look back and see how the LORD is carrying on, in all we seem to be contriving and ordering, one settled plan of goodness and mercy concerning us. Hence the church makes a beautiful conclusion from GOD'S love to his people, after giving a long account of his dealings with them: *whoso is wise will ponder these things, and they shall understand the loving kindness of the LORD.* Psalm 107:43.

1 SAMUEL 9:6-9

(6) And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go. (7) Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, *if* we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and *there is* not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we? (8) And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that* will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way. (9) (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is* now *called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

Observe, though neither Saul nor his servants had ever seen Samuel, his reputation as the LORD'S prophet was known to them. But Reader! do not fail to observe further, that in the proposed enquiry they meant to make, there is not a word concerning GOD, or how to obtain his favor. Alas is it not so now? Are not the whole world sending forth the enquiry, *who will shew us any good?* But how few the cry, LORD *lift up the light of thy countenance upon us!* Psalm 4:6.

1 SAMUEL 9:10-13

(10) Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God *was*. (11) ¶ *And* as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? (12) And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before you:

make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for *there is* a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place: (13) As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

It is worthy observation, that those young women were no strangers to what was going on in religious services. It is highly proper that servants as well as masters, the drawers of water as well as those that sit at the table with wine, should be savingly acquainted with all the grand principles of religion. I do not take upon me to say, whether this sacrifice of the people in the high place, was a feast upon the sacrifice, or a service with the sacrifice. But be it either, it is delightful to observe, that as it was the sacrifice of the people it must have been with an eye to CHRIST. Oh! how precious must that one all-sufficient offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST, once for all, be considered in the eye of GOD our FATHER, when every thing in the services and feasts of his people referred to it. Hebrews 9:6-11.

1 SAMUEL 9:14-17

(14) And they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place. (15) Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, (16) To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me. (17) And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

I hope the Reader will not overlook how the LORD is working while we are unconscious. Saul is in quest of his asses, the servant hath no anxiety but this, whereas all the great events

which were to follow in Saul's life were folded up in the result of this interview with Samuel. Of all the subjects upon earth, what can be so sweet and interesting to the review of a gracious mind, as the first dawnings of grace. Reader! if you are the happy partaker of it, I shall find no difficulty in getting you to pause in this place and remark, how that grace first manifested itself to you notwithstanding all your undeservings, how surprising, how unexpected, how unlooked for, when JESUS first looked upon you in your blood, and *bade you live*. Your care, like Saul and his servant's for the asses, was about nothing else than fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and the pursuits of the world; and then it was, the eye of JESUS was marking you out for his grace as the eye was upon Saul, when the LORD had told Samuel in his hearing concerning him for a kingdom.

1 SAMUEL 9:18

(18) ¶ Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house *is*.

Now the LORD in his providence had brought Saul to Samuel, and all the great events those two persons had to transact together, as the sequel of their history shows, began in this way. I would have the Reader remark with me, that though Saul was so handsome in his person, yet the great prophet Samuel was so poor and plain that Saul had no consciousness who it was when he accosted him. Such, depend upon it, are GOD'S people in a thousand and ten thousand instances as to any outward attraction. Like their great head, *there is no beauty* in external appearances, *that we should desire them*.

1 SAMUEL 9:19-20

(19) And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I *am* the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart. (20) And as for thine asses that were lost three days

ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

Here Samuel gives the first intimation of Saul's future greatness, and his own present ability as a prophet of the LORD. By telling him of the safety of his asses, he gave him to understand that he knew his errand before he communicated it; and by the promise of telling him all that was in his heart on the morrow, he prepared his mind for what he had to communicate. But what I would particularly desire the Reader to remark, in this first interview between Samuel and Saul, is, how the prophet passed by everything until he had called the king elect to the sacrifice. Though all the grand objects of the intended kingdom were in the prophet's mind, and all in full prospect before him, yet prayer and praise must precede every other consideration. How sweet is it to see this gracious conformity in every truly awakened soul in all his actions. These things will be spontaneous, and, like the lips of the spouse, will drop freely as the honeycomb; not by constraint, nor by pressure, but of themselves, and continually. Song of Solomon 4:11.

1 SAMUEL 9:21

(21) And Saul answered and said, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

No doubt Saul had heard that Israel was to have a king, for *Gibeah* of Saul the residence of *Kish*, was not above twenty miles from Samuel's house at *Ramah*. But though he had heard of this intended thing, he could not have had the most distant idea of being the person, unless by divine intimation as Samuel had it. And the whole life of Saul manifests, that this communion with GOD he was a stranger to. Benjamin was

the youngest of the tribes of Israel, and by the event of that unhappy war recorded in Judges, (chap. 20:48.) the whole tribe was much reduced.

1 SAMUEL 9:22-24

(22) And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons. (23) And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. (24) And the cook took up the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, Behold that which is left! set *it* before thee, *and* eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

The respect shown Saul by the prophet, plainly intimated somewhat very important. We cannot but admire Samuel's conduct upon this occasion. Though the making Saul king tended to the lessening Samuel's sons, yet in obedience to the command of GOD, the prophet did it with the greatest cheerfulness.

1 SAMUEL 9:25-27

(25) And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the house. (26) And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. (27) *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

What passed at this interview is not recorded, but no doubt the conversation was preparatory to the great event about to follow in Saul's life. Probably the man of GOD opened to his view the LORD's designs in the thing itself, and showed him that it was of the LORD. How astonished must have been the

son of *Kish!* And what a train of thoughts must have occupied his mind.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! I charge it upon thee while reading this chapter of the LORD'S providence concerning Saul, that thou search diligently into the records of thine own life, for the testimonies of the LORD'S dealings with thee, both in his world of providence and grace.

Pause and see whether the same gracious GOD, while thou hast been searching out the things of time and sense, hath not been going before thee, anticipating thy requests, blessing thee with things unasked, and infinitely exceeding all thy thoughts and expectations, with preventing and restraining mercy and grace? In things *temporal*, how hath he supplied all thy wants, *thy bread hath been given, and thy water hath been sure*, and GOD himself hath been thy defence as *the munition of rocks*. And in things *spiritual* how hath he outrun all thy desires! Nay, while thou wast standing out against him, and causing him to serve with thy sins, and wearying his patience with thine iniquities, then it was the LORD had mercy upon thee, even before thou wert conscious of the want of mercy; and saved thee though he *knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast a transgressor from the womb*. My soul! keep this ever in view, to make thee humble, to endear JESUS, to hide pride from thine eyes, and to make the redemption work of thy GOD more and more sweet and important. And oh! for grace, continual grace, to make suitable returns of love and praise and obedience, where mercy and favor are so freely given. Thou art called to a kingdom that cannot be moved. JESUS hath made all his children kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. Whatever trials beset us in the way to the possession of future glory, there is

no state can be truly called comfortless while JESUS is our portion. Neither can one of his children esteem his mercies small who is saved from hell, and brought into the sure path of Heaven.

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

This Chapter opens with presenting us by a view of the prophet's anointing Saul king. This is followed with tokens Samuel told Saul, should immediately take place, on his departure from him to return home to his father's house, and which accordingly came to pass. After this Samuel convenes Israel at Mizpeh; at which convocation, he proceeds to the election of a king. Saul is elected. With which event some are displeased, but Saul holds his peace. These are the principal things contained in this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 10:1

(1) ¶ Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it* not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?

The ceremony of pouring oil on the head, was the method appointed by way of inauguration into office. And this was used both in the anointing Priests and Kings. No doubt the ceremony itself was instituted with an eye to JESUS, who was anointed by the HOLY GHOST into all his precious offices, as prophet, priest, and king. The holy anointing oil was made according to the LORD's own direction. See Exodus 30:22-33. Hence the church speaking of her beloved, saith, *because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth.* Song Of Solomon 1:3. Whether the vial of oil was of this kind is not said. But the signification was the

same. And to show the good will of Samuel on this occasion, he accompanied the ceremony with a kiss. Precious JESUS! do thou grant me the anointings of thy blessed SPIRIT.

1 SAMUEL 10:2-8

(2) When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son? (3) Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: (4) And they will salute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands. (5) After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: (6) And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. (7) And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee; for God *is* with thee. (8) And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

All these signs were intended to convince Saul, that in all Samuel did, he had acted under the authority of GOD. And no doubt they had their effect by way of confirmation.

1 SAMUEL 10:9

(9) ¶ And it was *so*, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

In this verse it is said, that GOD gave him *another heart*. And Samuel had foretold him in the 6th verse, that the SPIRIT of the LORD would come upon him to prompt him to prophecy, and he should be turned *into another man*. And no doubt this change was wrought upon him. He had from this time another heart as to his dispositions, for no longer seeking asses he is now seeking a kingdom. And instead of being employed in his father's service, he is now another man in prosecuting his own grandeur. But I beg the Reader to remark with me, that these changes are from what are called the ordinary gifts of the SPIRIT, not his special work on the heart. Saul may be, and Saul is among the prophets; but Saul is not renewed in the spirit of his mind for all that. Reader! do not fail to make this observation as you go, it will not only help you to make a right conclusion of this man's history, but many a man's history; and what is yet more interesting than every other, of your own. There is not a word of the regeneration of the mind of Saul in what is here said. He was turned into *another man*, from a poor man to a rich one, and from a peasant to a prince. And the LORD made him *another heart* to prefer a court to the country. But the new creature which after GOD is created in righteousness and true holiness, is totally different from all this. It is a new heart, not a new form; a work of grace, not of nature. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.* 2 Corinthians 5:17.

1 SAMUEL 10:10

(10) And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

It should seem that this gift of prophecy was considered as a prelude to an advance of rank. We have a similar instance: Numbers 11:16, 17.

1 SAMUEL 10:11-16

(11) And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, *What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?* (12) And one of the same place answered and said, *But who is their father?* Therefore it became a proverb, *Is Saul also among the prophets?* (13) And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place. (14) And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, *Whither went ye?* And he said, *To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel.* (15) And Saul's uncle said, *Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.* (16) And Saul said unto his uncle, *He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.*

The secrecy which Saul observed respecting the kingdom is remarkable. Perhaps Samuel had ordered it. If not, it certainly was either from great modesty or great prudence. Believers in JESUS are very shy of communicating the secrets of the LORD in their first days of conversion.

1 SAMUEL 10:17-19

(17) ¶ And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; (18) And said unto the children of Israel, *Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:* (19) And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay,* but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

The day of election being arrived, Samuel convenes the people together. He again sets before them the folly as well as baseness of their conduct, in rejecting GOD for their king; and insisting upon being like other nations, in havrng a king taken from among themselves. Was not this typical of the

gospel state – in the Jewish nation rejecting CHRIST; and which our LORD represented under the similitude of a parable? Mark 12:1-12.

1 SAMUEL 10:20-21

(20) And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. (21) When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

No doubt the LORD had appointed this mode of election though it is not said. But it became a further proof that Saul was chosen of GOD, by the event. *The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.* Proverbs 16:33.

1 SAMUEL 10:22

(22) Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

This secreting himself, and the people enquiring of the LORD concerning Saul, is not so plain to apprehend. Whether Saul shrunk from the honor, or waited to be the more invited to it, I will not determine. However the LORD'S direction where to find him seems to have over-ruled the business.

1 SAMUEL 10:23-26

(23) And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. (24) And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. (25) Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his

house. (26) And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

The people seem to have been struck with his majestic appearance, and therefore hailed him as king. And some so much regarded him as to attend his person home. By God touching their hearts, I apprehend is meant as GOD touched his, that is, inclined them to respect him. No saving change of grace is meant. Not the regeneration of the heart by grace. The subject refers only to things of a temporal nature.

1 SAMUEL 10:27

(27) But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

Though it appeared that the general voice was with Saul, yet there were others who rejected him. Alas! is not this human nature in all ages the same? So our adored Redeemer, while those precious souls whose hearts the LORD hath regenerated, follow JESUS wheresoever he goeth; bend the knee, bow the heart, and bring presents of all their poor offerings can show to testify their love and attachment, there are men of Belial who slight redemption, and do in effect, if not in word, virtually say, *we will not have this man to reign over us.*

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you and I behold the aged prophet pouring the vial of oil over Saul's head, let our meditation take flight, and by faith behold the HOLY GHOST anointing JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, and installing him into all these offices by which our souls live under his precious exercise of them through all the departments of grace. Yes, blessed JESUS! we would hail thee king of Zion! We behold thee consecrated our great high priest for evermore. And we accept thee as the anointed

prophet of our GOD, to preach good tidings to the meek, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. We view thee as the Christ of GOD, the glorious GOD-man set up and anointed as the Mediator before all worlds. And oh! that thy *name*, in the sweet savor of it, may be as the fragrancy of *the holy ointment poured forth! therefore do the virgins love thee*.

And dearest JESUS! as it hath pleased GOD, even thy GOD, to anoint thee, as Mediator, with the oil of gladness for, and above thy fellows; oh for a portion of that sacred anointing of the HOLY SPIRIT, which was poured out upon thee without measure, to descend upon us like the precious ointment upon Aaron's head, which ran down to the skirts of his garments! Yes! we would pray for the largest, fullest portion of that rich anointing, which teacheth all things. We would covet the same holy unction, which, flowing from thee, makes all thy people priests, and kings to GOD, and the FATHER. And we would desire, to be made such partakers of thy grace, that by the exercises of it, our souls might be enabled to lay hold of thee, by lively faith, so as to live upon thy Person, to hang upon thy righteousness, and to walk evermore with thee, in all the departments of our pilgrimage here, till we come to dwell with thee for ever, as men whose hearts thou hast indeed touched, and who cannot cease from following thee. And grant, blessed, dearest JESUS, that in the gifts of thy HOLY SPIRIT, thou wilt not merely give us *another* heart, but a *new* heart, even the *renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed upon us abundantly, through* JESUS CHRIST *our* LORD: so shall we be, indeed, kings, and priests to the FATHER, and fellow-heirs of that *kingdom, which cannot be moved*.

CHAPTER 11

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This Chapter opens with an account of Israel's distress, by reason Of the Ammonites' daring encampment against Jabesh-Gilead. The Gileadites are disposed to submit to the Ammonites, but their terms are both insolent and cruel. Saul being made acquainted with the circumstances of the case, commands all Israel to assemble for the relief of the Gileadites. He routs the Ammonites in battle, and makes a very great slaughter of them. All Israel rejoice, in consequence thereof, and are full of praises of their new king.

1 SAMUEL 11:1

(1) ¶ Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

These *Ammonites* were relations to Israel, being the descendants of Lot. And if the Reader will consult Deuteronomy 2:19, he will find how graciously the LORD dealt with them on that account. This was but a poor requital to *Gilead*. But when sin weakens, every enemy takes advantage.

1 SAMUEL 11:2

(2) And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make a *covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

Observe, what fear must have taken possession of the minds of Israel, when the people are ready to submit to the yoke of Gentile nations, and to be tributaries to them. But reader, depend upon it, the same is in every instance. Guilt breeds fear.

1 SAMUEL 11:3-4

(3) And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee. (4) Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and

told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

We do not hear of prayer, or supplication to the LORD, put up. No fast. No day of public humiliation. The people lifted up their voices, and wept indeed, but it is not said, that they cried unto the LORD. Oh! how sweet is it to recollect, in the distresses of the soul, that the LORD waits to be gracious. See those promises, Isaiah 30:18. 65:24.

1 SAMUEL 11:5-7

(5) ¶ And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What *aieth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh. (6) And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly. (7) And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

We here see the effect of what was said in a former chapter, concerning Saul, that he should be turned into another man. Though he had retired, after his election to be king, to his father's house, yet he only waited an opportunity to testify that he was changed. But I beg the reader to observe, both what is said of Saul in these verses, and what is said of the people, that the whole is ascribed to the LORD. It was *the SPIRIT of the LORD* that stirred him up; and it was from the same source, that put *his fear in the people*. Precious in all instances, to trace our mercies to the fountain head!

1 SAMUEL 11:8-11

(8) And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. (9) And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead, To morrow, by *that*

time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. (10) Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. (11) And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

The reader will have a better idea of Saul's enterprising spirit, when he is informed, that from *Bezek*, to the scene of action, was near 60 miles, and the army had to cross *Jordan* also, in the accomplishment of it. Therefore he must not only have levied this army by day, but marched by night, in order to have done what he did. But principally let us behold the hand of the LORD in it. *If GOD be for us, who can be against us?* And my brother, amidst all the threats, and besiegings of the enemy, never forget how soon the Captain of our salvation can hasten to our rescue. Day and night he is at hand, and no distance, no Jordan, no fire, or water, can separate us from his love, and his powerful assistance. What a blessed recollection, amidst all the hosts of the believer's foes?

1 SAMUEL 11:12

(12) ¶ And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

The zeal of the Israelites for Saul, after so complete a victory, is not to be wondered at. They would have sacrificed, no doubt, anything at the moment, to show their loyalty. But we do not hear a word of ascribing the work to the LORD. Alas! what an everlasting backwardness there is in our nature, to do this!

1 SAMUEL 11:13

(13) And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

This conduct in Saul, was both generous, and becoming. David felt similar affections towards *Shimei*, his sworn enemy. 2 Samuel 19:21-23.

1 SAMUEL 11:14-15

(14) Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. (15) And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

How beautiful Samuel appears in this. He directs the minds of the people to be looking unto the LORD, and where to ascribe the praise. But oh! what rejoicings are in the soul, when JESUS is crowned King, and our sacrifices, and peace-offerings, are all found in him.

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MY soul! in those *Ammorites* behold the sworn foes, not of Israel of old only, but of the Israel of GOD, in all ages. How alive are they to harrass, and afflict believers. The reproach of Israel is their delight. To put out their right eyes would be their highest joy. And how hast thou, my soul, been ready to serve them, like the men of, *Jabesh-Gilead*, and to make any covenant with them, if they would but be easy in their government. Dearest JESUS! be thou everlastingly praised, that thou wouldst not let me rest in this yoke of sin, but didst come to my rescue, and hast gotten thyself the victory, and brought down thine, and my enemies under thy feet. Oh! grant, heavenly LORD, that I may never more, after so complete a deliverance, be brought under the dominion of the enemy, nor meanly seek peace with thine, and my sworn

foes. Give me grace and strength, openly, and boldly in thy great name, to wage war with sin, Satan, and the world. And in all my spiritual warfare, do thou as the great Captain of thy little army, go on before me, and make me more than conqueror, through thee, who hast loved me! Let this be my every day song; *the LORD is my light, and my salvation, whom then shall I fear; the LORD is my strength, and my song, and he is become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 12

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This Chapter contains the address to Samuel, on the resignation of his government, now Saul is king. He appeals to him concerning his own integrity, in the administration of justice; brings the people to the acknowledgment of it: points out, yet once again, their sin and folly in the insisting upon a king: at the call of Samuel the LORD answers, in confirmation of what he had said of their sin and his rectitude, in sending thunder; and the chapter concludes with Samuel's assurances, that if the people obeyed the LORD, both they and their king should be preserved.

1 SAMUEL 12:1-2

(1) ¶ And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. (2) And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

There is somewhat wonderfully affecting in the last address of departing persons, even in the commonest circumstances of life. But eminently more so in faithful ministers. Farewell discourses are generally very striking. Samuel had been called of GOD, from a very child, to minister unto the LORD's people; and now he was grown old among them. It is as if he had

said, by this preface, I pray to be heard, before that I take my leave of you forever.

1 SAMUEL 12:3

(3) Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

His discourse is not by way of self-justification, to meet their applause. But to take off all possible censure. What a beautiful example, in a yet higher point of view, doth the apostle Paul give of himself before the church of *Ephesus*, in the close of his ministry, when he saith, *I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.* Acts 20:26, 27. Reader! if you consider the vast, and arduous charge of the ministry, you will enter with a proper earnestness and warmth, into a suitable apprehension of these things. And then the appeal of Samuel, will strike your mind with its full importance.

1 SAMUEL 12:4

(4) And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

The answer of Israel is highly gratifying, in testimony to the character of Samuel, though it be only of the negative kind; not in giving him applause, but in doing him justice.

1 SAMUEL 12:5

(5) And he said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

It was well that the people could not condemn him, but Samuel was more highly gratified, that he had a record on

high. Reader! it is blessed, when in spiritual concerns we can appeal, like Paul, and say, *GOD is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of his Son.* Romans 1:9.

1 SAMUEL 12:6-7

(6) ¶ And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. (7) Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

We may consider this discourse of the prophet, as a beautiful example of ancient preaching. He takes up the subject from its beginning, and pints out the divine hand, as the Founder of every blessing. Nothing can be more sweet in our holy gospel, than when we trace the whole plan of redemption, with all its eventual happy consequences, back to its source in the everlasting love of GOD; and discover free grace, in its rise out of the spring of infinite mercy. It is sweet and precious on many accounts. Sweet and precious, in that it manifests the unchangeable purposes of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. Sweet also, in the assurance, that a dispensation so founded in infinite wisdom and mercy, must have made every suitable provision for it, in all its consequences. And sweet, and precious also, in that, all the future events of it are equally, and securely provided for. Think of this, reader, whenever doubts or misgivings arise in your mind.

1 SAMUEL 12:8-15

(8) When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. (9) And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Habor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. (10) And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and

have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. (11) And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe. (12) And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king. (13) Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. (14) If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: (15) But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

These verses form the great outlines of Israel's history, from the deliverance out of Egypt, to the hour of Samuel's address on this occasion. The design of this discourse was, to show GOD'S unceasing goodness, and Israel's continual disobedience. I detain the reader just to remark, that the *Bedan* here noticed in Samuel's discourse, is not mentioned before in the history of Israel. It should seem from his being placed, in the relation, between *Jerubbual* and *Jephthah*, that it must have been some one of Israel's deliverers, who lived between the periods of these men. Some have thought it was *Jair*. See Judges 10:3. But we may, at least, derive this instruction from the silence, which the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to observe, respecting this man, that many precious servants of the LORD, no doubt, will be found at the last day, whose memories have not been recorded with public notice. Many a sweet flower blooms, and sheds its fragrance on the mountain, unnoticed by every eye, but His, by whom it is formed.

1 SAMUEL 12:16-19

(16) ¶ Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. (17) *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. (18) So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. (19) And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

We ought to remark the great power of prayer, in this instance of Samuel. What an astonishing degree of faith had the LORD bestowed upon this man! And what cannot faith do, when the eye of the soul is looking stedfastly unto JESUS? Remember, what Christ himself saith of it: *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* John. 15:7.

1 SAMUEL 12:20-25

(20) And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; (21) And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain. (22) For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. (23) Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: (24) Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you. (25) But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

How encouraging the sermon ends. Amidst all the unworthiness of the people, the LORD's grace still reigns; *for his mercy endureth for ever.* But is not Samuel here, a type of JESUS? In all the intercessions of the priests, or prophets of GOD, do we not view him, whom they shadow forth? Blessed

JESUS! here I behold, as in numberless other instances, how thy Priesthood is an everlasting priesthood, and how the efficacy of it hath been, and still is, always prevailing. Though like Israel, I have sinned against thee, and slighted thy government, and too often made to myself a king of my own, to reign over me; yet dearest LORD! cease not to exercise that most precious, and glorious office of thine, for my soul. Oh! save me to the uttermost, seeing thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners!

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READER! let us not too hastily pass over this chapter, without taking with us the several very interesting instructions it affords.

In this address of the prophet, dismissed, as he evidently was, by the people, we behold how pleasant a thing it is, in the close of any labours, to be able to make an appeal to GOD, for the rectitude of our proceedings. And while we are enabled to challenge the tongue of calumny, to be yet more refreshed, in the consciousness, that *our record is on high*.

In the beautiful recapitulation, which the man of GOD makes in his sermon of Israel's history, by way of calling up the remembrance of the people, both to divine mercies, and their unworthiness, we ought to learn the preciousness of faith, in referring all our blessings, while we review them, into the grace, and mercy, and loving kindness of our GOD. Faith finds great strength in such reviews, for future occasions. And I would desire the reader, not to overlook this instruction from it, while I pray, that my own mind may be refreshed in the thought; that the best method to seek strength for confidence in JESUS, for future blessings, is to make remembrance at the throne of what are past. Looking up to the great Author, and

Finisher of faith, for suited strength for our day, we certainly take the most effectual means to trust him for what is to come, when we tell him of what he hath done before. And by giving him the glory of what we have received, to rely upon him for what we need.

But principally, as an improvement from the perusal of this chapter, in the call of Samuel to the LORD, and the LORD's answer, in a way contrary to the usual manner of things; let the Reader behold in the Prophet the type of his Master. Yes! blessed JESUS! I would desire grace, upon the humblest and slightest occasions, as well as the highest and the greatest, to discover somewhat of These. Do I not know, dearest LORD, that all intercourse with heaven can only be opened by Thee? No prophet, no patriarch, no apostle, no angel of light, could have procured for our fallen nature, this blessing. Heaven must have been for ever inaccessible, hadst thou not opened that new, and that living way, by thy blood! Convinced therefore, of this most precious, and soul-reviving truth, oh! let me learn to prize the unspeakable mercy; delight myself in seeking constant communion, and intercourse with my God and FATHER, in CHRIST JESUS; and like Samuel, learn to be looking out for such manifestations of thy grace, and glory, as may be contrary to the usual plan of ordinary events; that at an *evening time*, if needful, *it may be light*.

CHAPTER 13

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In this Chapter the history of Saul's reign opens, and a sad opening of it is recorded. He is invaded by foes from abroad, and disorders at home, His subjects desert him, and the enemy advances upon him. In this distress he offers sacrifice,

and thereby breaks the divine commands. The LORD rejects him from being king; and though the sentence is not immediately executed, yet he is told of the event, and consequently waits its execution. Such is the state of things as recorded in this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 13:1

(1) ¶ Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

The expression in the original, which we render Saul reigned one year, is, Saul was the son of one year; meaning, perhaps, that as the child of one year, it was an infancy of government, and nothing in it worth recording.

1 SAMUEL 13:2

(2) Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

This choice of some, and disbanding others, was without taking counsel of GOD, it should seem, for we hear nothing of the LORD'S direction in it. Reader! depend upon it, in the smallest, as well as the highest concerns, nothing should be undertaken without GOD. In *all thy ways*, is the precept, *acknowledge him*; and then the promise is absolute, *he will direct thy paths*. Proverbs 3:6. For my own part I desire to eye JESUS in every thing; for well assured I am, that he is in everything that concerns his people.

1 SAMUEL 13:3-4

(3) And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. (4) And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines,

and *that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

Here is an act of presumption in Saul, unadvised of GOD, and as it should seem, treacherous to men. The Philistines throughout the land soon heard of the treachery done by the Israelites to one of their garrisons, and as is common among men, the whole nation took indignation at it. Let the Reader fail not to trace the hand of GOD in it. For as there is no intercourse between Saul and the LORD by prayer, there is no communion by way of counsel to direct him.

1 SAMUEL 13:5-7

(5) And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

(6) When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. (7) And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

In all this relation here is nothing said of the LORD of Hosts, nothing of the ministry of his servants. Where is Samuel, where are the priests of the LORD? How strikingly do we behold in this what the LORD hath said in another part of scripture, when GOD'S people neglect him, and seek confidence in human strength, *one thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one, at the rebuke of five shall ye flee; till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.* Isaiah 30:17.

1 SAMUEL 13:8-9

(8) ¶ And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the

people were scattered from him. (9) And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

Samuel had promised (see chap. 10:8.) to visit Saul at the end of seven days; not to lead him to war, but to offer peace-offerings; and then to instruct him further into the mind and will of GOD, concerning the government of his people Israel. Saul could not but know this. But resolving to do somewhat of his own, in the mean time, perhaps to make his name great among the nations, an army, is chosen, others of the soldiers are dismissed, the Philistines are smitten, and he rushes into the sacred office. What a daring spirit must this man have possessed, and how full of impiety. Though the LORD had made him king, yet he had not made the LORD his GOD. Reader! what will not the carnal mind attempt, when human glory, and not divine praise, is made the object of pursuit.

1 SAMUEL 13:10-12

(10) And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. (11) And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; (12) Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

Observe, under what specious pretences Saul covered the motives of his conduct; like the first sinners in the garden of Eden: self-justification, even to the last, we find in their apology. Genesis 3:10-13. But Reader! do not in the conduct of Saul overlook the picture it affords of the human heart. How doth every man attempt to justify himself in his actions under the false covering of some supposed good, until the

film of self-deception is taken from off his eyes by the HOLY GHOST; and never until he is convinced of sin doth he seek justification in the righteousness of CHRIST.

1 SAMUEL 13:13-14

(13) And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. (14) But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

The reproof of the prophet corresponded to Saul's transgression. *Uzzah*, in the succeeding age, was struck dead for touching the ark. And another of the same name was smitten with the leprosy, for invading the Priest's office. Saul therefore had room given him for repentance, had he sought it. See 2 Samuel 6:6, 7. 2 Chronicles 26:16-21.

1 SAMUEL 13:15-16

(15) ¶ And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* present with him, about six hundred men. (16) And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

The departure of Samuel from Saul, was a sad presage of ruin. Yet we read of no compunction on the part of Saul. Alas! when men are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, what awful examples do they afford, of indifferency under the sorest judgments!

1 SAMUEL 13:17-23

(17) And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way *that leadeth to* Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: (18) And another company

turned the way *to* Bethhoron: and another company turned *to* the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. (19) Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears: (20) But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. (21) Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. (22) So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. (23) And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

Nothing can demonstrate more fully the low and impoverished state of Israel, than what is here said of the ravages of the enemy, and their being destitute of even the common weapons of defence. It should seem, from their having no smith in all the territories of Israel, that the policy of the Philistines in times past, (probably in the wars when they had been victorious over Israel) had compelled them not to exercise this art among them. And, as while they were at peace, the Israelites found the Philistines not unwilling to sharpen or repair their instruments of husbandry, the Israelites did not trouble themselves to keep in order their weapons of war. Indeed, while the LORD was their King, and humbled the nations before them, they needed none. But now, when they have by sin, made GOD their enemy, to what a humbled state are they reduced, before their foes! *No weapon* (GOD saith) *formed against his people, shall prosper.* But when his people transgress against him, he can make our very blessings become weapons of evil, and convert our comforts into the artillery of his displeasure. See Isaiah 54:17. Compared with Deuteronomy 28:1-25.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark with me, the very awful state of an unrenewed mind, in the conduct of Saul. No situation, no providences, however prosperous, in themselves; no elevation in rank, or power, can produce real comfort, or happiness, while the heart remains carnal, and unregenerated by grace. The LORD had given Saul a kingdom: and the LORD had turned him from the pursuit of his father's asses, to the pursuit of government; but Saul, though *another* man, as the scripture terms it, in outward things, remained the *same* man, as to vital godliness. Learn Reader herefrom, that it is not a change of place, or rank, or circumstances, that availeth anything; but *the putting of the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and the being renewed in the spirit of the mind: and the putting on the new man, which after GOD, is created in righteousness, and true holiness.*

Precious JESUS! grant me grace to learn once more from hence, in the view of Saul's profanation of thy Priestly office, how infinitely important must be the view of thy alone offering, and priesthood, in the sight of JEHOVAH; and how rejoiced my soul ought to be, in taking shelter under thy holy censer! Yes! dearest LORD! thou, and thou alone, art a Priest for ever, by oath, and the solemn inauguration of thy GOD and FATHER. Taken from among men, as it concerned thy manhood, thou wast called to this office from all eternity. And as it relates to thine eternal power and GODHEAD, thine own glorious perfections, and attributes, become the golden altar, on which, and from whence, the saving efficacy of the whole priesthood, derive their importance. From both, may my soul find continual comfort, and confidence. Never, like Saul, may I bring my poor offerings, or fancied peace offerings, without an eye to thy precious, and all-sufficient sacrifice: for it is thou only, dearest LORD, that canst make, or hath made, *our peace in the blood of the cross.* To seek acceptance another

way, though with the most costly rites, as Saul did, is to show contempt to thy person, thy blood, and thy finished righteousness; and to call down the vengeance of heaven. But while, through the influence of the HOLY GHOST, my soul is enabled to look stedfastly to thee, and to rely on thy precious, all atoning blood, and sacrifice, for acceptance with GOD, and the FATHER; let me, blessed JESUS, every day, and all the day, be continually coming in thy name, and righteousness, *boldly to the throne of grace, that I may find mercy, and grace to help, in all times of need.*

CHAPTER 14

CONTENTS

The history of Israel under the reign of Saul, brightens up a little in this Chapter. Jonathan, the son of Saul, prompted, it should seem, by a Divine impulse, goes forth with his armour-bearer only, to a garrison of the Philistines. He is made successful:—the host of Israel, when informed of it, follows after; and a great slaughter is obtained over the Philistines. In the close of this Chapter, we have a short relation of Saul's family.

1 SAMUEL 14:1

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that *is* on the other side. But he told not his father.

There appears so much of GOD'S mercy, manifested in what we read in this chapter, that I beg the Reader, more particularly to regard it, When the LORD works without means, and sometimes contrary to means, this becomes a more striking display of his Almighty hand. Let the Reader, before he enters upon the events recorded in this chapter, observe

the dangerous state of Israel. There were with Saul, but six hundred men, and they trembling with fear: whereas, the host of the Philistines consisted of thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand of the sea shore for multitude. How was it, that this great host had not swallowed up the handful of Saul's army? Was it not, because the LORD restrained them? Can it be referred unto any other cause? Though Israel merited nothing from GOD, but his displeasure, yet the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great Name's sake. This Samuel had said, and this the Church had found, in all ages. Compare chap. 12:22, with Psalm 106:7, 8. And cannot the Reader find similar proofs in his own history? Oh! it is sweet, it is precious, when we discover the aboundings of grace, over the aboundings of sin. There is a blessed *nevertheless*, in all the histories of GOD's people.

1 SAMUEL 14:2-3

(2) And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about six hundred men; (3) And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

Though Saul was thus reduced to the lowest state, and his fears were now visible, in taking shelter under a tree, instead of facing the enemy, yet we find no humblings of soul. He doth not send for Samuel, but Ahiah. He will not indeed again invade the priest's office, but calls for the priest of the LORD, and the Ark: but alas! there is no saving change made upon him. Though he hath the Ark of the divine presence with him, yet he finds no strength nor confidence in the presence of the LORD. Alas! outward services of worship without inward grace, only tend to keep the heart *from* GOD, and do not lead *to* GOD.

1 SAMUEL 14:4-6

(4) And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. (5) The forefront of the one *was* situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. (6) And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

This is the first introduction we have, in the sacred history of Jonathan, the son of Saul; and a most pleasing one it is. There can be no doubt, but that his mind was under gracious influences, from the strong confidence he expressed in the sovereignty of the LORD. He knew enough of JEHOVAH, and that in a covenant way it appears, from the line he draws between Israel and the uncircumcised Philistines, to know that few or many, are of no avail with him. Reader! what a lesson is this, to you and me? Had Jonathan such confidence in GOD, and shall our faith be less? I beg the Reader to remark with me, the grounds of this well formed faith of Jonathan's, namely, the divine glory. He had heard, no doubt, of the LORD'S former interferences, in Israel's distresses. Now, saith Jonathan, this is the time for GOD to work. The glory must be wholly his, if he save us. Oh! Reader! may the HOLY GHOST give you and me to profit from this view of faith, in one who never possessed the advantages for the exercise of it, which you and I do. We have seen JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our faith, accomplishing redemption: and his promise, like himself, is unchangeable. He saith; *If we have faith as a grain of mustard seed, we might say to the sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and it should obey you.* Luke 17:6. LORD I would say, increase our faith!

1 SAMUEL 14:7-10

(7) And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart. (8) Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto *these* men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. (9) If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. (10) But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this *shall be* a sign unto us.

It should seem to have been pretty much the custom, in the early ages, to ascertain the reality of being commissioned by the LORD, by some sign. Thus Abraham's servant; (Genesis 24:12-21) and *Gideon* respecting the Midianites: Judges 6:36-40. And Reader, I know not, what your own experience may furnish of such things, but I confess, that in the circumstances of my life, I do feel a growing confidence in divine assurances, when they are opened to my view by divine instructions. I consider that mercy, be it what it may, as good as possessed, which the LORD leads me to ask in the faith of JESUS. Oh! it is a sweet and self-rewarding employment, to watch the LORD JESUS in all things: for sure I am, that then, in all things, we shall find him watching over his people for good. What a very very precious scripture is that of he LORD by the prophet to this purpose: *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.* Jeremiah 32:41.

1 SAMUEL 14:11-13

(11) And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. (12) And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. (13) And

Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.

To what source, but the sovereignty of the LORD, can we ascribe it, that when these two poor solitary soldiers of the army of Israel, were climbing up, and were so exposed to danger, that the Philistines did not at once destroy them? How evidently did the LORD overrule the minds of the Philistines? And depend upon it, Reader, so it is in a thousand instances in life. The LORD GOD promised his people, to send the hornet among their enemies. And what is this, but the restraining power of his Almighty hand upon their minds? Deuteronomy 7:20.

1 SAMUEL 14:14-15

(14) And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, *which a yoke of oxen might plow*. (15) And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

It should seem, that a similar effect, like that which the LORD wrought in the host of Midian, must have been induced, to cause this great consternation, and trembling. The thing was of the LORD. Judges 7:22.

1 SAMUEL 14:16-17

(16) ¶ And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*. (17) Then said Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer *were* not *there*.

Probably, the watchmen upon the walls were enabled by somewhat more than mere outward discovery, to discern the

hand of the LORD in this. The history of Israel furnished out instances of divine interposition, for the delivery of his people. Watchmen upon the walls of Zion, like the ministers of the gospel of JESUS, are supposed, by prayer, to keep up communication with heaven. Isaiah 62:6, 7.

1 SAMUEL 14:18-19

(18) And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. (19) And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.

I cannot omit remarking to the Reader, in the history of Saul, how alike, unmoved by affliction or prosperity, this man's heart appears to have been towards the LORD. He set up indeed an enquiry, in commanding the priest to bring the ark; but receiving further conviction that the army of the Philistines were in distress, whatever the cause was which induced it, he waits not for direction from the LORD. Alas! to what a sad degree of degeneracy is the heart capable of ripening void of grace!

1 SAMUEL 14:20-23

(20) And Saul and all the people that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture. (21) Moreover the Hebrews *that were* with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan. (22) Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle. (23) So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven.

The close of this account of the battle, left no room to question, but that this salvation was of the LORD. How sweet

is it to remark in all the spiritual victories of the LORD's people, that the LORD's arm alone bringeth salvation!

1 SAMUEL 14:24-46

(24) ¶ And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food. (25) And all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. (26) And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. (27) But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. (28) Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint. (29) Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. (30) How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? (31) And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. (32) And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood. (33) Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day. (34) And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew *them* there. (35) And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD. (36) ¶ And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God. (37) And Saul asked

counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day. (38) And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. (39) For, *as* the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* answered him. (40) Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. (41) Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. (42) And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. (43) Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die. (44) And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. (45) And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not. (46) Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

There is, no doubt, somewhat of obscurity in this passage. Saul's whole conduct was wrong. In a false mistaken zeal for Israel, he brings the people under an heavy curse, if they partook of any food, until the battle was over. In this, we hear of no consultation with the LORD, no direction from him: and yet the LORD gives a decided answer, in pointing out the offender, in the person of Jonathan. And yet on the other hand, the eyes of Jonathan were so enlightened in eating of the honey, that from this refreshment, his ability to pursue the victory was certainly increased. Perhaps the sense of the passage is, that the most highly favored servants of the LORD, may be brought into trouble; and, like Jonathan, though evidently raised up of the LORD, for the deliverance of his people, may suffer persecution from those on whom they

have the highest claims of favor. And probably, as Saul in his carnal state, was every day more and more departing from GOD, he was permitted to fall under the dreadful oath he had taken for another, so as ultimately to become the victim of it himself. The sequel of Saul's history, too plainly shows this. And the sin, which by his rashness, he led the people into, when in their extreme hunger, they eat the blood with their food, seems to have been one of those things which aggravated his transgressions. See Genesis 9:4. and the note in the Commentary on the 9th chapter of Genesis, verse 4.

1 SAMUEL 14:47-52

(47) ¶ So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*. (48) And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them. (49) Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters *were these*; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal: (50) And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host *was* Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. (51) And Kish *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel. (52) And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

The victory, which begun from such small and inconsiderable means, as Jonathan and his armour bearer, was prosecuted to great exploits. It should seem, as if the LORD meant that Israel should learn from it, how much his mercy was with his people, notwithstanding their uncleservings. if we spiritualize the subject, as it concerns GOD's people, the same gracious lesson is exhibited to us now. We may, without going far in the enquiry of our lives, see enough to discover that our suc-

cess is wholly in GOD's favor, not man's desert; that grace is not bestowed for our merit, nor withheld for our transgressions. The rich and full salvation by JESUS, founded as it is in free and sovereign love, like the dew of heaven, *waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men*; but comes to us of the LORD's own bonnty, and hath for its beginning GOD's love, and for its end GOD's glory. *For of him and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory, for ever, and ever. Amen.*

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE over this chapter, my soul, and mark, in the history of Saul, the sure consequences of rebellion against GOD. The word of the LORD assures us, that, *when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh, even his enemies to be at peace with him*. But, when sinners neglect and despise the LORD, he can convert their very comforts into crosses. And Saul, though at the head of a kingdom, shall be afflicted, and his crown be filled with thorns.

But, my soul, while remarking, as in this man's history, the sure consequences of sin, remark no less in his history, and in thine own, how gracious the LORD is, notwithstanding all our multiplied transgressions. *The LORD will not retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy*. By some slender instrument, like that of Jonathan, he will work out deliverance for his people. Oh! my soul, learn to impress upon thy mind those precious things of GOD's grace. And in all thy manifold undeservings, never lose sight of divine love. And when at any time trials and difficulties occur for the exercise of faith, keep a steady eye unto JESUS, that it may be enlightened with the droppings of his grace, as the honey did unto him. And depend upon it, in the strength of the LORD JESUS, it will be found that all difficulties are as nothing. He can, and will

make thee more than conqueror, through the sovereignty of his power. All obstacles, in the way to the accomplishment of his holy purpose, will be as nothing, for *there is no restraint to the LORD, he saveth, by many or by few.*

CHAPTER 15

CONTENTS

The sacred historian is prosecuting the account of Saul's reign, in this chapter. Every part of his government seems to be with a view to aggrandize himself, and to show his disregard to the LORD. We have here, the relation of a commission the LORD sent him upon, to destroy the Amalekites: his partial obedience to that commission: the LORD'S displeasure upon the occasion, and his rejection of Saul from being king, communicated to him by Samuel. The zealous prophet, in his warmth for GOD'S glory, doth that which Saul had neglected, and heweth Agag, the king of the Amalekites, in pieces before the LORD, in Gilgal. The chapter closeth with an account of Samuel's final departure from Saul, and visiting him no more until his death.

1 SAMUEL 15:1

(1) ¶ Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

In the opening of this message, we should remark, how Samuel preface it. I do not command thee, saith the prophet, but the LORD, who sent me to anoint thee king. Receiving, therefore, thy commission from him, see thou obey this precept faithfully. Reader! it doth not behove creatures, and sinful ignorant creatures too, such as we are, to reason about the fitness of such things as GOD commands. When we

have to do with men, it may be proper to pause, and to reason on right and wrong: but when we have to do with GOD, it doth not become us to argue on his appointments. This doctrine is very sweet and precious, if considered as it refers to our faith in JESUS. Salvation in him, and through him, is the LORD's appointed way. As such, let you and I heartily, and cordially accept it, without presuming to be wiser than GOD: and this will be our wisdom. So Moses told Israel: Deuteronomy 4:6.

1 SAMUEL 15:2-3

(2) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. (3) Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

The observation made on the preceding verse meets us with full force in these. When the LORD commands any service, the justice and propriety of the measure, is not to be arraigned at the bar of man's tribunal. The LORD had sworn to have war with *Amalek*, from generation to generation. See Exodus 17:8-16. And now the year of the LORD's vengeance was come, and the iniquity of Amalek is full. Reader! if you are a child of GOD, do not overlook in this scripture, what is read to you in it: namely, the LORD will subdue all your foes before your face. He hath engaged in covenant promises to do this. And, Reader, do not envy therefore the short-lived triumphs of the ungodly, the LORD hath seen that his day is coming. Every injury done to one of GOD's afflicted ones, must sooner or later be accounted for. Psalm 37:13.

1 SAMUEL 15:4-6

(4) And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. (5) And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the

valley. (6) And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

It is profitable to mark, and admire distinguishing mercies of any kind. The salvation of the *Kenites*, was certainly a marked blessing. And is it not yet more sweet and refreshing, to contemplate the distinguishing blessings of grace. When the LORD was about to bring a flood upon the world, for the destruction of the ungodly, Noah had an ark provided for his safety. Dearest JESUS! how precious art thou in this point of view, to thy people!

1 SAMUEL 15:7-9

(7) And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt. (8) And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. (9) But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Is there not a spiritual sense in this, for the Reader to gather improvement from? Do we not, my brother, in that war, which admits of no neutrality, too often spare, what we think the best of our good deeds, and think favorably of ourselves, while sacrificing the more flagrant corruptions of our nature?

1 SAMUEL 15:10-11

(10) ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, (11) It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

Let not the Reader imagine, that from these expressions, there is any change in the mind of GOD, as if that GOD was liable to alter. The repentance here spoken of, is in accommodation to our language, speaking after the manner of men, and not in reference to him, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He is in one mind* (saith Job) *and who can turn him?* Job 23:13. But what a precious thought is it, concerning salvation, that *the gifts and calling of GOD are without repentance.* Romans 11:29. What a beautiful view is given, in the close of this verse of Samuel. Dear, man! the dismissal of himself and his sons from the government; called forth no such concern. But we behold him in tears a whole night, crying to the LORD for Saul. But Reader! turn your views from Samuel, and behold him, of whom Samuel is but a faint resemblance, who spent whole nights in prayers to GOD: and in that unequalled agony he sustained in the garden, poured out his very soul, until the sweat of his face was, as it were, *great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* Neither is this all. Samuel's intercession falls infinitely short of our JESUS. Though both prayed for their enemies, and the enemies of our GOD; yet though Samuel succeeded not, JESUS always prevails. Yes! dearest LORD! thou must ever prosper; neither can one, for whom thou prayest, perish, or come short of thy salvation.

1 SAMUEL 15:12

(12) And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

It should seem, from this account, that Saul was so flushed with his victory, he was regardless of the divine favor, and in the pride of his heart had set up a place, perhaps a pillar of triumph, by way of publishing and perpetuating his conquest.

Alas! what blindness, and presumption, and sin, is there in the human heart.

1 SAMUEL 15:13-23

(13) And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. (14) And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? (15) And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. (16) Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. (17) And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? (18) And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. (19) Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? (20) And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. (21) But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. (22) And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. (23) For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

We have here the solemn conference between Samuel and Saul, on the subject of Saul's disobedience, and the awful consequence of it, in the LORD'S determining to dethrone him. We behold, in the pointed language of the prophet, the unalterable purpose, and fixed displeasure of GOD against sin.

And we behold in Saul, what every man's heart is void of grace, full of excuses and justifying pretences, like the first sinners in Eden, to soften their transgressions. Alas! there is not a man alive but covers himself under this covering. And until GOD the HOLY GHOST convinces of sin, none of Adam's posterity are ever convinced of it, so as to see the absolute necessity of a Saviour. Precious SPIRIT of truth! do thou fulfil that blessed office which the Son of GOD promised thou shouldst perform in the minds of his people, and convince me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Make JESUS precious to my view, for he is only so to them that believe. John 16:8-11. 1 Peter 2:7.

1 SAMUEL 15:24

(24) ¶ And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

What it was that brought down the proud spirit of Saul to this confession, I know not, unless it was the dread of being dethroned. But certain it is, from all that followed in his life, though he acknowledged he had sinned; yet he never felt godly sorrow for sin, not to be repented of. 2 Corinthians 7:10.

1 SAMUEL 15:25

(25) Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

What a folly to ask Samuel to pardon his sin. But to preserve still his dignity with the people, Samuel's turning with him to worship the LORD, seemed to carry with it an idea that all was made up again. Thus sinners under the gospel are mightily well pleased, if they can carry on an outward appearance with men: little considering how to make peace with Him that readeth the heart.

1 SAMUEL 15:26-31

(26) And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. (27) And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. (28) And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou. (29) And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent. (30) Then he said, I have sinned: *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. (31) So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

Though Samuel at first refused to join in worship with Saul; yet perhaps in reflection he judged it to be right. Where shall gracious souls lead sinners but to a throne of grace? The rent of Saul's skirt was an apt allusion to the renting of the kingdom from him, and as Samuel made application of it to this event, so it is remarkable, that in the after history of Saul's life, when David cut off a portion of Saul's skirt, Saul, as if recollecting this circumstance, applied it to David. *I know well* (said he) *that thou shalt surely be King*. 1 Samuel 24:20.

1 SAMUEL 15:32-33

(32) ¶ Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. (33) And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

This view of *Agag* is truly awful. So must all sinners be accounted with at the last. Reader! remember the bitterness of death is never past, until the sting of death, which is sin, is taken out by the blood of Christ. Then, blessed be GOD, we have the victory through him, who *through death, destroyed*

him that had the power of death, that is the devil, that he might deliver them who through fear of death, are all their life time subject to bondage. Hebrews 2:14, 15.

1 SAMUEL 15:34-35

(34) Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. (35) And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

What is here said of Samuel's coming no more to see Saul, means no more to visit and advise him, or with a message from the LORD. That they met together afterwards, and perhaps more than once, is evident from chap. 19:24. But it means he came no more to him from the LORD. Saul was rejected in the LORD's will, and his servant had, therefore, no more message for him. Yet Samuel's heart mourned for Saul, and lamented, as every good man doth, when the wicked *reject the counsel of God, against their own souls.*

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause with me over the perusal of this chapter, and mark, in the progress of Saul's history, the certain truth of that awful sentence of the apostle, *that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* And while we look at the king of Israel under this melancholy character, let us not forget, to gather from the history of the LORD's everlasting war with the *Amalekites*, that there can be no truce in this battle. Grace and corruption can no more join issue, than the iron and the clay in the image which the prophet saw. Put it down, Reader, in the maxims of your life, and see to it that your own experience corresponds to this most certain and unquestionable truth: *the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit.* LORD, grant that neither the writer of this Commentary, nor the Reader of it, may be

debtor to the flesh to live after the flesh: for if we live after the flesh we shall die: but, if we through the SPIRIT, do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live.

Oh! most gracious GOD! give me to see, and awfully to feel the impression of it on my heart, in the history of the utter destruction of the *Amalekites*: that though the LORD long bears with the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; yet the day, the dreadful day, the tremendous day of judgment, surely cometh as a thief in the night, Oh! precious JESUS, be thou my refuge, my covert, my strong hold, in that day of wrath!

One sweet improvement more would I gather from the perusal of this chapter, before I take my leave of it, and in the sorrow the man of GOD felt for the LORD'S rejection of Saul, I would see how suited it is for the ministers of JESUS, *to weep between the porch and the Altar*, and lift up their cries and prayers over the sad ruin of our fallen nature? Did Samuel weep for Saul because the LORD had determined to take from him his earthly kingdom: and shall not my soul weep over the thousands of ungodly sinners, against whom the LORD hath sworn they shall not enter into his heavenly kingdom? Did the events of this short life, as they related to Saul, call forth the affection of the prophet: and shall not the grand concerns of eternity, as they attach themselves to sinners in the present hour, call forth my sympathy and prayer, that the LORD in the midst of judgment may remember mercy? Oh! most gracious Saviour! from whose distinguishing favor it is, that *by the grace of GOD, I am what I am*: teach me, LORD, *to rejoice with trembling*; and in the deepest sense of those awful judgments which I most righteously have deserved, but which thy mercy hath saved me from; give me a suitable frame of mind to come before thee. Like the prophet *Ezekiel*, I would fall to the dust, crying out; *Ah! LORD*

GOD! *wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in this pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem!*

CHAPTER 16

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This chapter is the first in the history of David. And as this man forms so distinguishing a character in the word of GOD, in every point of view, as a patriarch, prophet, writer, warrior, king, and above all, as a type of the LORD JESUS, everything respecting him becomes interesting and important. The history doth not open with the birth of David, but takes up the relation with his anointing by Samuel, as king of Israel, and the successor to Saul. Here is related in this chapter, the LORD'S sending Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint one of the sons of Jesse. All the sons of Jesse are made to pass before Samuel. David is chosen. Samuel pours the horn of oil upon him: Samuel returns to Ramah. An evil spirit from the LORD troubles Saul. David is sent for, as one that played well upon an instrument, to divert him.

1 SAMUEL 16:1

(1) ¶ And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

If we compare what was said of Samuel in the close of the foregoing chapter, with what is said of Samuel (in the 19th chap. 20 ver.) presiding over the younger prophets, it should seem that the man of GOD had retired from court, and all public services, excepting the sanctuary, to attend to the instruction of the college. But the LORD now calls him to another commission, and this seems to have been the last, and which was to go in quest of Saul's successor among the

sons of Jesse. I detain the Reader to mark in this verse, the expression *fill thine horn with oil*: and then beg him to remember the opening of the hymn of *Zecharias*, in allusion to the LORD JESUS when under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, he declared that glorious event of the coming Saviour, to be, that *he had raised up an horn of salvation for his people in the house of his servant David*. See Luke 1:67-69.

1 SAMUEL 16:2-3

(2) And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. (3) And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

This expression of fear on the part of Samuel, and the encouragement given on the part of the LORD, serves to throw a light upon the history, and to show us that affairs were become very desperate with Saul. Probably his anger and hatred against Samuel was grown to great height. Alas! the progress of iniquity must be so.

1 SAMUEL 16:4-5

(4) And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? (5) And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

The observation made upon the foregoing verses, is more confirmed in these. Wherefore should the men of Bethlehem tremble at the appearance of Samuel, had it not been that they feared the jealousy of Saul. I beg the Reader not to lose sight of the most interesting part in this history, I mean, its reference to the LORD JESUS; but remember that *Bethlehem-Judah* was the very spot, where in after ages, the glorious

David, of whom this David was but a type, was born. And doth not the Reader recollect, that in the first appearance of JESUS, at his birth at *Bethlehem*, Herod, and *all Jerusalem with him was troubled*. Matthew 2:1-3. It is hardly necessary for me to detain the Reader with observing, that to sanctify the household or persons of a family, was among the offices of GOD'S servants. Our dear LORD was pleased to sanctify himself for his people. John 17:19.

1 SAMUEL 16:6-7

(6) ¶ And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed *is* before him. (7) But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account of the review of Jesse's sons. The prophet is not acquainted on whom the LORD'S lot will fall, but they are all to be brought before him. So is it in the ministry of the word. The commission of the gospel is; *Go out to every creature*. But, we are told, while *many are called few are chosen*. The minister, like Samuel, knows not when he goes forth, to whom it will prove *the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death*. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16. In the conclusion Samuel made in favor of *Eliab*, we see how apt men are, and even the wisest of men, to be taken with things outward. He had been deceived in this once before, in the case of Saul. And though indeed this was by GOD'S appointment, yet the Reader should remember that the appointment of Saul was to gratify the people; not to please the LORD; whereas the choice to be made now, was to please himself. Dearest JESUS! do thou choose for me, and guide me in my all supposed choice of things, that I may behold thee in everything!

1 SAMUEL 16:8-10

(8) Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. (9) Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this. (10) Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

The whole seven of Jesse's sons, are brought before the prophet in the order of their birth-right. But Samuel discovered, perhaps by the SPIRIT's guidance, which operated upon his mind in his holy seasons of prophecy, that none of these were, in the LORD'S mind, appointed for the kingdom.

1 SAMUEL 16:11-13

(11) And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. (12) And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this *is* he. (13) Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

How wonderful are the ways and works of the LORD! I pass over several otherwise very interesting circumstances in this account, which might be largely dwelt upon, both in respect to the mind of the prophet, and of Jesse the father, to attend wholly to him, whom the LORD singled out from the rest. And as everything in the life of David is memorable, from the very many views of him, in which he stands forth as a type of our glorious David; it is here chiefly in the opening of his history, I would beg the Reader's more awakened attention. First then, when we are told concerning him, that he was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance; doth it not suggest to the Reader

somewhat of his features, of whom the Church sings so sweetly, when she saith; *my beloved is white, and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.* Song Of Solomon 5:10. And doth not the very name of David, which means *beloved*, instantly, when known, direct our hearts to him, who is by way of eminency, called the only begotten and beloved of the Father, in whom his soul is well pleased. Matthew 12:18. Moreover, when we see all the sons of Jesse passed by, and the youngest who was so little regarded, as to be sent to the humblest employment in the family, chosen of GOD and approved; how is it possible to overlook the LORD JESUS, *that stone* (as the apostle calls him) *which was set at nought by the builders, and which is become the head of the corner.* Acts 4:11. And when we see the poor, overlooked, and forgotten son of Jesse thus gathered out from among his brethren; surely we cannot but call to mind JESUS, who is introduced in that humble, low, and despised state when entering on his ministry, that even his brethren *did not believe on him.* John 7:5. Yes! dearest LORD! I would desire to trace even the minutest points of the signalized characters in thy word, which represent thee, somewhat to lead to thee. And as I know, from thine own authority, that thy *goings forth have been from of old from everlasting, when thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people:* so I behold the outlines of thy sweet features of character, as the Mediator and Redeemer of thy people, in these and numberless other instances marked in thy types and servants. As the LORD designed David to the kingdom; so from everlasting the LORD JEHOVAH set up our JESUS as the King in Zion. And as David was anointed with the holy oil; so JESUS had the SPIRIT poured out *without measure.* John 3:34.

1 SAMUEL 16:14

(14) ¶ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

We turn to a very awful contrast in this account of Saul. Reader! what can equal that distress of soul which ariseth from the LORD'S withdrawing his HOLY SPIRIT. Man is then open and exposed to all the fiery darts of the enemy. LORD I would pray both for myself and reader; *take not, oh! take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from us.*

1 SAMUEL 16:15-16

(15) And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. (16) Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

Alas! though the servants, it should seem, knew their lord's malady, yet instead of recommending a cure, they recommended somewhat to palliate the disease. Similar to those men who make religion a form, and desire not the power of godliness.

1 SAMUEL 16:17-18

(17) And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me. (18) Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD *is* with him.

It is somewhat singular that David should have been so well known at court by Saul's servants, for it appears by the after history of David, (chap. 17:55, &c.) that Saul did not know him. But probably, the account of Jesse's son having killed a lion, and a bear which took a lamb from his flock. (see chap. 17:34, 35), might have been related in Saul's palace among the servants. And if so, this accounts also, for the servants speaking of him as a mighty valiant man: for David at this

time could not have been more than from 20 to 25 years of age. And as David began to reign when he was thirty years old, Saul's reign continued *five* years at least after this event: or if David was but 20 when he was anointed, it must have been *ten* years. See 2 Samuel 5:4.

1 SAMUEL 16:19-23

(19) Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* with the sheep. (20) And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul. (21) And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. (22) And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. (23) And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

I think it more than probable, that Saul had no knowledge at this time, of Samuel's having anointed David as his successor in the kingdom. Neither do I conceive that the family of Jesse understood thoroughly the purport of Samuel's visit. It is said indeed, that Samuel anointed him *in the midst of his brethren*. But might it not be supposed (as the words will well bear) *from among, his brethren*: that is perhaps, took him into another apartment privately; by which neither Jesse nor his sons knew any more at present, than that Samuel had particularly noticed David. I do not presume to say that this was the case. But as Samuel's fears, on account of Saul, were overruled by the LORD allowing him to cover over the main design of visit to Jesse, by telling him that he was come to sacrifice: and as *Eliab*, as it appears in the next chapter, (see verse 28) when David came to visit his brethren in the camp, did not advert to it, but on the contrary reproved David for his supposed pride: and as Saul received David so kindly, and

loved him so greatly: these circumstances taken altogether, I am led to think that David's anointing (or at least the purport of it was known only to Samuel and himself. He indeed, could not but know it, because from that time, we are told, *the SPIRIT of the LORD came upon him*. Reader! it is precious to trace the SPIRIT'S season of regeneration, from his gracious work upon the heart. This sweet earnest of the SPIRIT, is what Paul calls, *the seal of the promised inheritance*. Ephesians 1:13, 14.

REFLECTIONS

HERE my soul, in the view of Samuel's commission to anoint David king of Israel, do thou learn the infinite importance of singling out thy Almighty David, as thy king and chosen from among his brethren. Fear not all the Sauls which would oppose thee, but boldly put the sacred crown of thy redemption upon his holy Head; and let the world know that him, whom thy GOD and FATHER hath chosen as thy Sovereign, is thy chosen also. The LORD'S CHRIST, is thy CHRIST; and his anointed, thine anointed from among ten thousand.

And as for thee, thou blessed, holy, Anointed One; to thee it belongs, both by thy natural right, as one with the FATHER, over all GOD blessed for ever, and by thy appointed and acquired right, as Mediator, to reign over thy church and people. Do thou take to thee thy great power, and rule in my heart, and over my whole soul and body forever. Though like David, thou art taken from the lowest state of poverty, so that when on earth thou hadst not where to lay thine head; yet art thou placed above all thy brethren. Thou art he, whom all shall praise: and all thy Father's children shall bend before thee. The FATHER hath solemnly put all things into thine hand, and declared that *men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed*. Before thee, therefore, would I

bow the knee and join with every creature to confess, that JESUS CHRIST *is* LORD *of all, to the glory of* GOD *the* FATHER.

CHAPTER 17

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The Chapter we are now about entering upon, relates to us the insolence of the Philistines towards Israel, and the challenge made by their champion Goliath of Gath, daring any man in Israel's army to single combat. The consequence of which, we are told, was, that Saul and all his army were dismayed. David coming from his father, on a message to his brethren into the camp of Israel, hears the challenge of Goliath, and accepts it. Going forth, not armed with the common weapons of slaughter, but in the confidence of GOD, he prevails over the Philistine, and kills him. In consequence thereof the Philistines are put to the rout, and Israel pursues them with a great slaughter. These are the principal matters contained in this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 17:1

(1) ¶ Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

The last accounts we had of the Philistines, their history left them perfectly subdued and overcome; and Israel, under Saul, was victorious everywhere. See chap. 14:47. Perhaps the miserable state of Saul, gave occasion to the Philistines to renew their former insolence. *When a man's ways please the LORD* (we are told) *he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* But when men slight the LORD, he can raise up enemies from every quarter. Proverbs 16.

1 SAMUEL 17:2

(2) And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

It should seem, that this commotion in the army of the Philistines roused Saul, for the present, from his distressed state of mind. Chap. 16:14.

1 SAMUEL 17:3-7

(3) And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them. (4) And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. (5) And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass. (6) And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. (7) And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

There is somewhat very striking in the account given, both of this giant and his armour. We were told in the book of Joshua, of the great size of the children of *Anak*; and as in *Gaza* of *Gath*, which belonged to the Philistines, there were the remains of this race of men, it is probable that *Goliath* was of this stock. See Joshua 11:22. His height must have been wonderful indeed, if the scripture cubit be, as is thought to be, 21 inches; and a span half a cubit: both added together and brought into our English measure, makes him to have been somewhat more than 11 feet high. And his whole armory seems to correspond to this account. The weight of his coat 5000 shekels, every one of which was at least half an ounce. And the spear 600 shekels; both added together, made the weight (besides all that is spoken of concerning his greaves and target of brass) 350 pounds. Such was the

monster and his armory, which came forth to the defiance of Israel. Reader! Was he not, think you, a formidable enemy? And can the imagination figure to itself anything more striking, to resemble the great enemy, who stands to defy the LORD's Israel; in all ages.

1 SAMUEL 17:8-11

(8) And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. (9) If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. (10) And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. (11) When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

See how guilt breeds fear: else wherefore did Saul and all Israel tremble? There was a time, when at the threats of the Ammonites, Saul hastened to the deliverance of the people, though only then coming from the herd of the field, and obtained a glorious victory. And now, though a king at the head of an army, he trembles. What made the difference? It is easily answered. The SPIRIT of the LORD came upon him, in the former instance, and inspired him with courage. But now, the SPIRIT of the LORD is departed from him, and all his confidence is fled. Oh! how sweet is it, Reader, to be under his blessed influence, whose *strength is made perfect in the weakness of his people*. What cannot a soul accomplish, when GOD leads that soul on? See chap. 11:6, compared with 16:14, Zechariah 4:6, 7.

1 SAMUEL 17:12-15

(12) ¶ Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

(13) And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. (14) And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. (15) But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

The sacred historian here revives again the history of David and his family. *Jesse* the father, is honorably spoken of: and the three eldest sons, who are in Saul's army, are mentioned by name. But the whole of this, is with a view to introduce the great hero of the family, David. If Saul and all his army trembled at the approach of Goliath, Jesse's eldest sons were among the number that feared. But do we not see here, somewhat leading to David's LORD. JESUS feeds his sheep at Bethlehem, amidst all the wars and hostilities of camps. Oh! for grace to seek after him like the church, and to find him beside the shepherds' tents. Song Of Solomon 1:7,8.

1 SAMUEL 17:16

(16) And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

Surely the LORD overruled the desire of this giant, and somehow or other overawed his mind, to restrain him from attacking Israel: otherwise he, and his army at his heels, would not have rested satisfied with this parade of mere threats, for forty days together. Reader! remark this, as you go on in your spiritual warfare. Have you never found the enemy advancing, threatening, and as the Psalmist saith, being ready to swallow you up: and yet deliverance hath come, unexpected, and unthought of? Psalm. 56:1, 2.

1 SAMUEL 17:17-18

(17) And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; (18) And carry these ten cheeses unto

the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

There is somewhat very sweet, to the gracious parent, in his view of this. How unconscious was the mind of the father, of the great events which the LORD in his providence had foreordained, to arise from this errand of his son to the camp. While he only wanted to know how his elder children were, the LORD had it in commission for his younger child to become the deliverer of his country. Ye watchful parents, of a gracious GOD, learn from hence, to be continually looking out for the merciful superintendance of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, over your children. Commit them with all their concerns to him, and watch the gracious manifestations of his love in all their arrangements. But Reader! do not overlook the sweet spiritual lesson held forth to the brethren of JESUS. Let our Almighty David take our poor pledge how *we* fare, and bear it to our Father. And may he bring to us, from our FATHER, all spiritual food and sustenance we need in our camp, where we are engaged with the enemies of our salvation in warfare, as the pledge of his everlasting, unchanging love in JESUS.

1 SAMUEL 17:19

(19) Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

The fighting here spoken of means, I should suppose, the preparation only, for battle: for had the battle been opened, the single combat Goliath proposed, would have been unnecessary.

1 SAMUEL 17:20-22

(20) And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. (21) For Israel and the Philistines

had put the battle in array, army against army. (22) And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account of David's affection to his brethren. Though he had risen early and come a long journey, yet it is said, he ran to salute his brethren. Precious JESUS! methinks I see thee here. Didst not thou come from thy FATHER, and our FATHER, and leave thy sheep above, when thou camest at his command, to see how thy brethren fared below. Thou didst run indeed, blessed JESUS, when thou camest among us for the purpose of salvation, for thy zeal even consumed thee, and thou was straitened, until the baptism of thy sufferings was accomplished. Luke 12:50. The Reader will not overlook I hope, nor forget to connect the history of Joseph, sent on a similar errand by Jacob, with this of David. Surely we do not strain the subject in the idea of somewhat typical in both. See Genesis 37:13, 14.

1 SAMUEL 17:23-27

(23) And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*. (24) And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. (25) And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. (26) And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? (27) And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

The subject is beautifully introduced to the knowledge of David, as well by Goliath drawing nigh and trumpeting forth

his own challenge, as by the answers given by those that stood by to David's enquiries. But what I would wish the Reader particularly to notice is, the observation of David on the conduct and character of Goliath. A Philistine braving the armies of Israel, and one thus daring, who was uncircumcised. Observe, Reader, in this, what stress David laid upon the blessedness of being within the Covenant. Is it not, as if he had said, where can be the blessedness of Israel, or the high privilege of GOD'S covenant; if his people, even in the lowest circumstances, are thus to be insulted by their uncircumcised enemies? Oh! what a lift would it give to the faith of GOD'S people, if at the worst of times they took shelter under GOD'S covenant engagements. Shall I despond, shall I despair, when I know that my GOD in CHRIST is absolutely under covenant obligations to be my GOD, and to acknowledge me as one of his people? See that one promise to this effect, which is in itself a volume: Jeremiah 32:38.

1 SAMUEL 17:28-29

(28) And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. (29) And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?

The character of *Eliab* is here shown to the full, in this short relation of him. He is a portrait of every natural man, in his envy of what is gracious. It is very galling to flesh and blood, that *the elder should serve the younger*. Our dear LORD felt no small opposition in his blessed work, from the envy and unbelief of his brethren. See John 7:3-5.

1 SAMUEL 17:30-32

(30) And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. (31) ¶ And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he sent for him. (32) And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

We may read this passage sweetly indeed, if we behold in it some faint outlines of JESUS, who in his gracious undertaking for our deliverance is represented by the prophet, who, *when he saw that there was none to help* in all the armies of Israel, and when all hearts gathered blackness, *his own arm brought salvation, and of the people, there was none with him*. Isaiah 63:3-5.

1 SAMUEL 17:33-37

(33) And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. (34) And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: (35) And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. (36) Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. (37) David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

The offer of David, no doubt, gave courage to the whole army of Israel. For it should be observed, that Israel had been long accustomed, when at any time the LORD was about to deliver his people, to expect that deliverance in some unthought of way. And frequently the deliverer was altogether such as no human foresight could have provided. See in the case of *Deborah*, in the Book of Judges, chap. 4:1-9. And Samuel had

taught the people to recollect other cases. See 1 Samuel 12:6-11. But in the fears and apprehensions of Saul concerning David's youth, opposed to Goliath's strength and experience in war, we see how much his carnal heart was looking to an arm of flesh. The argument upon which David laid the greatest stress, in assuring him of victory, was not so much his former conquests over the lion and the bear, but because this Philistine had no interest in the covenant of God with his people, but had openly defied GOD himself. It is very encouraging in all our conflicts, when we see that we are not only on the LORD'S side; but that in reality the battle is the LORD'S and not ours. David told the Philistine so, before he engaged him. (See verse 47.) We have a beautiful example of the same kind, 2 Chronicles 20:5-15. But how much sweeter still, is it to eye JESUS in all these things, as going forth in the deliverance of his tried ones, from *the mountains of leopards, and from the lions dens*. Song Of Solomon 4:8.

1 SAMUEL 17:38-41

(38) And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. (39) And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him. (40) ¶ And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. (41) And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

There is somewhat very interesting in this equipping David for the battle; in the putting on, and putting off the unsuited armour, and at length, choosing only a few stones from the brook. Surely without much enquiry, we may see the gracious lesson it teaches us, under this simillitude. In going forth

against the cursed enemy of our souls, no human armour, though burnished, and sharpened with the keenest edge, will answer our purpose. The enemy, as is said of the Leviathan, *laugheth at the shaking of a spear. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold.* Job 41:28, 29. David went forth, as he saith himself in another place, in the strength of the LORD GOD: Psalm 71:16. He that prompted him to undertake the battle, armed him with strength suitable to it. The smooth stone of the brook, which was of GOD'S own creating, and which no human heart had polished or worked upon, was a sweet type, that both the LORD'S armour and the LORD'S strength should nerve his arm to give it the full commission intended. And how didst thou come, blessed JESUS, and of what was thy armour composed, when, in thy victory for us, and for our deliverance, thou didst enter the lists alone, to vanquish Satan, and sin, and death, and hell, and the grave. Surely *thine own arm brought salvation unto thee; and thy fury it upheld thee.* Isaiah 63:5.

1 SAMUEL 17:42-47

(42) And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. (43) And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. (44) And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. (45) Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. (46) This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. (47) And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

The address of the Philistine to David, and David's answer to the Philistine, previous to the battle, is exactly suited to their different characters. How confident are all carnal men, like this Philistine. And what a contemptuous view do they take of the LORD'S people. On the other hand, how humble and unassuming is the language of grace, like that of David. Here is not a word of himself, or of his own merit, or strength, or might, for the war. It is the LORD'S cause in which I am engaged, saith the gracious soul, and the LORD shall have all the glory. Reader! do not overlook this, as among the sweetest improvements of the history. And recollect, that even our dear Redeemer did not make application of his victories to himself, but to his FATHER. *Therefore* (saith JESUS) *doth my FATHER love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again., No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down if myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my FATHER.* John 10:17, 18.

1 SAMUEL 17:48-51

(48) ¶ And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. (49) And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. (50) So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David. (51) Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

Here we have the termination of the battle, in the fall of Goliath, and a tremendous one it was. So simple means as a stone, for the weapon of destruction, and slung by so youthful an hand, serve at once to show the arm of the God

of Israel engaged in it. Blind indeed, must be that eye that doth not recognize such a visible display. One of the Jewish Rabbins hath observed upon it, but by what authority I know not, that *Goliath* in his rage and contempt of David, when he said *Come, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air*, threw up the upper part of his helmet, and thereby left his forehead bare for the stone of David to have the easier entrance. Whether this were so or not, no doubt the LORD who presided over the battle and ordered all, so disposed of, everything in it, as to facilitate the event he had ordained. But is it not delightful to see, that the very weapons of the Philistine's own pride and ostentation, are made subservient to his own destruction. Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of Goliath, his total destruction whom Goliath represented, and by the conversion of his own weapons to his own overthrow. When the devil tempted Adam to transgress, little did he think, that this very transgression should lay the foundation for all the blessed things contained in our redemption by JESUS. And when in after ages, the Jews led on by his temptations, nailed JESUS to the cross, little did he then consider, that that very cross would become the glorious cause of his people's salvation, and their everlasting joy through all eternity. I would desire grace from the HOLY GHOST, ever to keep such evidences of the LORD'S overruling all the church's enemies, to his own glory and his people's good, in view. It would serve to prove in many lesser instances, where perhaps things are not so plainly manifested, the truth of that precious scripture, that *the very wrath of man* (and may we not add devils) *shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath the LORD will restrain.* Psalm 76:10.

1 SAMUEL 17:52-54

(52) And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the

gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. (53) And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. (54) And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

The event of this victory over Goliath, was, as might have been expected. The Philistines fled, and Israel pursued. But this was not fair as was agreed upon. Goliath had promised for his countrymen, that if any man could be found to conquer him, the Philistines would then be the servants of Israel. But now this is done, they flee. In the LORD JESUS'S victory, however, which this typified, the conquest will be altogether final and complete. The Devil, that deceived the world, will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and the torment will be for ever and ever. See Revelation 20:10, &c.

1 SAMUEL 17:55-58

(55) And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As* thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. (56) And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling *is*. (57) And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. (58) And Saul said to him, Whose son *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, I *am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

It should seem that Saul had forgotten the person of David, so as not to know him again, which would appear rather strange if it were not considered that his disease at that time had left him but little recollection; and his anxiety for his kingdom and his life, also now preyed, no doubt, much upon him. But when David made himself known to him, the matter must have been brought to his recollection.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the perusal of this chapter, and behold in the character of Goliath of Gath, and his bold and open defiance of Israel, a lively resemblance of that implacable, proud, and haughty foe, the accursed enemy of GOD and man, the Devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. How often hath he stood tremendous to thy view, defying GOD and his Redeemer, to save thee! How fierce and blasphemous have been his insinuations, in tempting thee to fear that his threatenings were but too well founded. And how often, like the whole army of Saul at his approach, again and again, not only for forty days together, but for years, in apprehension, hast thou fled from him, and been sore afraid! And indeed, had a deliverance from his power been left to the accomplishment of an arm of flesh, how sure would have been thy everlasting ruin!

Oh, precious JESUS! thou Almighty David of thy people! Blessed be our FATHER'S mercy, that sent thee to see how thy brethren fared, and to take their pledge! And blessed be thy love, which prompted thy divine mind to come to our rescue, from all the powers of sin and hell! And thrice blessed be the hour when in thine own blood and righteousness thou didst conquer for us all the enemies of our salvation! And now, Almighty LORD, we behold thee as returning from the slaughter of the Philistines, *having spoiled principalities, and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphing over them in it.* Now, LORD, we behold thee seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and all power thine in heaven and in earth. Go on, Almighty Conqueror, in thine holy war, until all hearts are subdued to the sovereignty of thy grace. And having wrought out such a glorions deliverance *for us*, work a still more powerful victory *in us*. And O lead us on, as the *Israelites* pursued the *Philistines*, to all the conquests

which thy redemption hath procured, until at length, having under thy banners manfully opposed and subdued all the enemies of our salvation, we follow thee to the seat of the conqueror, where, in an unceasing security which thy complete victory hath purchased, of everlasting joy, we obtain that kingdom which cannot be moved, and where thou last made us kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER.

CHAPTER 18

CONTENTS

This forms an interesting Chapter, because it opens that account of the loves of David and Jonathan, which in the after history of David forms so very interesting a subject. Jonathan's heart is won by David. Saul at first seemed to be much pleased with David, but because the women in their songs and dances praised David's victories more than Saul's, from that day forth Saul envied David. This Chapter relates some of the evidences by which Saul manifested this malice towards him, in casting his javelin at him twice to slay him; then proposing to give him his eldest daughter to wife, but afterwards giving her to another; then offering his younger daughter, but with the hope of proving his ruin. Notwithstanding these things David prospers.

1 SAMUEL 18:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

There is somewhat very sweet and engaging in this account of Jonathan. Among carnal men such a success as David's would have called forth the greatest dislike. But in the breast of Jonathan we find love. And was it not grace that made all

the difference? But how doth Jonathan's love sink to nothing, compared to thine, thou blessed JESUS, which thou hast manifested towards our poor nature? Of thee is it not the prophet speaks, when in allusion to thine unequalled love to thy people, he saith, *I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart and with my whole soul?* Jeremiah 32:41.

1 SAMUEL 18:2-5

(2) And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. (3) Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. (4) And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. (5) And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

Whatever this covenant between Jonathan and David might mean, yet it may serve to suggest to us that *better covenant established upon better security*, and better *promises*, which the LORD hath made *for* his people and *with* his people. The covenant *for* his people stands everlastingly and eternally secure, being founded between all the persons of the GODHEAD. See the outlines of it, Isaiah 59:21. and the covenant made *with* his people, see two sweet transcripts of it, Jeremiah 31:31-34. and 32:40. But there is another beautiful thought suggested to us in these verses, David was clothed with Jonathan's raiment. And did not our JESUS put on our garments, when he clothed himself in our nature? JESUS indeed stript himself of his robes of glory, when he put on the garment of mortality, and as the apostle beautifully speaks, *for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich*. Precious Redeemer! what love of Jonathan is to be named with thine? 2 Corinthians 8:9.

1 SAMUEL 18:6-9

(6) ¶ And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick. (7) And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. (8) And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom? (9) And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

Here we behold the sad consequences of jealousy and envy. David's victory now began to cost him dear. In all ages this hath been the case. And no sooner doth grace manifest itself in any man's heart, but the enmity of the carnal mind breaks out. How did the victories of our JESUS over diseases, the possession of evil spirits, and the like, subject him to the reproaches of bad men? *He hath a devil and is mad*, said some. *He casteth out devils*, said others, *through Beelzebub the prince of the devils*. And Herod sought to kill him. Yes! dearest LORD! in all things it behoved thee to have the pre-eminency, though it be in suffering, and in persecution.

1 SAMUEL 18:10-11

(10) And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand. (11) And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

What an awful account doth the scripture give of this unhappy man. No mercy from GOD, no deliverance from enemies, no services of friends, can work upon Saul's mind. *The last state of that man*, on whom Satan hath power, *is worse than the first*. Oh! LORD! whatever mercies thou art

pleased to withhold, take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from us. But while we mark the malice of Saul, led on by the devil, let us not overlook the safety of David, protected by the LORD. Oh! how eternally safe and secure are they kept, who are under the divine keeping!

1 SAMUEL 18:12-16

(12) ¶ And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul. (13) Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. (14) And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him. (15) Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him. (16) But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

It is worthy the Reader's remark, what is here said twice within a few verses of each other, of Saul's fear of David. Yes! there is a servile, pitiful, cowardly fear of the righteous, in the minds of the ungodly. And though the wicked hate the godly, and seek every occasion to slay them; yet in the midst of all, their minds are overawed at their presence. How did the Governor Felix tremble at the poor prisoner Paul's preaching, Acts 24:25. And though it be in an infinitely higher instance, yet it ought not to be forgotten, how did the band of men and officers, who went to apprehend Christ, fall to the ground before him overawed, and trembling at his presence! John 18:3-6.

1 SAMUEL 18:17-19

(17) And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him. (18) And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? (19) But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been

given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

This, in fact, was the original promise made by Saul to any man that should be found to kill Goliath. It was a breach of that promise it had not been done before. But it should seem that David's modesty had never demanded it. The giving his eldest daughter to another, was no doubt intended by Saul to displease David. But we find no resentment on David's part. Here, surely, David leads us to consider His unequalled patience, *who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

1 SAMUEL 18:20-30

(20) And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. (21) And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in *the one of* the twain. (22) And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law. (23) And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a light thing* to be a king's son in law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed? (24) And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David. (25) And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. (26) And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired. (27) Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. (28) And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal Saul's daughter loved him. (29) And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually. (30) Then the

princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

I class all these together, for the sake of shortness, and because one or two general observations will suit all. Saul's design is altogether evil, whether he withholds one daughter or promiseth another; it is but with a view to ruin David. But the humbleness of David's mind, under the gracious power of GOD, defeats all his stratagems. I cannot suffer those verses to pass away from our view without remarking to the Reader, that if David thus thought so highly of being made son-in-law to an earthly prince, what views ought the people of GOD to entertain of their adoption-character who are made *sons and daughters to the LORD GOD Almighty! Behold* (saith an Apostle) *what manner of love the FATHER hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of GOD!* Well might the Prophet, in the contemplation of gospel mercies exclaim, *O! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD!* See 2 Corinthians 6:18. 1 John 3:1. Romans 11:33.

REFLECTIONS

I would call upon the Reader, while calling upon my own soul, in the contemplation of this chapter, to pass by all other considerations, to pause over the view of the love of Jonathan to David; to remark its wonderful properties, to stand amazed at the extensiveness of creature love in this man; and then to ask my heart, whether there is not cause to blush in the view of it, when I compare his love to David to my love to Him, who is David's LORD? Was Jonathan's soul so instantly captivated, so strongly rivetted, and so engaged by covenant to David, as to love him as his own soul; to strip himself of his garments and of his princely robe, in order to cloath David; while I who have so long known the LORD JESUS; have been so often fed, so constantly cloathed, so everlastingly protected,

so graciously loved by him, feel such coldness, such deadness, and such little drawings of my heart towards him!

Oh! precious JESUS! *thy love indeed is better than wine, thy favour than life itself.* Thou hast shown it by ways infinitely surpassing the love of Jonathan to David. Thou hast not only clothed the souls of thy people, with thy robe and garment of salvation, but thou hast made over thine whole soul to their welfare. All the blessings of grace flow from thy boundless, matchless love. And the various ways by which thou hast made the rich discoveries of thy love, all show its wonderful properties. The covenant thou didst make for them in the everlasting counsel of peace, makes known thy love, for thou art thyself the whole of the Covenant. Yes! clearest LORD! thou hast proved it by all thy suretyship engagements; by all thy gracious undertakings; by all thy great accomplishments; by all thou hast done, and art doing, and wilt do for thy people. Oh! dearest, blessed JESUS! add this one mercy to all thou hast wrought, as great a miracle as any; melt my cold icy heart into a love for thee, who hast so loved me, and knit my whole soul unto thee, that I may fear and love thy name. Then will my song correspond with that of David, and I shall say as he did; *I will love thee, O LORD my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my Deliverer; my GOD, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my high tower.*

CHAPTER 19

CONTENTS

The history of David, and Saul's enmity against him, is prosecuted in this chapter. Saul throws off the mask, and openly commands his son and servants to kill David. Jonathan

expostulates with his father on the subject, and for a time obtains a promise, that David shall not be hurt. But his malice breaks out afresh, and he is obliged to flee for his life. Saul pursues him; but his design is overruled, and David again escapes. These are the principal things contained in this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 19:1

(1) ¶ And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

We should again remark in the character of Saul, the progress of sin. In his example indeed, it is most awful. Having not been able to accomplish his bloody design upon David by private stratagem, he now proceeds by open command. So Herod, in his intention to crush the LORD JESUS, desired the wise men, when they had found CHRIST, to tell him where he was, that he might go and worship him also; but when he found that scheme failed, he sent out an order to kill all children under two years old, concluding that that must subject the LORD JESUS to the power of the sword. Matthew 2:8, 9, 16.

1 SAMUEL 19:2-7

(2) But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself: (3) And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. (4) And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good: (5) For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David

without a cause? (6) And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.* (7) And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

While we behold the friendship of Jonathan to his beloved David, let us not overlook His friendship, concerning whom it may truly be said, as it relates to us and our rescue from everlasting destruction, a greater than Jonathan is here. Jonathan was made useful to David, in communicating to him his unkind father's designs concerning him; and he pleaded for David with his unnatural father. But our JESUS'S friendship to us and our fallen nature, was, and is, manifested in communicating to us the blessed intentions of our most merciful and kind FATHER, in redemption work. He lay in the bosom of the FATHER, and was intimately acquainted with all his gracious designs towards us from everlasting, and hath communicated them: *I have called you friends, (saith JESUS) for all things that I have heard of my FATHER, I have made known to you.* John 15:15. Yes! thou dear LORD, thou art a Friend indeed, *a Brother born for adversity, that lovest at all times, and one that sticketh closer than a brother.* Proverbs 17:17.

1 SAMUEL 19:8

(8) ¶ And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

How lovely David appears in the field against the common enemy of Israel! How infinitely surpassing all loveliness, doth JESUS the Captain of our salvation appear, when he goeth forth to the renewed assaults of sin and Satan!

1 SAMUEL 19:9-10

(9) And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand. (10) And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

What sad breaks in the history, are those melancholy instances of the evil spirit's dominion over Saul. And such, Reader, would be his dominion over you and me, did not sovereign grace restrain. It is JESUS that binds up his power, restrains the malice of the foe, and subdues by his grace, the influences of his malignant venom upon our corrupt and lustful nature.

1 SAMUEL 19:11-17

(11) ¶ Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain. (12) So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. (13) And Michal took an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster, and covered *it* with a cloth. (14) And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He *is* sick. (15) And Saul sent the messengers *again* to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him. (16) And when the messengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' *hair* for his bolster. (17) And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

These several narrow escapes of David are soon related, and we rest satisfied in the account, seeing he is safe. But they were very trying moments with him, as appears by his writings. The 59th Psalm, we are told by the title of it, was written by David, upon this very occasion. And if the Reader would wish to enter deeper into the view of what David's

feelings were upon this occasion, he will there behold, in the fervent breathings of his soul, his fears, and how the LORD strengthened him with faith. But while we look at David, let us not overlook David's LORD. Few of the holy men of old were more lively types of JESUS, in his unequalled persecutions, than David. And therefore, we should never read of the one in his seasons of trial, without having our minds directed to the other. Many of the most earnest expressions we meet with in David's Psalms, certainly had no reference to his own personal sufferings, for they could not be applied to him. And in many others, they are abundantly heightened and made interesting in their application to JESUS. See particularly the 16th and 22nd Psalms.

1 SAMUEL 19:18

(18) ¶ So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

It is pleasing to hear again of Samuel, who had long retired from the bustling scenes of government, to the college of the prophets, and presided over them. David's retreat to Samuel was, no doubt, with a view to ask counsel from GOD, how to act in the present juncture. Reader! doth not JESUS sometimes, and perhaps not unfrequently, unsettle our rests, and stir up matters to shake the earthly props of his people, on purpose to drive our hearts to him? But beside this retreat of David to Samuel at *Naioth*, to seek counsel from GOD, it should seem that he fled there as a place of safety. For there is reason to conclude, from what is related both in this place and in a former chapter, that the general opinion concerning the schools of the prophets was, that the spot was sanctified: and that those who came within its region were under particular impressions. Oh! that it could be said so now! See chapter 10:10-13.

1 SAMUEL 19:19-24

(19) And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah. (20) And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. (21) And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. (22) Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* said, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah. (23) And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. (24) And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, *is* Saul also among the prophets?

Those effects wrought upon the mind of Saul and messengers, seem to confirm what was said before, that certain impressions were wrought upon the minds of men according to the pleasure of the LORD, from the exercises of the prophets in their schools. In this instance, at least, it was made the means, in the LORD's hands, to deliver David from the power of Saul. The LORD hath a thousand methods, in the stores of omnipotency, to answer the purposes of his grace. *And he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.* And let not the Reader be surprized that the LORD should cause the same influence to work upon the mind of Saul. In all ages, bad men have been sometimes made the unwilling instruments of his pleasure. We read of New Testament Prophets, who shall be commissioned to much good to others, but in the end be found unrenewed in themselves, and rejected of GOD. Matthew 7:22, 23.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT an awful contrast marks the characters of Saul and Jonathan this son! While the Father manifests the malignity of an evil spirit, breathing out nothing but hatred, malice, and death, against a faithful servant, who had gone with his life in his hand, to deliver him and his kingdom from ruin; see how the son's heart is influenced with all the kinder feelings of love, and brotherly affection towards him, so as to love him as his own soul! Reader! remark with me, the precious, blessed properties of distinguishing grace.

But while we admire and praise the friendship of Jonathan towards David, let my soul take wing, and fly to the contemplation of the unequalled friendship of Him, whose love as far exceeds the love of Jonathan, as the light transcends the darkness. In the loves of Jonathan and David there was a congeniality of soul, of manners, of age, and of mind. But in thy love and friendship towards our fallen nature, O blessed JESUS, thou wast *a Brother born for adversity*. Thy love, to us was when our persons were not only totally opposite to thy pure nature, but loathsome; and no congeniality, no one thing to form a likeness, prompted thine infinite mind to such stupendous acts of mercy. Never forget, my soul, that it was while we were enemies, CHRIST *died for us*. And when we come to estimate the acts of JESUS' friendship, how doth all human friendship fall to the ground before it. Thy friendship not only led thee to engage as our surety, to pay all our debts, to supply all our wants, to answer all our demands, to purchase by thy blood and righteousness an inheritance for us; but thou didst give thyself a ransom to deliver us from captivity: didst place thyself in the very state of vassalage in which thou didst find us, and though unconscious of sin in thyself, didst become *sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in thee*. Oh! matchless love, unparalleled friendship! Oh! be thou, blessed

JESUS, to me ever dear, ever precious; and cause my soul to love thee, who hast so loved me, that *neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, may be able to separate my soul from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS the LORD.*

CHAPTER 20

CONTENTS

The subject of David's distresses, on account of Saul's seeking his life, is continued through this Chapter. David leaveth Naioth, and flees to Jonathan for counsel. They confer on the best means for David to adopt. A plan is suggested for this purpose, but it fails. They meet by appointment, and it becoming necessary for David to escape for his life, Jonathan and David part with tears.

1 SAMUEL 20:1

(1) ¶ And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

In those frequent flights of David from one place to another, is not the Reader reminded how JESUS was frequently compelled to make his escape from the fury of his enemies. From his birth, he was constrained to flee into Egypt. And in the Synagogue, when they thrust him out, and led him to the brow of the hill to cast him down headlong, he was obliged to seek his safety in hastening to *Capernaum*: and again, to avoid being stoned, to conceal himself from their knowledge by passing through the crowd. See Matthew 2:13. Luke 4:28-30. John 8:59.

1 SAMUEL 20:2-4

(2) And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it *is* not *so*. (3) And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death. (4) Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

It is somewhat astonishing, that as David had been anointed for the succession to the kingdom, and as such, was sure of the LORD's design, that his faith had not got the better of his fears. But we see in him, that mingled frame of mind which distinguishes, more or less, all GOD's people. Sometimes believing, and acting according to that belief. At others doubting, and then calling in question all GOD's promises. *Fear not, little flock*, (saith JESUS to his people) *it is your FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom*. But in the midst of this, how often do we find the people of GOD complaining lest they should fail of the grace of GOD. Luke 12:32. Hebrews 12:15.

1 SAMUEL 20:5-7

(5) And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even. (6) If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. (7) If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him.

The feast of the new moon was a solemn ordinance in the church, and observed in Israel with great solemnity. In pious families, it should seem by what is said of Jesse's household, these services were much attended to. Job's was of this kind. And was it not with an eye to JESUS, as a feast upon a

sacrifice? The sacrifice was to be once offered. But the precious effects of it were to be continually eyed in solemn remembrance. Such is the ordinance of the LORD's supper now. See Job 1:5.

1 SAMUEL 20:8

(8) Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?

The reference to this covenant is very interesting, because the covenant of the LORD, as it is called; included the engagements which are in CHRIST, the promised seed in the Covenant.

1 SAMUEL 20:9-17

(9) ¶ And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee? (10) Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly? (11) And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field. (12) And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee; (13) The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. (14) And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: (15) But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. (16) So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies. (17) And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Nothing can be more engaging, to interest the Reader in behalf of Jonathan, than what is here related of him. Though it should seem, he knew that David would be his father's successor in the kingdom; yet there is no jealousy on his part. His love for David threw all other considerations to the ground. He only desired that David would show kindness to his house. And amidst all the unpromising circumstances about David, his faith seemed now to be getting up again. But here, my soul, let Jonathan teach thee another lesson. Did he look forward to the period of David's exaltation, amidst all the obstacles which seemed at this time to quench the hopes of it, and cause David to promise mercy to his family, when things were so discouraging; and wilt thou not depend upon the promises of thy JESUS, who is purposely exalted at the right hand of power, to prepare sure happiness for all his people? Shall Jonathan's faith in David's prospects of preferment, be so sanguine as to take an oath from him, for a blessing in it; and wilt thou doubt the word, the promise, the oath of thy GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS? Oh! for faith *to believe the record which GOD hath given of his dear Son.* 1 John 5:11.

1 SAMUEL 20:18-24

(18) Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty. (19) And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. (20) And I will shoot three arrows on the side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark. (21) And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt; *as* the LORD liveth. (22) But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away. (23) And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever. (24) ¶ So David hid himself in the

field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

If the Reader recollects, our dear LORD did not go up publicly to the feast, but after his brethren were gone, he then made a private visit there. John 7:1-10.

1 SAMUEL 20:25-34

(25) And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. (26) Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean. (27) And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day? (28) And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Bethlehem: (29) And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table. (30) Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? (31) For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die. (32) And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? (33) And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. (34) So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

It should seem, that the plan between David and Jonathan for the discovery of the real intention of Saul, was of the LORD. For, humanly speaking, had David sat in his usual place,

before Saul, he could not have escaped with his life, when Jonathan's life became so endangered, only from Saul's disappointment. How profitable is it to remark the watchful eye of the LORD over his people! Reader! depend upon it, there are a thousand escapes of this kind, more or less, in the lives of GOD's children, and of which they are altogether unconscious. When we come to look over the battlements of heaven, and see all the way which the LORD our GOD hath led us through the wilderness, what songs of praise will burst forth in the view of deliverances? See that sweet promise: Isaiah 42:16.

1 SAMUEL 20:35-40

(35) ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. (36) And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. (37) And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee? (38) And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. (39) But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. (40) And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

I cannot help remarking on these verses, how many times the LORD makes men, like this lad, the unconscious instruments of working after the counsel of his will. What a glorious instance of this kind, is that of the Jews crucifying the LORD JESUS. *Him* (saith Peter in his inspired Sermon) *being delivered, by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of GOD, ye have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified and slain.* Acts 2:23.

1 SAMUEL 20:41-42

(41) *And* as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of *a place* toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. (42) And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

The sweetest instruction from this parting interview, (for they knew not that they should ever see one another again) is the recollection of that everlasting covenant, in which all the people of GOD are included. That precious promise made by JEHOVAH to the person of the LORD JESUS, the great Head of his people, is of everlasting efficacy: *As for me, saith the LORD, this is my covenant with them: my SPIRIT that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.* Isaiah 59:21. This became the security in the parting of Jonathan and David. And the same is the everlasting security of the faithful, in all the separations made in life, or death, among the LORD'S heritage. Children may die; friends may forsake us, we may be bereaved of all earthly things we hold dear; but, the LORD is the Rock of ages, and his mercy endureth for ever.

REFLECTIONS

READER! there is so much loveliness in the character of Jonathan, according as the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to present him before the church, in his conduct towards David, that I think it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to look at him with proper attention: and while we adore the gracious GOD that made him so lovely, we should implore grace to imitate his bright example. How beautiful he appears in this

chapter, in his wisdom of discovering the real state of his father's mind towards David, and in his contrivance of communicating the same, unobserved, to the mind of David! How very engaging he appears also, in his sympathizing with David on the occasion, and mingling his tears with his, in the prospect of separation! How lovely in his piety towards the LORD, in so cheerfully looking forward to the sure succession of David to the kingdom, though to the exclusion of himself and his own family, because the thing was of the LORD!

But, my soul, when thou hast taken the fullest, and most leisurely survey of the loveliness, and wisdom, and generosity of Jonathan, turn thy thoughts to the contemplation of thy JESUS, in whom are hid all the treasures of loveliness, wisdom, and knowledge; and behold that matchless superiority in him to every thing excellent. JESUS is, indeed, *the altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand*. He is the wonderful Counsellor, for guiding and instructing his people in wisdom and knowledge. And he is not only the noblest of all possible examples of mercy, but mercy itself; even *the mercy promised*. Yes! blessed JESUS, it is thy sweet and friendly office to give us counsel in all seasons of perplexity; to impart to us the secrets of thy FATHER'S will, both in a way of providence and of grace: and thou dost indeed sooth us in all our troubles. When on earth thou didst mingle thy tears with the sorrows of thy distressed family. And now in glory, thou still retainest the feelings of our human nature: and when we are driven out and forsaken of all men, thou dost never leave us, nor forsake us. Oh! Precious LORD GOD! when I think of thy matchless love, how infinite, how inexhaustible; that even my ingratitude and forgetfulness of thee cannot wear out. Shall I not in all seasons when viewing anything lovely in the creature, like this of Jonathan, shall I not call to mind thy surpassing loveliness, in mercy, grace, and favour to me, and

to thy people? And shall I not, under the impression of the vast superiority, point to JESUS, as the church of old, and say, *this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

CHAPTER 21

CONTENTS

The troubles of David are prosecuted in history through this chapter. Being driven from home, and like one banished the land, he visits Nob; receives from Ahimelech, the priest, hallowed bread: and the sword of Goliath, which was there. David hastens to Achish, at Gath; is but poorly received, and full of fears lest the men of Gath should betray him, he feigns himself mad. These are the principal points in this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 21:1

(1) ¶ Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?

Poor David, though the conqueror of Goliath, and the deliverer of his country, yet being proscribed by the king, and wandering about in the preservation of his life, excites fear in all that he approacheth. If what *Doeg*, the *Edomite*, told Saul be true, as is related in the succeeding chapter, (see chap. 22:9, 10), the priest *Ahimelech*, enquired of the LORD about him; that is David came to the tabernacle to seek counsel from the LORD. And what more proper for a tried, exercised soul? Reader! it is sweet when our afflictions lead us *to* the LORD; and do not keep us *from* the LORD. Beloved JESUS! in his unequalled agonies, cried unto his FATHER; and in proportion as his sorrows increased, the more vehement was his prayer. Luke 22:44. It is not meant by Ahimelech's saying, Why art

thou alone, and no man with thee? that he had no company; for our blessed LORD in referring to this history of David, speaks of him and those that were with him, *as eating of the show-bread*. See Mark 2:26. But it means that David had no suitable companions, so that he looked as if he were in haste for his life, and which was really the case.

1 SAMUEL 21:2

(2) And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

Let the Reader observe, and observe with concern, not like the carnal triumph of the ungodly over the frailties of good men, whose hearts rejoice in the view, saying, *Aha! Aha! So would we have it:* but let the Reader observe, how the want of faith and confidence in the LORD, leads men, even true believers, into sin. Had David trusted in Him and his support, who anointed him Saul's successor, he needed not to have run up and down in such apprehensions for his life. David could, and did, say upon another occasion, *my times are in thine hands*. Psalm 31:15: and in that assurance he then found strength. But now, he loseth for the moment, sight of this confidence, he falls into sin, and forgets the Rock of his salvation. Reader! learn to make this improvement from it. The best of men are but men, and frail sinful men too; when left to themselves. Grace is no self-acting principle. Sweetly doth Paul speak on this point, and his experience corresponds to that of the faithful in all ages: *I know nothing, by myself*. 1 Corinthians 4:4. *I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me*. Philippians 4:13.

1 SAMUEL 21:3

(3) Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves* of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

David wanted bread: he felt the force of hunger, and therefore scrupled not to take of what the priest would give him in his distress. Do I not see JESUS's hunger here pointed out, when he was led up of the SPIRIT into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil? But oh! how vast the superiority? Though that holy, harmless, undefiled High Priest, felt all the pressure of hunger; *for he was in points tempted like as we are, sin only excepted*, yet JESUS permitted not a miracle to supply his own wants, though he graciously wrought many to supply the wants of others.

1 SAMUEL 21:4-6

(4) And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women. (5) And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. (6) So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

The Reader, if he consults Leviticus 24:5-9, will understand what this hallowed bread was. Being set apart to GOD's service, it could not be used in common. Abstinence from even lawful things, at certain times, and upon certain occasions, was enjoined by the law. See Exodus 19:15. And this is what is meant here, by the young men being kept from women: namely their wives. As to the bread, the observation which our blessed LORD makes on this passage, in his discourse with the Pharisees, (see Matthew 12:1-4,) throws the best light upon it. The *show-bread* was peculiarly for the priest's use, having been sanctified. See Leviticus 24:5-9. But

David's necessity pleaded for the dispensing with this law; and *Ahimelech* judged it right. But is there not much of gospel in it? Did it not mean to show, that in the dispensation by the LORD JESUS, the bodies of his people were the temples of the HOLY GHOST, and were holy, being sanctified by the SPIRIT? And as JESUS himself, which this show-bread represented, is the bread of life to his people; so his people are made kings and priests to GOD, and the FATHER; and consequently, are privileged to eat that bread of life, and live for ever. LORD, *evermore give us this bread.* John 6:32-34.

1 SAMUEL 21:7

(7) Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.

The character of this man is somewhat singular. He was an *Edomite*; that is, one of the stock of Esau. How came he in the house of the LORD, or employed in the service of Saul? Perhaps from being skilful as an *herdsman*. And observe the expression; he was *detained* before the LORD; that is, his attendance in the sanctuary was constrained, not willingly. So that take him altogether, he was an enemy to GOD and his people. His presence, when David came to the sanctuary, foreboded no good. When the sons of GOD present themselves before the LORD, *Satan comes also with them.* Job 1:6.

1 SAMUEL 21:8-9

(8) And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. (9) And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

Poor David in his flight came unarmed. It is good to furnish our armoury from the sanctuary. *The sword of the SPIRIT is the word of GOD.* The sword of Goliath was a sword of remembrance, and no doubt peculiarly valuable, to David. It was hardly possible for him to look upon it without giving a new edge to his faith. There is great sweetness in all our past experiences of GOD'S mercy.

1 SAMUEL 21:10

(10) ¶ And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

It is astonishing to see how the LORD'S most eminent servants have been obliged to seek shelter from their foes. *Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab, (saith the LORD) be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.* Though they are *outcasts*, yet are they GOD'S outcasts. And Moab, a sworn foe to GOD, shall protect them, if the LORD finds it necessary. Isaiah 16:4.

1 SAMUEL 21:11

(11) And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

Certainly the idea of David's succession to the kingdom of Israel must have been by this time generally understood, for the report of it had reached and gained belief in Gath.

1 SAMUEL 21:12-15

(12) And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. (13) And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard. (14) Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to

me? (15) Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the mad man in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?

The fears and distresses of David were very great, no doubt, when: he feigned madness, in order to escape the danger which threatened him. Certainly there was enough to alarm him, had he not had resource in the LORD. For he was now in the very spot which Goliath came from. He had the very sword of Goliath on him. He was now surrounded with an host of foes. But, amidst all these dangers, and the feigning himself mad, never perhaps in any period of his life was his mind more composed and settled upon GOD. It was to this state of mind that we are indebted, under the HOLY GHOST, for those most beautiful Psalms which he then wrote, and which have refreshed, and will continue to refresh, the church of the LORD in the afflictions of his people in all ages. I mean the 34th and the 56th, to which I refer the Reader. The latter is called *Michtam* of David; meaning a golden Precious Psalm of David. The title also, upon *Jonath-elem-rechekim*, some have thought intimates himself, because it means, *the silent dove that is afar off*, alluding perhaps to his distance from home, and in the midst of his enemies. How beautiful is it to see, in this man's experience, how faith works when the LORD gives grace. When his natural fears had prompted him to throw himself into the very bosom of his enemies, his spiritual faith, which the LORD had given him, led him to throw himself into the very bosom of his GOD. There, blessed JESUS, it is I would be found living and dying; in my best and in my weakest frames. *For thou art my hiding place: thou shalt preserve me from trouble: thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.* Selah. Psalm 32:7.

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BLESSED Redeemer! I cannot behold the show-bread which David craved for himself and followers, from the hand of the Priest, without having my soul led to contemplate thee, thou bread of life, thou show-bread on the Golden Altar, before thy FATHER, as the everlasting food of all thy people. Thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed. Thou hast been the show-bread of thy FATHER before all worlds. As the corn is bruised, and broken, and prepared for nourishment to the body, so, precious JESUS! hast thou been bruised and broken for our sins, and prepared for the durable substance of thy people, from and to everlasting. And oh! the heavenly, the divinely prepared sustenance in thee! Thou art shown forth by our GOD and FATHER as the infinitely satisfying fulness on which thy people may live for ever. Without thee all is empty and unsatisfying. in thee every want is answered. Thy Priests (for all thy people are a nation of kings and priests) enjoy thy fulness. The carnal world neither know thee nor enjoy thee. Oh! precious LORD GOD, enable me by true faith, with all the royal priesthood, to make a special appropriation of thy person and righteousness, with all thy saving benefits, to my soul. I would live upon thee, rejoice in thee, walk with thee, and make use of thee, as David did the show-bread of the sanctuary, upon every occasion. Be, thou my GOD, and acknowledge me for one of thy people. Never like *Doeg*, to be detained before thee; but, as a free-will offering, may I *present myself by the mercies of my GOD a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD, which is my reasonable service*. And do thou, dearest JESUS, give me of the bread which is in secret, which the world knoweth not, because it knew thee not, that *I may eat and live for ever*.

CHAPTER 22

CONTENTS

David's distresses are still continued, and form the subject of this Chapter. He is constrained to leave Achish, and gets to the cave of Adullam. His relations now seek to him: many persons in desperate circumstances join him: Saul's rage against him breaks out with more and more violence: Doeg the Edomite, having informed Saul of Ahimelech the priest's kindness to David, Saul causeth the priests of Nob to be slain, and the city of Nob is destroyed by him. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escapes, and flees to David. These are the principal matters contained in this Chapter.

1 SAMUEL 22:1

(1) ¶ David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

It is an observation that meets us at every part of Davrd's history, and ought to be marked down by the Reader with a particular mark, that but for the many and multiplied troubles of David, the Church of the LORD would have wanted those precious things which his book of Psalms contains. It is indeed a Book of rich experiences. And the HOLY GHOST hath furnished for the Church, from this man's history, a great variety to suit most cases of his people. The title of the 142d Psalm marks this as the period, in David's life, when it was written. And a most precious Psalm it is. I beg the Reader to turn to it, in order to behold the workings of David's mind. But, while I do this, in order that the Reader may have the more lively idea of David's history, I beseech him to be always looking beyond David to behold him whom David so strikingly typified. One example in proof will be sufficient to justify this request, and may serve to throw light upon many others. In that Psalm David saith, *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.* Now the Reader cannot fail, I should hope, to recollect that JESUS was

precisely in this state, when all the disciples forsook him and fled; when one denied him and another betrayed him.

1 SAMUEL 22:2

(2) And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Here surely, if any where, we may see the LORD JESUS strongly typified. Yes! thou dearest LORD! thy little army is composed of distressed souls; for none will make thee their Captain whose spiritual circumstances are not desperate. Until I found myself totally insolvent, and unable to satisfy the debt of GOD'S law; until my soul felt distress from the sense of sin, the alarms of conscience, and the accusations of Satan; until discontent under a load of guilt, and the fear of the wrath to come, compelled me to seek redemption; never wast thou dear to me, nor did I desire to come under thy banner! But now, oh! thou chiefest among ten thousand; now art thou to me the altogether lovely, and the Captain of my salvation. *They shall come, it is said, that are ready to perish:* and I am also convinced that without thee I must, perish for ever. Isaiah 27:13.

1 SAMUEL 22:3-4

(3) And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me.

(4) And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

I pass over the consideration of David's filial regard to his parents, sweet and profitable as the review of his affection to them would be, in the improvement it holds forth, in order to attend to a point in these verses infinitely more important; I

mean, that patient waiting, and dependence upon GOD, until he knew what the LORD's will concerning him was; and how he should be disposed of. The highest marks of faith are those which eye GOD in every thing, and cause the soul humbly to wait the LORD's pleasure. When we can pray over the dispensation, leave that dispensation with Him that ordereth all things in wisdom; and cheerfully abide by the result. This is faith in its best principles. Reader! may you and I thus love CHRIST, and then we shall truly glorify him. See another beautiful example of this kind in David's conduct on a similar occasion. 2 Samuel 15:25, 26.

1 SAMUEL 22:5

(5) And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

I admire the conduct of David in thus taking counsel from the Prophet, and following his advice. He considered it as coming from the LORD. The prophet *Malachi* had it in commission in after ages to tell the Church, that GOD's servants are his messengers to give information to his people. Malachi 2:7.

1 SAMUEL 22:6-8

(6) ¶ When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;) (7) Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; (8) That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

Reader! remark the progress of iniquity in this unhappy man. Not able to bring his son Jonathan over to his own persuasion, he now implicates him in the supposed treachery of David; and thus seeks a pretence in the counsel of the wicked for David's destruction. Doth not the Reader call to mind an higher instance of this turpitude, in the conduct of the High Priest towards the person of our adorable Redeemer. *Answerest thou nothing?* (said this pretended upright and conscientious High Priest) *behold how many things they witness against thee.* And when our dear LORD, agreeable to what had been predicted of him, standing, *as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, and opened not his mouth,* still remained silent. "I adjure thee (says he) by the living GOD, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of GOD?" And when to this solemn demand, the Son of GOD, who came to bear witness to the truth, openly professed who he was: the High Priest rent his dothes, and pronounced it to be blasphemy. See Matthew 26:62-65.

1 SAMUEL 22:9-10

(9) Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. (10) And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

Uniformly in all ages of the church the children of the bond-woman are enemies to the children of the free. Esau's race, the Edomites, and Jacob's seed, the true Israelites, are in different covenants. Reader! put it down as a certain truth, every one belonging to CHRIST must and will suffer persecution. Galatians 4:29.

1 SAMUEL 22:11-15

(11) Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob:

and they came all of them to the king. (12) And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord. (13) And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? (14) Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? (15) Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

I never read the process of an unjust tribunal like this of Saul's, but I desire to have my thoughts directed, by the HOLY GHOST to contemplate thy matchless humbleness and purity of soul, dearest JESUS, when, before Pontius Pilate, *thou didst witness a good confession*. The conscious rectitude of *Ahimelech* in the instance before us, lovely as it is, sinks to nothing in the comparison. Who is faithful among all the LORD'S servants, as the servant whom JEHOVAH had chosen? And yet was not he accused of blasphemy? Oh! thou LAMB of GOD, who didst endure such a contradiction of sinners against thyself. Hebrews 12:3.

1 SAMUEL 22:16-19

(16) And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. (17) And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. (18) And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. (19) And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

Observe, the awful height in iniquity to which Saul is now arrived! he calls Ahimelech and his companions Priests of the LORD: and yet dares to lay hands upon them. And observe, the awful character of Doeg: and in him mark the decided hatred in the hearts of all men, by nature, to the children of grace. This man is a lively type of it. But Reader! do not fail to remark, the fulfilment of GOD'S threatened judgment upon the house of Eli, here visited on the children. See chap. 3:11-14. I do not know anything more awful, than the consideration that the threatenings of the LORD, as well as his promises, must be fulfilled. JEHOVAH is as truly engaged to the performance of the one, as he is to the other. And what an alarming consideration is the thought, that the days shall come when the wicked shall be driven from the presence of the LORD, with everlasting destruction. 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

1 SAMUEL 22:20

(20) ¶ And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

The flight of Abiathar to David, should serve to teach every persecuted soul that JESUS, the Son of David, must be fled to in all seasons of distress. It is he which receiveth the sinner under the threatened pursuit of law and justice, and affords shelter in his righteousness against all their claims.

1 SAMUEL 22:21-23

(21) And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. (22) And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house. (23) Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.

Though David held forth such consolation to Abiathar, yet it appears, from his history, and the contents of the *Fifty-*

second Psalm, which he wrote upon this occasion, that his mind was sharply exercised, though with steady faith. But do we not see a greater than David here? Is not our Almighty David shadowed forth, as brought into distresses, and bringing his followers, to similar situations like Ahimelech? But how sweet the relief to the mind, that our Almighty David hath anticipated the sure judgment, which must follow the persecutors of his people. Yes! the LORD will destroy, all the enemies of our salvation, and that for ever. David hath marked *Selah* to this observation, when he prophesied that they should be rooted out of the land of the living. By which he meant that the Reader should mark it down as a thing so sure to be done as if it were done already. See Psalm 52.

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HERE, dearest JESUS, in the flight of David to the cave of Adullam, I would pause to contemplate thee. Thou art ever precious, ever lovely, ever endearing, in every possible point of view, in which my soul beholds thee; but when I see thee, as David is here represented, as becoming the Captain of every poor distressed, discontented, and wretched debtor: oh! how doth my soul long to come for ever under thy banner, and hail thee the Captain of my salvation!

And in this glorious character, as the Leader and Commander of thy people, do I not behold thee as the gift of thy FATHER to this blessed purpose, to the fugitive, distressed band of poor, ruined, and undone sinners? Do I not view thee as becoming Captain *over* them, as well as Captain *to* them! For surely, when thou receivest them in the wilderness of their state by nature, thou regeneratest them by thy power, convertest them from the error of their way, and dost not only cancel the debt of the insolvent, and soften and remove the distress of the afflicted; but take away the very cause of discontent in

those who have found but too much reason to be dissatisfied with the ruined state of their nature, and have fled to thee for peace and content, in thy finished righteousness, and blood-shedding atonement. Yes! thou blessed JESUS! thou Almighty Captain of our salvation! it is thine, with the sword of the SPIRIT, both to conquer for them, and conquer in them. Oh! let thy precious word bring with it convictions of our sin, and convictions of thy all-sufficient righteousness; that thy little army may become more than conquerors through thy grace leading them on; until all the Sauls of persecution and opposition, which hunt for their life, are destroyed; and thou shalt bring them into thy holy mountain, thy kingdom, where thou wilt make them kings and Priests to GOD and the FATHER, for evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER 23

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This is an interesting Chapter, and it contains some sweet practical instructions to the exercised believer, in his views of what is here recorded in the life of David. Saul is still pursuing him for slaughter; the LORD works deliverance by David for the men of Keilah; notwithstanding which the men of Keilah intended to deliver David into Saul's hand. David retreats to the wilderness of Ziph, and there has an interview with Jonathan; but upon the Ziphites treachery, in inviting Saul to come and take him, David escapes from thence, and retreats to the strong holds of En-gedi.

1 SAMUEL 23:1-4

(1) ¶ Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors. (2) Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the

Philistines, and save Keilah. (3) And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? (4) Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

If the Reader will consult the preceding chapter, at the fifth verse, where Gad the prophet bids David go into the land of Judah, he will then discover both the cause in this rescue the LORD intended him for Keilah, and that he might have a servant of the LORD in the person of Gad for his instructor in all doubtful cases. It is sweet in providences to trace the LORD's hand, and to connect one event with another, in order to observe the LORD's dealings with his people. But it is sweeter still to behold, in the outlines of the LORD's people's exercises, some resemblance, however faint they are, to JESUS. Amidst all David's own private distresses, the love of Israel was uppermost in his heart. But oh! how shrunk to nothing is this view of David compared to David's LORD, who, in all his agonies in the garden, and the path to the cross, would have restrained the tears of the daughters of Jerusalem, which they were shedding for him, to shed them over the beloved Jerusalem. Luke 23:28.

1 SAMUEL 23:5

(5) So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

What a blessed testimony was this victory that the LORD was with David. Surely, Reader, the LORD doth give tokens, many love tokens by the way, amidst our sorrowful paths, did we but notice them, of his presence and favour.

1 SAMUEL 23:6

(6) And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in his hand.

It was no inconsiderable token this neither of the same favour, in that the priest brought with him the ephod into the wilderness: for, as David was cut off from the house of the LORD, it was pleasing, and especially in those days, to have the symbols of his worship. The *urim* and the *thummim* were in the ephod: and David, no doubt, considered them as *lights* and *perfections* to instruct him. But, Reader, do not overlook our superior privileges. We need no more the urim, nor the thummim, the ephod, nor the altar, In CHRIST we have all: he is the sum and substance, of which those symbols were the shadow and figure. Oh! precious JESUS! be thou my High Priest, my Ephod, my Urim and Thummim, both Altar and Sacrifice. *On* thee would I offer up all my poor offerings; and *from* thee receive all I need.

1 SAMUEL 23:7

(7) ¶ And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

I beg the Reader, through the whole history of Saul, to mark with me the progress of sin. He is arrived to that degree of ripeness in iniquity, that now he hath not only thrown off the mask in openly persecuting David, but he dares to join God himself with him as engaged in his cause. Thus, Reader, the apostle tells us, that *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.* 2 Timothy 3:13.

1 SAMUEL 23:8-9

(8) And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. (9) And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

This furnisheth an interesting view of David. In his distress, what doth he do? He doth not take counsel of his friends: he doth not engage any thing upon his own strength; but he flies to the LORD: *bring hither the ephod*. Reader, let us, in all our lesser trials, adopt the same. Whither shall the exercised go with their troubles, but to the LORD? Bring hither, I would say, GOD'S word, and let me seek counsel there! Oh! it is a very high privilege to have a GOD in CHRIST to go to, who is engaged in covenant to deliver his people; and when more likely than when they call upon him?

1 SAMUEL 23:10-13

(10) Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. (11) Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down. (12) Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver *thee* up. (13) Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

The enquiry of David, and the LORD'S answers, were suited to his present circumstances. It was not that Saul would come down, but that it was his *intention* to come down; and, therefore, it implied the necessity of David'S departure. The LORD is graciously pleased to furnish out suitable providences, when such things wilt answer his blessed purpose, without stepping out of the ordinary way, to deliver his servants.

1 SAMUEL 23:14-15

(14) ¶ And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. (15) And

David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

Every day Saul sought to accomplish his purposes, and every day, the LORD as often delivered his servant. Such are the LORD's deliverances to all his people. Oh! how precious would it be to the souls of the faithful, if they every day lived, kept house, and feasted upon this; for the truth is certain; the LORD himself saith, *I, the LORD, do keep it; will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* Isaiah 27:3.

1 SAMUEL 23:16-18

(16) And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. (17) And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. (18) And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

It must have been a very refreshing thing to the heart of David, this interview with Jonathan. And, no doubt, the LORD graciously brought it to pass for a relief to poor David, to bear him up under his trouble. But, Reader, I hope you will not need from me to be reminded, that if the visit of Jonathan was so sweet and seasonable to David, what must *his* visits be to his poor ones in distress, who is *a Friend at all times, and a Brother born for adversity?* Surely, dearest JESUS, if the kindness, and friendship, and love of Jonathan was so constant, well may I depend upon thee, whose love is from everlasting, and whose friendship is like thyself, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.* Do I see Jonathan, a poor creature like myself, and whose friendship, at the highest, could be but creature friendship, thus faithful to his David; and shall I ever more doubt thy love, thy friendship,

dearest JESUS, when both are the result of Creator and Redeemer affections. Oh! for grace to behold thy frequent visits in the woods of this world, and the wilderness state, and as frequently to renew the covenant engagements

before JEHOVAH, in which thou hast promised to be my portion, and I to be the purchase of thy blood for evermore.

1 SAMUEL 23:19-26

(19) ¶ Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? (20) Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand. (21) And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me. (22) Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly. (23) See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah. (24) And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. (25) Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. (26) And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

We have reason to bless GOD for these continued exercises of David, however painful to him, they prove profitable to us. Those two precious Psalms, the 54th and 63^d, were written by him upon those occasions as the Reader will perceive by consulting them in the title page. And, Reader, depend upon it, that life in grace will be peculiarly honoured by the LORD,

that is, peculiarly marked with situations for the exercise of grace and faith, and the display of GOD'S faithfulness in carrying the believer through them. If the LORD hath promised his presence to his people in affliction, must they not be brought into trouble, in order to have that precious promise realized?

1 SAMUEL 23:27-29

(27) But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land. (28) Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth. (29) And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

The Hebrew word *Sela-hammah-lekoth*, means the *rock of divisions*. And is there not an everlasting division between the Sauls and Davids in all ages of the church? Reader, remark how, in the very moment of inevitable destruction, as it should appear to us, the LORD calls off the enemy from the pursuit: thus is the case of Saul from David. And in a yet more remarkable case, in the instance of another Saul, in gospel times, when he was threatening, and breathing out nothing but death and slaughter against the disciples of the LORD. It is sweet to trace the LORD'S hand in our deliverances. See those scriptures, Acts 9:1, and Isaiah 37:28, 29.

REFLECTIONS

READER, let us pause over the perusal of this chapter, if it be for no other purpose than to remark the gracious care of a covenant GOD over his people; and to observe, that though *many be the afflictions of the righteous, yet the LORD delivereth out of them all*. But let us further learn from the view of it, how graciously the same merciful LORD supports the trials of his people, and makes their back suited to their

burden; that *as their day is, so their strength shall be*. Surely nothing but the LORD'S grace could have been found sufficient to have borne up David's mind under such heavy afflictions. And who, thus supported, but must have been constrained to say as he did; *It is good for me to have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes?* if trouble, and the malice and persecution of our enemies, be made the means, in the hand of our most wise and gracious GOD, to bring our hearts to live on him; and if, (as is most probable) without these exercises, our hearts would not be found so closely cleaving to the LORD; oh! who would not wish to be driven out from all creature comfort, that we might experience such sweet and holy enjoyment as David did, in communion with GOD.

But chiefly, from the perusal of this chapter, let us, Reader, eye JESUS. Was not that precious LAMB of GOD represented in all David's troubles? Did Saul hunt David from city to city, and from one place to another; and can we forget, how *strong bulls of Bashan beset him around, until his strength was poured out like water; and his heart, like wax, was melted in his bowels!* Yes! thou dearest JESUS, David's LORD and Son! thou wast exposed to the wrath, both of devils and of wicked men, in the day of thy calamity. Thou didst endure *such a contradiction of sinners against thyself;* and wast brought under oppression and suffering, until that thy life was made an offering, and a sacrifice for sin. But here, blessed JESUS, in the view of thine unequalled sufferings, may I always connect with it the cause. All this was not for thyself, but thy people. In the midst of all, thou wast *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* And when I see thee in these situations of trial and suffering, and behold thee personating thy people, *the heir of all things,* and yet *not where to lay thine head; the brightness of thy Father's glory,* and yet *thy visage marred more than any man:*

the wonder, the praise, the adoration of angels, and yet, as thou saidst thyself, *a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and the outcast of the people!* Oh! precious, precious JESUS, what love must have enflamed thy heart, that thou shouldst become all this, and infinitely more than this, even *sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in thee.* Hail! holy Saviour! gracious LORD GOD, Emmanuel! add one blessing more, and incline every heart to love thee, that *every knee may bow before thee, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.*

CHAPTER 24

CONTENTS

The history of Saul's pursuit of David, is continued in the opening of this chapter. But, in this pursuit, the LORD brought Saul into David's hand: his followers advise David to avail himself of the advantage; but David refuses. He takes occasion, however, to remonstrate with Saul, by bidding him take notice what he might have done, and how he forbore. Saul seems pricked to the heart, in the relation: confesses his sin to David, and obtains from David, a promise of kindness to his house. They part.

1 SAMUEL 24:1-2

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of Engedi. (2) Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

What an awful view doth the character of Saul afford, of the desperately wicked state of the heart of man by nature, void of grace. With what unremitting, unabated fury, doth Saul

hunt after the life of David. Reader! recollect the instance of the Jews hunting after the life of JESUS, of whom, in this point no doubt David was a type.

1 SAMUEL 24:3

(3) And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

Covering his feet, in these hot countries, most probably means sleep, (though some have thought another relief of nature). No doubt a sleep from the LORD, in order to deliver his servant from his hand. If the Reader, while he reads this chapter, will consult the 57th Psalm, he will perceive what a very precious moment in the life of David this was. David wrote that Psalm, concerning this very period. I do not say that he in the same moment did it. But what then passed in his mind, at that period, was what he afterwards committed to writing. So that he might be said to have *composed* it when he had enough to have *discomposed* his mind, and no doubt but for God's presence and grace, would have been discomposed indeed. It was very properly called *Michtam* of David, meaning *golden, precious* words of David, for nothing can be more so. But I refer the Reader to it. And he will there discover how a full and an entire confidence in the LORD, bore him up to do as he did. This Engedi was in the wilderness, a barren rocky place. Yet even here, Saul's jealousy and rage could not allow David to live peaceably.

1 SAMUEL 24:4-7

(4) And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. (5) And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. (6) And he said unto his men,

The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD. (7) So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.

The LORD had given David many precious promises, that he would be with him to deliver him at all times. And the LORD had done so. Indeed the anointing him to the throne, implied all this. But there was no one promise of a particular day when the LORD would deliver Saul into his hand. Therefore this was a temptation of the enemy. And it is plain that afterwards David saw it in this point of view, when his heart smote him for only having cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. But Reader, when you have paid all due attention to this example of David, in the forbearance of resentment for injuries received, (for it is a very sweet one, and may serve to show us that true believers in CHRIST cannot take the government even of their own wrongs into their own hand, for they are themselves the LORD'S property, and the LORD'S care;) when I say, you have paid all due respect to this view of the subject, turn your thoughts to one infinitely higher, and in the person of David's LORD on the cross, see how JESUS, in his unequalled forbearance, prayed for mercy on his murderers; and no doubt, from these prayers of JESUS, several of those who crucified the LORD of life and glory, were afterwards made the happy partakers of redemption in his blood. Think, Reader, of the manifold wisdom of GOD in this, and behold how that prayer was literally fulfilled, though in a way the very reverse in which it was uttered; when they said, *his blood be upon us and upon our children*. Compare Matthew 27:25, with Acts 2:23, 37-41.

1 SAMUEL 24:8-15

(8) David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked

behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. (9) ¶ And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? (10) Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD'S anointed. (11) Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. (12) The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. (13) As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. (14) After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. (15) The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

Reader! I do request you will remark with me, how all the finer feelings of the christian, and the man, are blended in this address of David. What could he have said; what ought he to have said more? He first calls upon him as his sovereign; next as his father; so as to plead the double claim that he had upon him to kindness. He then, in a most graceful manner, would have set up an apology for Saul's unkindness, in taking for granted that he had ill-advisers. It could not be Saul; whom I have served; whom I have loved; whose battles I have fought; whose subject, nay, whose son-in-law I am. It must be some base adviser. And after this, as if to bid defiance to every barefaced insinuation which might have been made against him, he holds up the skirt of Saul's robe, and says, See! what greater evidence would my lord and father desire, that I value and wish to preserve his life, when in the same moment I cut off thy skirt, I might have cut off thine head. He then points out the degradation of a king to pursue such a poor fugitive as himself, as if the death of a

flea, or a dog, could give comfort to a character so high and exalted as a king. But, as if to show Saul the awfulness of such a conduct, twice in his speech, he dwells upon the certainty of the decision from a righteous GOD, to whom he makes appeal. As much as to say; if nothing can prevail upon one from whom I have a right to expect love, to soften his resentment so unjustly bestowed upon me; the LORD will do me justice, and the event will be most tremendous to mine enemy. Reader! do not fail to remark with me, the happiness of such a frame of mind, which is its own reward: for the conversion of our natural passions into gracious deeds, is bringing a very heaven into the soul. But while you and I look at the *effects*, never let us overlook the *cause*. It is JESUS which inspires the whole; and not only makes one man differ from another, but makes a man differ even from himself. In proof of this, compare David's conduct here, with his heart smitten for only cutting off Saul's robe; and look at him in the case of his conduct to *Uriah*, where after murder and adultery, his heart never smote him for *nine whole months* together. And would not have smitten him then, if the LORD in mercy had not sent grace to awaken by the ministry of the Prophet. If the Reader be not able to mark the difference, and to know where, and to whom to ascribe all the praise, I can but pity him. But if, happily, the LORD be his Teacher, I know his heart will rejoice with me, to behold all the pride of man laid low, and let GOD have what is his just due, the whole glory. See 2 Samuel 12:5-9.

1 SAMUEL 24:16-22

(16) ¶ And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is this thy voice, my son David?* And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. (17) And he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. (18) And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand,

thou killedst me not. (19) For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. (20) And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. (21) Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. (22) And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

Is it not matter of astonishment, that after such a palpable act of mercy as David had shown Saul, that his mind should still retain hatred to the person of David, as we find in the sequel of the history it did? And is it not yet more astonishing that Saul should even weep, confess his baseness, and yet soon dry up the tears and hate more than ever. Reader! I beg it of you as a favour, though your welfare, not mine, is concerned in the request, look inward, search that depth of corruption lodged in your own heart! depend upon it, the LORD did not ask that question by the prophet, without full cause, when pronouncing the heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, he added *who* can know it? meaning no doubt that none can thoroughly know it, but the LORD. See Jeremiah 17:9, 10. No man hath ever yet penetrated to the bottom of the wickedness and deceit of his own heart; neither have all the foldings in which foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, been laid open to any man's view. Proverbs 22:15. But wherefore have I adverted to this subject; or requested the Reader to look so narrowly within? Believe me, it is not that any pleasure can be derived to him that writes, more than to him that reads, from ripping open the bosom of either, when both are alike unclean. But it is to endear JESUS; it is to render him yet more sweet and more precious. It is, to convince, by an evidence so decided, and palpable as a man's own bosom, that *there is salvation in no other*. The tears of Saul, the tears of Esau; nay, all the tears which have been

shed from the days of Adam to this hour, have no efficacy to change the heart, or wash away sin. And though I make a wide difference between these tears of Saul, in the same unregenerated state, and the tears of Peter, when the LORD had renewed him to repentance; yet the tears of Peter, were only precious evidences of his being renewed, and his heart changed; not the means of his acceptance. Neither those tears, nor that repentance, became the cause of his recovery, or of the LORD'S favour. This mercy wholly sprung from the fountain of mercy, GOD'S grace in JESUS CHRIST. Oh! for testimonies in my soul that I am become a new creature in CHRIST JESUS, by the sweet fruits of faith, repentance, and a new life. But with all these precious gifts in full exercise in my soul, I pray GOD that I may lay no stress upon either, but wholly seek to be accepted in the person and complete redemption-work of JESUS CHRIST. As Paul counted *all things but dross to win CHRIST, and be found in him*; so would I pray to be found, living and dying *to the praise of the glory of his grace*, wherein he hath made poor sinners *accepted in the Beloved*. See Philippians 3:7-9. Ephesians 1:6, 7.

REFLECTIONS

READ, my soul, in the character of this deluded, wretched, and unwise king of Israel, the sad history of every unrenewed man, by nature. Blind to all his own real interest and happiness; and giving himself up to work all malice with greediness. And is not every man in this state, that goes forth to the pursuit of persecution, and regardless of his own happiness. He sees not the light of life. He knows nothing of JESUS and his righteousness, but is full of envy, hatred, and every evil work. Alas! what shall open his eyes, or awaken his mind to the proper apprehension of good and evil?

Read, my soul, in the unwearied persecutions of poor David, the happy state, notwithstanding all outward circumstances, of the godly in CHRIST JESUS. Though cast out, and fugitives, and vagabonds, too frequently, in the sight of men, or, as David speaks, like a flea, or a dead dog, of no value; yet chosen of GOD, and precious. They are crucified with CHRIST; exposed to the rage and violence of Satan and bad men; and worse than all, to the remains of indwelling corruption in their own nature. But, O dearest LORD, how sweet and refreshing is the thought, *more is He that is with us, than all that are against us*. All the Sauls, which now persecute us, know as he did concerning David, that the LORD hath established his kingdom in the hearts of his people. Let this, O my GOD, be my everlasting comfort under every trial. Poor, wretched, persecuted, and deeply tried, as I may be in myself, yet JESUS will plead my cause, and bear me out through every difficulty. LORD! do thou carry me through all the caves of *En-gedi*, and the mountains, and wilderness state of my warfare; support me under every burden; lighten every care; bear one up under every trial; lead me through every opposition; bring me constantly near thy throne of grace, and finally bring me home to thy throne of glory.

CHAPTER 25

CONTENTS

This Chapter contains a great variety of contents, in its relation. Here is an account of the death of Samuel; the character and behaviour of Nabal towards David; the sin-preventing providence of GOD, in causing Nabal's wife, by her prudence, to avert the intended destruction of Nabal and his house, by David; the death of Nabal, and the wife of Nabal becoming afterwards, the wife of David.

1 SAMUEL 25:1

(1) ¶ And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

It is not said *how* Samuel died. The HOLY GHOST hath thought it enough to record his death, without subjoining anything more. No doubt, he died in faith. In another scripture, the HOLY GHOST hath said so. See Hebrews 11:13 with 32. So died all the faithful! As they lived, so they died, *waiting for the consolation of Israel*. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the patriarchs, prophets, all looking with an eye of faith to Him, and speaking of him, *to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*. Luke 2:38. Precious faith! so may it be my portion to live, and so to die; clasping JESUS in my arms, and dropping this tabernacle, in the moment while his name is the last word quivering on my lips, and he himself in my heart. See, Reader! how the memory of the faithful is blessed, in the lamentation over his remains. *Precious in the sight of the LORD, is the death of his saints*: and precious in the sight of saints, is the death of each other. Psalm 116:15.

1 SAMUEL 25:2

(2) ¶ And *there was* a man in Maon, whose possessions *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

Probably *Maon*, was near the wilderness of *Paran*, in its borders. This is the wilderness which David refers to, when he said, *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar*. Psalm 120:5. Gracious souls! dwell often with ungracious companions, by necessity. A state of nature, is frequently spoken of under the similitude of *Kedar*. Song Of Solomon 1:5.

1 SAMUEL 25:3

(3) Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *she was* a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churlish and evil in his doings; and he *was* of the house of Caleb.

The HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give the names of this married couple. Perhaps, to point out thereby more strikingly, their character. *Nabal*, signifies in its original, *a fool*. And *Abigail*, the *joy of her father*. *Caleb*, the progenitor of Nabal, was of a different spirit, of whom such honourable testimony is given in the holy word. Numbers 14:24.

1 SAMUEL 25:4-8

(4) And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. (5) And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: (6) And thus shall ye say to him that liveth *in prosperity*, Peace *be* both to thee, and peace *be* to thine house, and peace *be* unto all that thou hast. (7) And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. (8) Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

Let the Reader observe, how poor David, though king elect, and long since anointed as such, was put to hard shifts and difficulties to live, for the common accommodations of this life. When the Reader hath duly pondered over this, let him not be surprised that kings elect in grace, should be exercised with difficulties also, in their way. Though JESUS hath made them *kings and priests to GOD, and the FATHER*; yet according to their high rank, they are proportionably exercised. *I think* (says Paul) *that GOD hath 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. 1 Corinthians 4:9. Highly dignified followers of the LORD! Count it, I charge you, honour, *to be thought worthy to suffer shame for his name.* Acts 5:41.

1 SAMUEL 25:9-11

(9) And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. (10) And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who *is* David? and who *is* the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. (11) Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* unto men, whom I know not whence they *be*?

It is evident, that Nabal was no stranger to David's history, by this answer; or he could not have called him the son of Jesse, nor Saul's servant. But observe, in order to cover over his inhumanity under fair pretences, instead of speaking of David, the deliverer of his country, from the Philistines, and as one oppressed for his faithfulness, he calls him a runaway servant, and only the poor son of a poor father. It is astonishing to observe how the worst of men will find excuses, by way of justifying their conduct.

1 SAMUEL 25:12-13

(12) ¶ So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. (13) And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

The principal feature I would beg the Reader to remark in this part of David's conduct, is the evidence it carries with it, of the remains of indwelling corruption in the best of men. It is like a wound lurking under a covered skin: let it be touched

beneath the surface, and out the matter comes. It was truly unkind in Nabal so to treat David's modest request. But this became no apology for David's unjust resentment. Oh, Reader! let you and I learn from it, that nature, even when renewed by grace, is renewed but in part. The body of sin and death still tends to corruption; though *the inward man be renewed day by day*.

1 SAMUEL 25:14-17

(14) But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. (15) But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: (16) They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. (17) Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he *is such* a son of Belial, that *a man* cannot speak to him.

We should overlook the servant in this happy and seasonable advice, to remark the hand of GOD in it. How sweetly doth Joseph look beyond second causes, in the instance of himself and brethren, when the overruling providences of GOD had so arranged the events in his wonderful life, that their inhuman conduct in selling him for a slave was made the very foundation of his becoming their preserver. It was not *you* that sent me hither (said Joseph) but GOD. Genesis 45:8. Reader! depend upon it, you lose a thousand of the most precious enjoyments of life, if you do not continually take into your view the gracious overruling hand of GOD in all that concerns you. Every blessing is made doubly sweet, by thus beholding the LORD arranging and appointing all.

1 SAMUEL 25:18-31

(18) ¶ Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five

measures of parched *corn*, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on asses. (19) And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. (20) And it was *so*, *as* she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them. (21) Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *pertained* unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good. (22) So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall. (23) And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, (24) And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, *upon me let this iniquity be*: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. (25) Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, so *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. (26) Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. (27) And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. (28) I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days. (29) Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, *as out* of the middle of a sling. (30) And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; (31) That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

I need not offer any comment, by way of explaining what is already so very plain; or of recommending what is so very beautiful in itself, in this conduct and address of *Abigail*, to the Reader's notice. But, while I would leave the Reader to his own reflections on this most interesting passage in the chapter, I cannot suffer him to pass on, without calling on him to remark with me, how very evident the wisdom and grace of GOD must have been working upon Abigail's mind, to induce this conduct. Oh, Sir! it is sweet, very sweet, to observe how a gracious GOD arrangeth and disposeth of a thousand things to bring about the purposes and counsels of his own will. Whether Abigail knew the LORD, or whether she did not, at this time, yet GOD was pleased to make her an instrument to save the shedding of blood, to protect and shelter the innocent from being included in the common calamity with the wicked, and to keep back his servant David from sin. Perhaps David referred to this instance when he expressed himself in that Psalm, of being *kept from presumptuous sins*. Psalm 19:13.

1 SAMUEL 25:32-34

(32) ¶ And David said to Abigail, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: (33) And blessed *be* thy advice, and blessed *be* thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to *shed* blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. (34) For in very deed, *as* the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

I have often admired, and every renewed opportunity of reading these delightful words of David again makes me to admire, still more and more, the pious sentiments which David utters in contemplating the mercies he then was receiving. I desire the Reader to remark with me, how precious a strain of the most devout affections they breathe,

while he revered the gracious hand of GOD in this sin-preventing providence. He first, as is most suitable and proper, looks up and acknowledges the hand of GOD. *Blessed* (says he) *be the LORD GOD of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me.* Having blessed GOD as the *Author*, he *next* looks with gratitude to the *means*: *Blessed* (says he) *be thy advice.* And *lastly* he looks to Abigail as the honoured *instrument* in the LORD's hand to restrain, *blessed be thou.* Here's blessing upon blessing, in that he had been kept from sin, and his corrupt nature had not been suffered to embroil his hands in blood. I know not what the Reader's feelings are upon this occasion, while beholding the restraining grace and mercy of GOD towards his servant; but for my own part I desire to look up and ascribe the whole of my preservation and safety from the commission of all evil to the same source, the over-ruling and restraining grace of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. See 1 Peter 1:5. Sweet is that prayer of JESUS: John 17:11.

1 SAMUEL 25:35

(35) So David received of her hand *that* which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

How delightful the issue of an affair which appeared at first so alarming.

1 SAMUEL 25:36-38

(36) ¶ And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. (37) But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone. (38) And it came to pass about ten days *after*, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

The awful departure of Nabal, is enough in itself to strike terror to every unawakened, unregenerated soul. The LORD *smote Nabal*, it is said. The HOLY GHOST hath not recorded anything more of this man. This is indeed more than enough to show the folly and madness of sin. How awful a death! Like another rich man we read of, whose last account is, that *he died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes in torments*. From such an end good LORD deliver us! Luke 16:22, 23.

1 SAMUEL 25:39

(39) And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

What must have been the thoughts of David when these tidings were brought him. Reader! it is a blessed thing when GOD'S people can leave all their affairs with their GOD. The apostle's advice is founded on this; Romans 12:19-21.

1 SAMUEL 25:40-44

(40) And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife. (41) And she arose, and bowed herself on *her* face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord. (42) And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife. (43) David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives. (44) But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which *was* of Gallim.

These historical relations are thrown in at the close of this Chapter, because though not immediately interesting, yet they form a part in the after circumstances of David's history.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss our review of this chapter, nor close the book which records the death of Samuel, without first paying due tribute to a memory so truly valuable. I would for once methinks pass over the consideration of many other beauties contained in this Chapter, in order to gather suitable reflections from the tomb of the prophet. It pleased the LORD to call Samuel to be his servant in a day of great departure from the LORD. And the LORD was pleased to call him home at a season when corruption abounded. Surely it was a time when such a man was most needed. Saints and servants of the LORD who are eminent in their day and generation, are the salt, the light, and pillars of the earth. When they are gone, their vacancies form sad gaps in the church. How different a death from that of *Nabal*! while the one dies unlamented, unpitied, disregarded: the name of *Samuel* ever lives in remembrance, and his memory is blessed.

But let us not stop here. Do I not see in Samuel a type of the ever blessed JESUS! Not only as a prophet, but as a priest, a ruler, a judge, a deliverer in Israel? Was Samuel *promised* of the LORD as his very name *Samuel* implied? and was not our JESUS the very *promised seed*, in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed? Was Samuel coveted by his mother, and as instantly lent or returned unto the LORD from the womb; and do we not feel our minds in this view, directed to the contemplation of him, who in all ages was the earnestly sought and longed for, *the desire of all nations*, and who was given as a covenant of the people, dedicated to GOD, and consecrated in the service of redemption, from his miraculous

birth. Yes, blessed JESUS! the outlines of thy unequalled character thou wert pleased to have marked out in the several servants of thine, which ministered in thy church before thy coming. The early call of Samuel, and his being appointed to the prophetic office; his ministry, his unkind treatment, and rejection by the people; his benevolent labours, prayers, and intercessions for Israel; these, and many other circumstances which marked his life, became typical of thee, and thy divine mission, when for the government, instruction, and redemption of thy people, thou camest on earth as the almighty prophet of thy church, and as the faithful priest whom GOD the FATHER promised to raise up, that should *build him a sure house, and become his anointed for ever*. Oh, blessed JESUS! the gift of our GOD and FATHER *unasked*; and here as in a thousand other instances, infinitely surpassing all the Samuel's thy servants, be thou to me both prophet, priest, and king! Do thou now by the rich anointing of thy blessed SPIRIT, graciously teach me of thyself and of thy FATHER: guide me and lead me into all truth, and when thou hast accomplished all thine holy will and pleasure concerning me in this my day and generation; LORD, take me home to thyself to behold thy glory, that *where thou art there may I be also*.

CHAPTER 26

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The history of David's persecution by Saul is again opened, and continued through this Chapter. The Ziphites inform Saul against David. Saul goes in quest of him. David is favoured with another opportunity of slaying Saul, but will not avail himself of it. A similar interview takes place to what happened

before between David and Saul; after which they depart one from the other.

1 SAMUEL 26:1

(1) ¶ And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?

This is the second instance of the treachery of the *Ziphites*. (See chap. 23:19.) And what had David done to deserve it at their hands?

1 SAMUEL 26:2-3

(2) Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. (3) And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

Observe, how little effect the pretended contrition of Saul had left upon his mind. Alas! until grace makes a saving change upon the heart, there is neither real sorrow, nor true repentance, wrought in the soul.

1 SAMUEL 26:4

(4) David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

It should seem that David could not be immediately brought to believe that Saul, after his former profession, would have pursued him any more. But the fact proved it to be so. Reader! learn from hence, what a deceitfulness there is in the heart of man?

1 SAMUEL 26:5-7

(5) And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner

the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him. (6) ¶ Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. (7) So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

This bold attempt probably was from some secret influence imparted to David's mind. The sequel of the history of it proves, how sweet a lesson he gathered from it, and therefore it seems not improbable, that the LORD inclined his heart to the undertaking. Reader! it is very profitable at times to observe, how graciously the LORD leads on the minds of his people to do what they themselves would otherwise have never been competent to perform.

1 SAMUEL 26:8-9

(8) Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time. (9) And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

Observe the different principles of nature and grace in the minds of Abishai and David. How lovely doth David appear in this instance. But for a more delightful instance look at the cross of JESUS. Luke 23:34.

1 SAMUEL 26:10

(10) David said furthermore, *As* the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

Was there not somewhat of a spirit of prophecy in those expressions of David, when we consider the close of Saul's life? Chap. 31:4. See also Psalm 43:9, 10.

1 SAMUEL 26:11-12

(11) The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

(12) So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

This last verse becomes a clue for explaining this wonderful transaction, *a sleep, from the LORD* had sealed up their senses. Oh! what a volume of comfort ariseth out of this view, in the LORD's watchfulness over his people. How can the LORD seal, or how can the LORD open the faculties of our enemies, when either operation shall best promote the purposes of his glory and his people's welfare. See a sweet promise to this effect: Isaiah 54:16, 17.

1 SAMUEL 26:13-20

(13) ¶ Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them: (14) And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king? (15) And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. (16) This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster. (17) And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king. (18) And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand? (19) Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord

the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods. (20) Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

Here is a similar interview to what passed, chap. 24:8. but here, David first calls to the servant of Saul, and afterwards to the master. The argument David makes use of in this conference is also stronger than in the former, he complains of being driven out of his inheritance; from the inheritance of the LORD; and as such, being tempted to mingle with the heathen and learn their works. But how beautiful is it to observe, that there is no railing against Saul, no accusation brought against him for a breach of his word and honor. When our LORD JESUS CHRIST was struck by one of the officers in the palace of the high priest, we find no answer of wrath, no charge, no crimination made by the LAMB of GOD; but only a justification of himself and a meek question, *Why smitest thou me?* John 18:22, 23.

1 SAMUEL 26:21

(21) ¶ Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

We have here once more the king of Israel's honest confession of the injury he had done David, and his promise that he would do so no more. But not a word of his sorrow for his sin against GOD. That repentance which begins not in GOD's grace, is never to be depended upon in man's mercy. Alas! Saul knew not his own heart! He was compelled from

the moment to say as he said, but his heart remained the same.

1 SAMUEL 26:22-25

(22) And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it. (23) The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed. (24) And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation. (25) Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

David points out in this account one grand motive why he had been so favourable to Saul, in that he considered him, as the LORD'S anointed. And had Saul considered David in the same light, his life ought to have been set by as equally sacred. It doth not appear by what follows in the history of Saul and David, that they ever conferred with one another, or saw the face of each other after this anymore. *David went on his way*, it is said, the way of grace and salvation; for JESUS was then as he was afterwards, and is now and ever will be, *the way, the truth, and the life*. *Saul returned to his place*. An awful account though short: for where is the place of the wicked, *where* in this life, and *where* in that which is to come? *Judas*, when he fell, went to his own place. Acts 1:25.

REFLECTIONS

READER! again the HOLY GHOST calleth us to behold the implacable and unmerciful malice of Saul, and the gracious exercises of the mind of David, in a renewed instance of the evil designs of the one, and the deliverance GOD wrought for the other. Let us obey the sacred call, and pause over what we have read, in order to mark the different dispositions, of

these men; and yet more especially to behold the gracious interposition of GOD, in defeating the evil schemes of Saul and prospering the hand of David.

But may we not without violence to the subject, behold in the unremitting persecution of David by Saul, somewhat more than the mere jealousies of nature in the envy of Saul to David, respecting his succession in the kingdom? Are there not traces to be seen of the still greater envy arising in the mind of the unregenerate, in the view of the LORD'S favour towards his people in a spiritual kingdom. Alas! what bitterness do the children of the wicked one manifest to the children of the kingdom? Like the corrupt stock from which they shoot, their very vine is *of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah*. In this spiritual warfare what goings forth of the enemy, like Saul in the pursuit of David, are there every day to surprise by ambush, or to take by subtilty? And what *Ziphites* are there every where to join in the confederacy, to deliver the godly into the snare of the wicked. Ye soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, *be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of GOD*. Remember your enemies are the enemies of our GOD and of his CHRIST. He will fight your battles. *Stand still* and you shall shortly *see the salvation of GOD*. He hath delivered you hitherto, and doth deliver, and therefore trust in him, and he will yet deliver. Ere long the battle will be finished. That promise is absolute. *The GOD of peace shall bruise satan under your feet shortly*.

CHAPTER 27

CONTENTS

The HOLY GHOST in holding forth to the church the history of David, hath in this Chapter given us a view of this great man in the infirmities of his character. Here are his fears respecting Saul, and his want of faith in GOD recorded: his flight to Gath in consequence thereof: Achish the king of Gath, his kind reception of David: gives him Ziklag for a dwelling place. During his residence in the country of the Philistines, David maketh excursions upon the neighbouring states and conquers them, but deceives Achish in the account. These are the principal contents of this Chapter.

1 SAMUEL 27:1

(1) ¶ And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

Surely the HOLY GHOST had a most gracious design in giving the church the true portrait of David in this verse. Was it possible for David after two such remarkable interpositions, as the 24th chapter relates at the cave of *Engedi*, and as the 26th chapter relates of the event in the wilderness of *Zeph*: was it possible for David ever to question the LORD'S care of him, even if he had not also been anointed for the succession to the kingdom? But Reader! in David we behold what all human nature affords evidence of, to demonstrate what a man's faith is when supported by GOD, and what the same man is when left to himself. Put it down, my brother, as a maxim of everlasting truth and, certainty, if the LORD leaves our faith alone to act of itself, that act will be weak indeed. It is but for the great author and finisher of faith to withdraw the arm of his power, and then the poor believer falls into fears and doubts, as David did. Reader! if you know anything of precious faith, I would charge it upon you as one of the grand

lessons of the soul: learn to make JESUS the *finisher* as well as the *author* of your faith and salvation. There are many souls who know CHRIST as the *author*, but very few are so highly taught as to make him the *finisher*.

1 SAMUEL 27:2

(2) And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.

Besides David's want of faith, here was a breach of obedience. The prophet Gad had been commissioned to tell David to abide in Judah, how then could he think himself either justified, or in safety, in fleeing to Gath? See chap. 22:5.

1 SAMUEL 27:3-4

(3) And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife. (4) And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

Saul's giving over the pursuit of David seems to be so related, not as he did it from choice, but from necessity. There was no opportunity of going after David into an enemy's country. It is not unfrequently so by men in various transgressions. When men have no longer power to prosecute their lusts, they relinquish what they can no longer enjoy. The heart remains the same, but the ability is no more. An awful picture this of a state of unregeneracy.

1 SAMUEL 27:5-7

(5) And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? (6) Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore

Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. (7) And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

The removal of David to Ziklag, seems to have been from an higher direction than either David or Achish. From its being nearer to the borders of Judah, the return thither would be more easily effected. And as Ziklag originally belonged to Judah, it was literally no other than giving back again what belonged to Judah. See Joshua 15:31.

1 SAMUEL 27:8-12

(8) ¶ And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. (9) And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish. (10) And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. (11) And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so *will be* his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines. (12) And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

No doubt *a* zeal for the honor of GOD, with an eye to what the LORD had determined concerning the utter destruction of the Amalekites, was the leading object David had in view in this excursion. See Exodus 17:14. It is astonishing to see, in the dissimulation of David with Achish in this business, what littleness, mixed with much greatness, the mind of man is made up of. Alas! what is any man, the best of men, but a mass of sin and unworthiness in himself. Oh! how precious is the LORD JESUS endeared to the heart, in every review of what he is to us, and what we are without him. 1 Corinthians 1:30.

REFLECTIONS

Do not, my soul, pass over the review which the HOLY GHOST gives thee of David's want of faith, in the opening of this chapter, without taking home with thee the important instruction it affords, to teach thee where thy strength is, and where is all thy stay. Oh, blessed SPIRIT! I thank thee for the view. Yes, gracious GOD, I see the need of it. If David failed after such distinguishing evidences of favor; if he, *the man after GOD's own heart*, was led away from his steadfastness; Oh! how shall I be supported in a trying hour? There is a way indeed by which I shall be more than conqueror; and that is in thee, O blessed JESUS. Thy servant hath from his own experience assured the church, that *they which are kept, are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation*. LORD, I take occasion from the weakness of David's faith, the HOLY GHOST hath here shown me, I take occasion to bespeak thy grace for every trying hour, and that thy strength may be made perfect in my weakness. To thy precious bloodshedding power would I look; in its divine efficacy would I trust to resist all temptations; and under its sprinkling would my soul come; this, this dearest JESUS, will secure me, and like the holy army in heaven, who overcame by the blood of the LAMB, I shall then be enabled *to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*.

CHAPTER 28

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We are hastening to the close of the reign and life of Saul. The Philistines are preparing for a battle fatal to Saul. He is dispirited and dismayed; and instead of looking to the LORD, he betakes himself to familiar spirits; the sad consequence

which follows, and the alarms of Saul, are rehearsed in the close of this chapter.

1 SAMUEL 28:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

See Reader, in this preparation of the Philistines for battle against Israel, the sad effects of Israel departing from the LORD. The LORD had promised when he settled his people in their kingdom, to drive out all nations from before them, and that there should not be a man to stand before them. But, when Israel deserted the LORD, the LORD raised up enemies to Israel, as his instruments to correct them. See Joshua 1:3-5. But Reader! when you have duly pondered this subject, as it concerns Israel of old, look at it again, as it concerns Israel now. Are not our unsubdued corruptions, our unhumbled lusts, and the remains of inbred sin in our mortal bodies, like those Philistines waging war with the soul? Did you and I live wholly to JESUS, would those enemies dare rise up against us? How important is that exhortation of Peter, when he said, *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.* 1 Peter 2:11.

1 SAMUEL 28:2

(2) And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

The situation of David was critical. How could he fight against his own people? And on the other hand, how could he continue in safety with Achish?

1 SAMUEL 28:3

(3) Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

The reminding the Reader of the death of Samuel is very interesting in this place. Samuel was dead, and now the Philistines became bold. No doubt before his death, he had lamented in secret the sad conduct of Saul, and the corruptions of the people. Every true lover of GOD must mourn in secret for the sins of Zion. Reader! it is a sad proof of sad times, when the righteous die, and are taken away from the evil to come. But, *blessed are the dead that die in the LORD*. They enter into rest. They cease from their labours. They are in better company. Happy souls!

1 SAMUEL 28:4-6

(4) And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. (5) And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. (6) And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

It is more than probable, that Saul in his haste to destroy David, had neglected even the common means of safety respecting his kingdom. His army perhaps dwindled and scattered abroad; so that when the Philistines came forward with so formidable an host, and even advanced as far as Shunem, which lay in the tribe of Issachar, and in the borders of Israel itself, there was great cause for dismay. But all this would have been nothing, if Saul had made GOD his friend. Israel had found, upon all occasions, while the LORD of hosts fought their battles, that one would chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. But when *the LORD is turned to*

be their enemy, and to fight against them, this sums up the full heaped measure of human misery.

1 SAMUEL 28:7

(7) ¶ Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

Observe, that Saul, in his distress, enquired of the LORD, but the LORD answered him not. But how did he enquire? Samuel was dead. The Priests, the faithful Priests of the LORD, Saul had killed. See chap. 22:17-19. By whom then did he enquire? Perhaps presumptuously, without either Prophet or Priest. But if not; it is evident that Saul's enquiry was not in the way GOD had appointed, neither was his heart prepared to enquire, as appears by the sequel. For when the LORD did not immediately answer; from GOD, Saul turned to the devil. Alas! what answer can men expect, when like Saul, they seek not GOD in faith, but are in league with the unfruitful works of darkness?

1 SAMUEL 28:8-20

(8) And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee. (9) And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? (10) And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. (11) Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. (12) And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul. (13) And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said

unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. (14) And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself. (15) ¶ And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. (16) Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? (17) And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David: (18) Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. (19) Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow *shalt* thou and thy sons *be* with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. (20) ¶ Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

In order to have a right apprehension of this part of Saul's history, it will be needful to take into the account the several circumstances connected with it. Let it be then first observed by the Reader, that what is here called having a *familiar spirit*, refers to those who, imposing upon the credulity and ignorance of mankind, pretended to divine, and foretell events. Thus Balaam was a noted impostor of this kind, whom Balak called out of the East, to use his enchantments against Israel. And GOD was pleased to overrule this man's devices, so as absolutely to make him the instrument of blessing the very people he hired himself out to curse. See Numbers 22:23, 24; and the Commentary upon those Chapters. Hence we read also in Isaiah, that there were wizards who did peep, and

mutter, and spake as whispering out of the dust. See Isaiah 8:19; and chap. 29:4. There have been such characters in all ages. And men forsaken of GOD, in desperate circumstances like Saul, have had recourse to them. Let us next consider how far the LORD is said to have permitted such things. Paul tells us, that *it is no marvel that there should be false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of CHRIST; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.* 2 Corinthians 11:13, 14. And in another part of his writings he seems to admit the possibility that one putting on the appearance of an *angel from heaven might be suffered, by way of exercise to the faith of GOD's children, to preach another gospel* from the true one. Galatians 1:8. From these views of the subject, we cannot be at a loss to have a proper conception of this *supposed* apparition of Samuel to Saul, by the witch at *Endor*. The great enemy of souls might be permitted to personate the departed Prophet. As such he appears to Saul's view like Samuel. He is permitted to speak of the events shortly to happen; the rout of Israel, and the death of Saul and of his sons. And thus, through this means, Saul is awfully apprised of what is about to follow. That it could not be Samuel himself is, I think, evident from other considerations. Neither Satan nor his instruments, can have power over the souls of glorified saints. Neither was it probable that Saul, at his death, should in his spirit associate with Samuel. Neither could the soul of Samuel be said to *come up out of the earth*, when we know that the spirits of just men made perfect are with the LORD. Neither, had it been really Samuel, would he have told him of the awful events about to take place, without following it up with advice to repent, instead of driving him to despair, and thereby forming a temptation to self-murder. From all these considerations, it seems to me very evident that there was a permission for the appearance of Samuel's form by *the Prince of the power of*

the air, the spirit that both then and now still worketh in the children of disobedience; the LORD overruling in this instance, as in that of Balaam, and in the case of another spirit, permitted to foretell the fall of Ahab at Ramoth Gilead. See 1 Kings 22:20-22.

But, while I have said so much, by way of helping the ordinary Reader to what appears to me to be the safest plan of forming a right conception of this part of Saul's history, I beg that he will allow me to suggest to him one thought upon it which is more important; and which may not only serve to guide his mind, under grace, to a becoming humbleness on this, but other parts of scripture which are not so interesting for us to be over anxious about the clear apprehension of. Depend upon it, my Brother, had it been an object of moment to the peace or comfort of the church, the HOLY GHOST would have been more explicit. But wherever we meet with anything of obscurity, the reason is obvious: *Secret things belong to the LORD our GOD.* Enough is revealed for us and our children to know. And here let our chief enquiry be directed. One passage in the supposed conference between Saul and Samuel, opens to our minds a subject of infinite improvement; and to this I would desire to direct the Reader's principal attention: I mean where Saul saith, *I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and GOD is departed from me.* Oh! Reader! what state out of hell can exceed this in misery? When a child of GOD is in trouble the LORD is with him. If sorrow, sickness, nay even sin oppress him, JESUS is the support and burden-bearer of all: and he both bears his people, and all their burdens with him. But to be at once forsaken both of heaven, and earth, where shall the wretched run for deliverance then? What a dolorous case like that of Saul's, doth the prophet describe, when he saith;

Woe is me for my hurt; my wound is grievous: truly this is a grief, and I must bear it. Jeremiah 10:19.

1 SAMUEL 28:21-25

(21) And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me. (22) Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way. (23) But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. (24) And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: (25) And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

The sequel of this story is just as might be expected. Had this message, awful as it was, come from heaven in answer to prayer, a door of hope might have still been open to repentance. But, when the poor misguided wretch had knocked at the gates of hell, and received such an answer, nothing *but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation remained*, to finish the misery. See that awful scripture, Hebrews 10:26-31.

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IF ever the contemplation of the wicked, in his progress from sin to sin can become profitable to deter from the commission of sin, and to keep back the soul, under grace, from presumption; surely there is not a character in scripture which teaches this more loudly, than that of Saul. Behold him from the moment of Samuel's anointing him king, to the hour in which the HOLY GHOST hath here sketched his history, and

what doth it afford but the very melancholy account of a desperately wicked heart. That heart of Saul was never changed by grace; for though he is said to have had *another* heart from what he had when seeking his Father's asses, when he came to the kingdom; yet not a *new heart created in righteousness and true holiness*. With this deceitful heart of nature, the acquired purple of a kingdom, and the power of a Prince, only furnished means of manifesting what that heart originally was by nature, and what it ever remained untouched by grace. It only was uniformly making a greater progression and ripeness in evil. Reader! behold in his history how he proposed to himself pleasure in offending GOD; fighting against the gracious hand that had given him a throne; and as one determined to sacrifice every thing rather than that GOD should appoint a successor in his kingdom, who had, unasked, and unthought of, given a kingdom to him. Think herefrom what an awful thing it must be in the wicked to be found fighting against GOD.

From the view of Saul, let us turn our thoughts to JESUS, whose redemption work becomes the only remedy for all sin, even in his children, who are by nature open and justly exposed to wrath even as others. We read the history of Saul to very little purpose if the sequel of it and indeed every part of it, doth not lead to this conclusion of the apostles; *Are we then better than they?* Are we in ourselves, and in our fallen state, by nature, less exposed to the same commission of sin? No, in no wise. For the scripture hath before proved all under sin. And GOD hath concluded all in unbelief as well as sin. Well may every truly awakened soul cry out, under the heart-felt conviction of the truth; *Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.* Here then, Reader! let you and I join issue and rejoice. JESUS is set forth as a

propitiation for sin through faith in his blood. He is the salvation and the righteousness of GOD to every sinner that believeth. Oh! LORD, grant us the fullness of grace to believe the record which GOD the FATHER hath given of his dear Son. And may that precious scripture be ever sounding in our ears, and ever living in its divine and saving influence in our hearts; GOD *having raised up his Son JESUS hath sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

CHAPTER 29

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This Chapter makes a digression from the prosecution of Saul's history, to relate an event in the life of David. While Saul was distressed in the approach of the Philistines, and Achish was proposing to take David with him to the battle; the lords of the Philistines objecting to it, David is dismissed with kind marks of respect by Achish.

1 SAMUEL 29:1-2

- (1) ¶ Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel.
(2) And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish.

It is to be supposed, though it be not said so in the history, that David must have felt himself most awkwardly situated in the army of the Philistines. To have declined going to the battle would have betrayed him to the Philistines: and to have been found fighting against his country, how was this possible to a generous patriot like David? Had David's want of faith been less, and he had remained in Judah, this could not have happened. See Reader! how even good men when going, out

of the path of duty, expose themselves to temptation. Now if the LORD doth not interpose for him, we cannot see any way by which he may escape. Blessed be GOD! there is a promise to this purport, and though we deserve it not, yet not our merit but divine grace, becomes the source of our deliverance. See the promise, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

1 SAMUEL 29:3-5

(3) Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here*? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day? (4) And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it* not *be* with the heads of these men? (5) *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

Reader! do not fail to observe, how GOD opened a door of escape for David. Surely it was GOD'S superintendance over him; that prompted the minds of the Philistine princes thus to reason, and thus to insist upon his departure. The LORD hath the hearts of all men at his disposal, and like rivers of waters, turneth them whithersoever he pleaseth, Proverbs 21:1. It is very sweet and precious to eye GOD'S hand in all our concerns.

1 SAMUEL 29:6-7

(6) ¶ Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as* the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is* good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not. (7) Wherefore now

return, and go in peace, that thou displeas not the lords of the Philistines.

The Reader may perhaps be rather surprised, that Achish should have so little weight in his kingdom as not to be able to retain David in his service. But he should be told, that the Philistines were governed by *five* lords, and Gath was but one of their kingdoms. *Ekron, Gaza, Ashdod, and Askelon*, were the other four parts which these lords of the Philistines governed.

1 SAMUEL 29:8-11

(8) And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king? (9) And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. (10) Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart. (11) So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Beside the motives here assigned for removing David from the army of the Philistines, it appears by the following chapter, that the LORD had services for him at that time elsewhere. Thus the LORD ordereth all our ways, and the whole disposing of his people is of the LORD. Though David seemed hurt at the not being permitted to go up to the battle, yet no doubt, as he had no direction for this purpose from the LORD, he could not be very forward to it. Indeed David was conscious that he was out of the path of duty. And perhaps this had made a shyness in his visits to a throne of grace. Reader! what is related in this chapter, and indeed the whole of David's conduct, from the moment he took up the

unbecoming thought, that he should one day perish by the hand of Saul, is not to David's credit. We see in him what we feel in ourselves, and what the best of men do but too fully manifest, that there is a great deal of the old stock of nature, as well as the new springs of grace in GOD's faithful servants. Much corruption mingled with much faith. Oh! how needful then is it, that the great author of faith should keep up his precious communications, to keep alive his grace in the soul! Sweetly David sung to this point, when he said: *Hold thou me up and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.* Psalm. 119:117.

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I HOPE the Reader will feel his soul drawn out with mine, both to admire and adore the faithfulness of GOD, in his deliverance of poor David from the snare into which his want of faithfulness in his GOD had brought him. Surely none but a wise GOD could have found the means to have brought him out of the double danger into which his folly and sin had brought him. Apparently there was no way to escape, but either he must have proved a traitor to his country, or a traitor to his friend. And surely none but a faithful GOD would have given grace to have brought him out, when his own unfaithfulness had so justly forfeited the LORD'S favour. But oh, thou dearest LORD! how plainly are we taught by this and every other instance, of thy passing by the worthlessness of thy people, that thou dost this not for our own sake, but for thine own great name's sake and thy glory. Hence, blessed LORD, thou dost manifest thy faithfulness in sending the trial upon the heels of our unfaithfulness. And thou dost manifest thy faithfulness in guiding us through the trial. And thou displayest the riches of thy grace and faithfulness, in making the termination of it minister to thy glory and our welfare. Oh precious JESUS! in every instance of my poor wanderings and

unbelief, and fear, and the like, do thou so mercifully and so tenderly deal by me. And while thou dost compassionate my unworthiness, let thy grace be sufficient for me, and let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness. I lament, dearest LORD, that like David, I have too often thought and feared, that notwithstanding all thy past mercies and manifestations, I should one day be left to perish by the hand of the enemy. But in thy after grace in sending difficulties and hedging up my way with thorns, I have proved thy mercy. I can and do therefore set up my *Ebenezer* in all the proofs of thy love, and find cause to say with David, *I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.*

CHAPTER 30

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This Chapter becomes very interesting in its contents, for it relates to a period in the life of David, both important, as it proved to him, and instructive to God's people. During the absence of David from Ziklag to attend the army of the Philistines, the Amalekites whom David had before scourged, made an incursion upon the city, and had not only set fire to it but carried away the women and children captives. The distress of David's little army was so great upon this occasion, that they talked of stoning him.— David sought the LORD — the LORD answered him — David by GOD'S direction pursued the spoilers, overtook them, recovered all his loss, and made distribution among his soldiers of the plunder.

1 SAMUEL 30:1-3

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; (2)

And had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way. (3) So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it was* burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

I beg the Reader to remark with me concerning this event, how evidently the hand of the LORD was in it. No doubt it was intended to correct David for his past faithlessness. What business had David in an enemies' country? It was the want of faith in his GOD which first led him there. And moreover I beg to intimate, that it appears to me by the late conduct of David, that since this breach of trust in GOD, there was a remissness on the part of David, in his communion with the LORD. Hence we read of no counsel being asked of GOD all the time he had been in Gath. Conscious of his ill conduct, he was shy at the heavenly court, and did not except perhaps in form, frequently go there. I do not say that this was really the case. But from the silence of the HOLY GHOST upon the subject, after recording his faithlessness and fear, (chap. 27:1.) I think it more than probable. How then is the LORD's servant to be brought back? What method in all the stores of grace will the LORD adopt to make him sensible of his sin? What so suited as affliction. Hence David could and did say, not only upon this, but perhaps many other occasions: *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.* Psalm. 119:67. Dearest JESUS! have I not found cause to adopt the same language? I desire the Reader to make one remark more with me upon the occasion of this distress of David and his men, in proof that the LORD's hand was in it; and that is, that the LORD over-ruled the minds of the *Ama-lekites*, so that they slew not any of the people, only took them captive. Had not the LORD restrained, surely it is more than probable, that they would have done by David as he did

by them, as we are told in the 27th chapter, and have saved none alive.

1 SAMUEL 30:4-5

(4) Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. (5) And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

It is more than likely, that David was returning home with great delight to the enjoyment of himself and family, since he had been delivered from the painful situation in which he found himself respecting the going to war with the Philistines: so that his trouble must have been the greater. Reader! let this disappointment of David and his army teach you and me, the necessity of being always prepared for sudden and unexpected events of sorrow, in such a dying sorrowful world as this is which we are passing through. When we leave our family in the morning, who shall say in what state we may find them at our return at night. And if, through mercy, those we left in health and peace we find the same, and they receive us so, learn from this example, to whom the glory is due.

1 SAMUEL 30:6

(6) And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

The affliction now was grown to its height. David, for whom, like another Jonah, the storm is induced, is to be the greatest sufferer: else wherefore stone him more than the rest. Reader! I know not what your views of this history are. But to Me, I confess, that I think the whole was so arranged and ordered by the LORD to bring back the heart of David again,

(which I fear had for a long time been cold towards the God of his mercies), to a sense of his sin, and a longing to be restored once more to the LORD. And if I am right in my conjecture, what a blessed issue did the LORD bring this affair to? *David encouraged himself in the LORD his GOD*. Yes! the LORD his GOD, properly so called. For notwithstanding all David's unworthiness and undeservings, GOD was still his GOD in covenant. Reader! do not overlook this whatever else you lose sight of in this sweet scripture. There may be, and no doubt there is, much unworthiness, much undeserving, in the best of saints. There will be changes in GOD's people, like the ebbings and flowings of the tide. But there is no change in the covenant security of GOD's love. The efficacy of this is eternally and everlastingly the same. GOD in CHRIST is an ocean that never dries, never lessens, never abates. *He is a rock, his work is perfect*. LORD! give me grace, that whatever leanness or barrenness there may be in me, I may, like David, encourage myself in the LORD my GOD.

1 SAMUEL 30:7-8

(7) ¶ And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. (8) And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*.

Here we see David returned to the LORD in a way of duty. And the LORD returned unto David in a way of grace. Indeed had not the LORD first given grace to David, never would he have returned to the LORD in duty. He saith, himself, and his own experience taught him the precious truth: *none can keep alive his own soul*. Psalm 22:29. His enquiry by the high priest was in the appointed way. See Numbers 27:21. But wherefore did not David enquire by him at the LORD's hand, in the case of his going to war with Achish? Alas! David's mind was certainly

cold towards the LORD at that season. See Reader, what man is, void of grace. Oh precious, precious JESUS! that waiteth not the return of thy sheep, but goeth after the wanderers into the mountains. Oh! seek my soul in all its manifold departures, when going astray, *like a sheep that is lost*. Psalm 119:176. Ezekiel 34:11-13.

1 SAMUEL 30:9-10

(9) So David went, he and the six hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. (10) But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

No doubt after this gracious answer from the LORD, the minds of the people were stayed from any further anger against David. It was no small mercy from the LORD, that he endued the mind of David with meekness, so as not to return railing for railing to the people. But here in the very view of David's meekness, how is my soul constrained to contemplate thine unequalled meekness, oh thou LAMB of GOD, when thou wast led to the slaughter, and amidst all the taunts and reproaches of the ungodly, thou wast *like a deaf man and heard not, and as one that was dumb who did not open his mouth*. Psalm 38:13. We must not overlook in the case of the third part of his army being faint, the new trial which arose from it to exercise his faith and patience. No doubt the *four hundred* as well as himself, were not far from the same languor, for they had had a long march when they returned from the camp of Achish. What a state then must the pursuers be in, when they came up to fight with the Amalekites. But Reader! remember, David was now encouraging himself in the LORD his GOD. It was this that made him in times past victorious, in the case of Goliath, the lion, and the bear. Oh it is sweet to see what a soul can do, who goes forth in the strength of the LORD GOD.

But is there not a spiritual instruction to be gathered here, from the march of David and his faint soldiers? Is not all the army of our Almighty David like the four hundred of David, *faint yet pursuing*? And doth not our JESUS lead us on, and bear with all our weaknesses, and faintings, and infirmities? Yes, dearest LORD! thou knowest what we are, and whereof we are made, and art leading us on in thy great strength, made perfect in our weakness.

1 SAMUEL 30:11-15

(11) And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water; (12) And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights. (13) And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. (14) We made an invasion *upon* the south of the Cherethites, and upon *the coast* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. (15) And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

Surely it was not accidental, that this poor Egyptian fell in their way. *This cometh forth*, saith the prophet upon another occasion, (and which will suit most occasions of his people) *from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*. Isaiah 28:29. Reader! when you have duly pondered the gracious hand of GOD in making this poor cast away servant, the Egyptian, instrumental in aiding David and his army; next turn your thoughts to the justice of God manifested thereby, in punishing the iniquity of his master the Amalekite, who left him to perish. And when your mind hath fully revolved this lesson also, let your thoughts be directed to

another, if possible more important than either, and remark with me, how the LORD worketh sometimes by weak and despised and cast away instruments, to accomplish the purposes of his holy will. Think in what an eminent degree the LORD hath done it, in the publishing salvation and the recovery, of our lost nature, which the great enemy of souls, like those Amalekites, made upon us in the person of our first father, in the garden of Eden. Is not the blessed gospel of the ever-blessed GOD, even now proclaimed by poor perishing Gentile sinners like this Egyptian; and unless our Almighty David had given us of his figs and his clusters, his bread of life and his water of life, our spirit never would have revived, nor should we have known anything of the salvation we now publish! Oh, precious JESUS! here again let our souls adore the riches of thy clemency, that thou hast condescended to visit us and *to remember us in our low estate, for thy mercy endureth for ever.* Psalm 136:23.

1 SAMUEL 30:16-20

(16) And when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. (17) And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. (18) And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. (19) And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them: David recovered all. (20) And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This *is* David's spoil.

The event, in the recovery not only of all they had lost but much more, serves to show how confident they ought to be of success who trust in GOD'S promises, who can and will in his

own time accomplish all his holy will. But beside the providential instruction this part of David's history affords, there is a spiritual lesson to be gathered from it yet more sweet and precious. As David came upon the spoil in a moment they thought themselves secure, and were triumphing over their poor captives: so a greater than David, even David's LORD, came upon the great enemy of souls when he stood triumphing over our fall, and rescued us from the hand of him that was stronger than we. Beautifully it is said of JESUS that he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea even for the rebellious: for we were all rebellious and undeserving of his favour, when he came to save us from the prey of the mighty. And as the soldiers in David's army called the victory *David's spoil*, so we shout aloud, Salvation alone to GOD and the LAMB! It was thine own arm, dearest JESUS, which brought salvation, for of the people; in the way of victory, there was none with thee. Isaiah 63:5.

1 SAMUEL 30:21-25

(21) ¶ And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. (22) Then answered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart. (23) Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. (24) For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. (25) And it was *so* from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

I would have the Reader remark with me on this passage, that David's army, though but small, yet had wicked men in the party. It was so from the beginning, and will be so during the continuance of the world. *Noah* had an *Ham* in the ark, and the LORD JESUS a *Judas* among his disciples. The LORD hath shown us that there will be tares among the wheat, and both must grow together until the harvest. LORD, keep thy church, and watch over it continually. LORD keep my heart, and suffer not corruptions to break out. The equity of David's conduct in the division of the spoil, and the ordinance framed upon this principle, may serve to teach us, that in the church of JESUS, as all the gifts and usefulness of his people are from the LORD; all are equally the objects of his love, and come in for a suitable proportion of his favour, the HOLY GHOST *giveth to every man severally as he will.* 1 Corinthians 12:11.

1 SAMUEL 30:26-31

(26) And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; (27) To *them* which *were* in Bethel, and to *them* which *were* in south Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in Jattir, (28) And to *them* which *were* in Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eshtemoa, (29) And to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Kenites, (30) And to *them* which *were* in Hormah, and to *them* which *were* in Chorashan, and to *them* which *were* in Athach, (31) And to *them* which *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

We have here an instance of David's gratitude. No doubt, but that during his long wanderings, and flights from place to place to avoid Saul, he had pretty well exercised the generosity of his friends, for he and his army of 600 men, could not be supplied, and fed upon a trifle. Hence he availed himself of the first moment the LORD had enabled him, to

recompense those who had been kind to him. But from David's generosity to his friends, let you and I, Reader, turn our eyes to the view of David's LORD, whose generosity was manifested to his enemies. After our dear LORD returned to glory, having spoiled principalities and powers, he gave gifts to his enemies, even to the rebellious, saith the HOLY GHOST, even to *you* and *me*. Yes, dearest JESUS! thy love is commended to us, in that *while we were enemies*, CHRIST *died for us*. Oh! matchless generosity! Oh, unequalled love! LORD be thou the first and best, and the unrivalled object of my love, as thine swallows up every other: and may *I love thee for that thou hast first loved me*.

REFLECTIONS

THE HOLY GHOST hath evidently much instruction to convey to his Church, in what is here related of David's calamity; and I would charge it upon the Reader's soul, and my own, to enquire very humbly, what the will and mind of the LORD is.

My Brother! when like David, our want of faith, and the slenderness of our trust in GOD, tempts us to go out of the path of duty, and a shyness takes place between the LORD and our hearts; is it not a blessed mark of grace, that the LORD doth not leave us to ourselves, and to eat the fruit of our own devices? Doth he not mean everything gracious, when he hedgeth up our way with thorns on purpose that *we shall not find our lovers*; but that our minds, being prepared by his secret workings, may be constrained to say; *I will return again to my first love, my first husband; for then was it better with me than now?*

If then, my Brother, after going out at any time full, we are made to return empty: if our house, which we left in peace, we find disordered, as David and his men did *Ziklag*, at our

coming home: if the LORD takes away the desire of our eyes with a stroke; removes our creature comforts; breaks down our creature confidences; makes a sorrow to grow out of the very root which we had planted for ourselves, and promised the sure fruit of enjoyment: what shall I say? If nothing but some severe dispensation will bring us back, when all the milder methods of his love have failed: will you not count that love, nay infinite love, and wisdom too, which administereth the medicine, however nauseous to our proud, and too much pampered stomachs, because nothing but physic will reach our case?

Oh! gracious, long suffering, long forgotten Saviour, in every view, and at every direction, how doth thy tenderness meet our ingratitude! How oft, like David, have I said; *I shall one day perish* by the hand of one or another! And even in the midst of deliverances have feared the issue? And how oft like him, have I ran to Philistine confederacies, and an arm of flesh, have *forgotten the LORD my Maker, and feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy; and where is the fury of the oppressor? And* hadst thou, dearest LORD! justly, as thou mightest have done, given me up to the pursuit of my own ways, and to the fruit of my own devices; where would have been my portion? But, oh! thou most gracious JESUS! precious Saviour, how thou hast called me home; allured me, and brought me into some *wilderness* dispensation; and there hast caused *the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad; and even the desert to rejoice, and to blossom as the rose.* Go on, heavenly Teacher, graciously go on, nor spare the rod of affliction, when the wayward conduct of thy poor, ignorant, and ungrateful child makes it necessary. Only, dearest LORD, come thyself with, and in the affliction, that it may be fully blessed, and sanctified, in bringing back my heart to thee;

that when, like David, *I have wept till I can weep no more;* and sorrows, like a flood, poured over me from within and without, and everything like the threatened stoning of the people, oppress me on every side, like him, *I may still find grace and faith to encourage myself in the LORD my GOD.*

CHAPTER 31

CONTENTS

This is a melancholy Chapter, which relates to us the sequel of Saul's history; the sad termination of a sinful life. The battle between the Philistines, and Israel, in mount Gilboa, in which the Philistines are conquerors, and Saul, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, his sons, are slain.—Israel possessed by the Philistines; the camp of Saul plundered, his dead body, and those of his sons, carried away to Beth-shan: but afterwards rescued by the men of Jabesh-gilead. These are the principal contents rehearsed in this Chapter, which ends the Book.

1 SAMUEL 31:1-2

(1) ¶ Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. (2) And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

David had prophesied, (chap. 26:10) that either the LORD should smite Saul; or, his day should come to die; or, he should descend into battle, and perish; and now the day was arrived. The preludes to his death were most distressing. He beholds his army routed, his faithful soldiers slain, and his three sons killed by his side.—Even Jonathan, the lovely, and beloved Jonathan, is slain also. Perhaps the Reader may be

inclined to wish that this affectionate friend of David, had been spared. But not so. GOD'S thoughts are not our thoughts; nor our ways the LORD'S ways. Yet Reader! do not forget, that though in this solemn visitation, that is common to all men, *there is one event in this scene, to the righteous, and to the wicked; yet the righteous hath hope in his death: merciful men are taken away from the evil to come, and enter into peace.* See Proverbs 14:32. Isaiah 57:1, 2.

1 SAMUEL 31:3

(3) And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

Saul's death, and the approach of it, were tremblingly awful. He is sore wounded; perhaps deadly wounded by the archers; more darts than one, it should seem.

1 SAMUEL 31:4

(4) Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

But though death would have soon come from the hands of the Philistines, yet impatient of misery, like a man desperate to plunge into everlasting woe before the time, he becomes his own executioner. Poor wretched, awful character! He is anxious that his *body* should not be abused by the Philistines; but feels no anxiety for his *soul!* But even that, after all his caution, as appears by the sequel of the history, is denied him. Reader! think, if it be possible, what a state of mind must he have been in, when, to avoid the racking torments in his own breast, he dares to make experiment of the more immediate torments of the miserable in eternity!

1 SAMUEL 31:5

(5) And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

There is a tradition, that this armour-bearer was *Doeg*, the *Edomite*: and that Saul advanced him to this honour, for his killing the priests of the LORD. But this is not certain. The Reader would do well to recollect, what David prophesied concerning this man in the 52d Psalm.

1 SAMUEL 31:6-8

(6) So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together. (7) And when the men of Israel that *were* on the other side of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

See the folly, sin, and ingratitude of Israel, in the rejection of the LORD for their king, as Samuel had pointed out. See chap. 12. And doth not the LORD, by his servant the prophet, refer to this in the after ages, when he said; *I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.* Hosea 13:11.

1 SAMUEL 31:8-10

(8) ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. (9) And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish *it* in the house of their idols, and among the people. (10) And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

No doubt, so complete a victory, and so great a triumph inflamed the minds of the Philistines exceedingly. But had they seen the hand of the LORD in it, they would not have been tempted to ascribe the victory to their idols.

1 SAMUEL 31:11-13

(11) And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; (12) All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. (13) And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

The HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to record the bravery of the men of *Jabesh-gilead*, not, perhaps, out of regard to Saul's memory, but to testify the proper conduct of those men. Saul had been blessed of GOD, as an instrument in rescuing *Jabesh-gilead* from *Nahash*, the king of the Ammorites, and therefore, gratitude made them alive to rescue their deliverer's body, and those of his sons, from such an ignominious exposure. And this the men of Jabesh could very easily accomplish, because *Beth-shan* was only separated by a branch of Jordan from Jabesh-gilead. And thus the history of Saul terminates in the finishing of the first Book, as it is called, of Samuel, containing a period of about *eighty years*. Alas! what is the sum and substance of everything short of JESUS, but *vanity and vexation of spirit*. At the dose of every relation, and of every man's history, we may write this down, and exclaim with the prophet: *Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?* But, blessed JESUS, amidst all the scenes of departing men; amidst the dying, and the dead, Oh! what a relief is that sweet thought to the soul of thy people; *Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail*. Zechariah 1:5. Hebrews 1:12.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! once more over the sad view of Saul's history, and as thou hast been called upon to mark his progress in sin, and the ripening of his mind in iniquity; here behold, in self-murder, the awful close of a life so evil. Oh!

how dreadful to die out of CHRIST, uninterested in him; void of all covenant promises; unregenerated in heart, unwashed in the blood of the LAMB, and without the clothing of the Redeemer's righteousness. Better to die in a ditch, than to die out of CHRIST. The manner of death is nothing: to die any how, any where, by any means; only to die in JESUS. LORD! give to him that reads, and him that writes, the blessed hope in our death, that *living or dying, we are the LORD'S*. Oh! for a part in *the first resurrection, and then the second death hath no power*.

Dearest JESUS! thou art the resurrection, and the life. Thou blessed JESUS, by thy death, hast overcome death, so that death now, by thee, is among the inventory of the believer's treasure. To die in time is gain. LORD, give grace, both to writer and reader, that we may so live, as to add death to our sure account of profit; that *whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all may be ours; for we are CHRIST'S, and CHRIST is GOD'S*.

THE SECOND BOOK

of

SAMUEL

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Several of the observations which were proposed in the opening of the *first* book of Samuel, will meet the Reader at the commencement of this *second*. As was remarked concerning the supposed author of it, whose name it bears, Samuel, though he might be the writer of the first book in part, that is, as far as took place in point of history prior to his death; yet common sense must know that the events recorded after that period could never have been handed to the church by him. And therefore it will necessarily follow that the whole of this *second* book must have owed its existence to some other penman. And perhaps it was on this account that the *seventy* who formed the scriptures into the present order in which they are placed in our Bibles, judged it more proper to distinguish both this and the former under the title of *the first and second books of Samuel; otherwise called the first and second books of the Kings*.

I think it hardly necessary to detain the Reader from immediately entering on the perusal of this *second* book of

Samuel, with desiring him to look out very diligently for the signatures of divine inspiration through all the parts of it. If the writer of this Commentary and the Reader of it, are both brought under the teachings of the SPIRIT, and by his unerring hand are led to trace, through the whole of its departments, his well known characters; these will refresh the mind and carry the truest and indeed the only infallible testimonies to the understanding, of authenticity. And the importance of such a discovery is I hope by this time so thoroughly understood by the Reader, who hath kindly accompanied me through the several preceding books of this Commentary, that I presume it can no longer be needful to insist upon it.

With respect to the annals of mankind, in which, as an history, the second book of Samuel is placed, we find the period to be somewhat about 1060 years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The book itself includes the whole reign of David, which continued nearly forty years.

There are a great many sweet and spiritual subjects opened to our contemplation in the several parts of this book; and especially considered as leading the mind to the Person, and Offices, and Characters of the LORD JESUS.

David, whose history it contains, was in many instances so eminent a type of the ever blessed JESUS, that it may well be supposed the HOLY GHOST, (whose office and whose pleasure it is, to be *taking of the things of JESUS to show unto the people*), would not suffer the life of this man to be marked out for the instruction and comfort of the church, without very frequently causing the mind of the Reader to be directed from David's history, to David's LORD. On this feature of the book

itself, I would, above all things, earnestly request the Reader to let his eye be fixed. And I pray the HOLY SPIRIT to bless, in a very eminent degree to his view, this most precious part of it. I only take occasion, before I enter upon the commentary of this book (as in former instances) to make a request of the Reader (and in which his own happiness is too highly interested to refuse me); that he will pray over it, and pause over it, in the poor *human* observations presented to his view, for *divine* teachings. Beg of GOD, my brother, to give you *the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*; that, in the seeing eye, and the hearing ear, and the understanding heart, (all which are of the LORD) these sacred books of GOD may come home to the mind, not only *in word, but in power, and in much assurance of faith, and of the HOLY GHOST.*

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

The event of the battle between Israel and the Philistines, in the overthrow of Israel and the death of Saul, and his three sons, this chapter opens with the relation of, as reported to David, by an Amalekite. The sacred historian, gives the account of the distress of David upon the occasion: his anger against the informer, who, thinking to have ingratiated himself with David, boasted of his having slain Saul, and is slain for it. David breaks out into a bitter lamentation on this event, and especially mourns over the death of his beloved Jonathan.

2 SAMUEL 1:1

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

David no doubt was busily engaged in repairing the injury the Amalekites had done to Ziklag while the Philistines' battle with Saul was going on. Though, no doubt, his anxiety concerning the event frequently made him send forth enquiries, David could not but be waiting the LORD's fulfillment of his promise concerning the kingdom. It was now several years since his being anointed, (seven at least, if not more) and therefore it was impossible but for his expectation to have been continually excited. Reader! In spiritual things GOD'S people are continually anxious, though they know the promises of GOD in CHRIST JESUS to be yea and amen. The LORD hath said; *Fear not little flock; it is your heavenly FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Yet it is also said, that *it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.* Luke 12:32. Lamentations 3:26.

2 SAMUEL 1:2

(2) It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

It should seem, if we compare the corresponding history of David in the book of the Chronicles, (See 1 Chronicles 12:1-22.) with what is related of David in this place, that about this time David's army was increasing daily. And hence, as this man came out of the camp, and had seen the end of Saul, he considered David now as king. Hence he made obeisance.

2 SAMUEL 1:3-10

(3) And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped. (4) And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. (5) And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? (6) And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. (7) And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I. (8) And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite. (9) He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me. (10) So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

This relation is truly interesting. The anxiety, distress, and the various conflicts of natural and gracious feelings on the part of David, and the artfulness of address on the part of the man, are beautifully implied. We may easily conceive, from the well known character of David, what a conflict must have passed in his mind during this relation. And no doubt as the man knew David's history, he knew how to effect David's mind, in working upon his feelings in the relation of the death of Saul and Jonathan. Whether the relation he gave was altogether true is not certain; and there is some reason to question it, as there is no account of it in the relation given of Saul's death in the preceding chapter. See I Samuel 31:4, 5. And indeed it differs from it. I stay not however to enquire, as it is not very material. One thing is certain, that as this man brought the crown and bracelet of Saul to David, he must have been with Saul at his death. But I pass over these

circumstances, which are not of the first importance, to advert to what appears to be more so in the thing itself. Let the Reader then remark with me, that, as the first instance of Saul's rebellion against GOD began in the affair of sparing *Amalek*, (See I Samuel 15:1-3, 9, 10, &c.) so the LORD causeth the spared Amalekites to rise up to the last act of Saul's ruin. Oh! Reader, how certain is it, that the LORD never relaxeth one moment in the distribution of righteous judgment. Rather than one sin shall go unpunished, JESUS, his dear Son, shall die. See that solemn scripture: Zechariah 13:7.

2 SAMUEL 1:11-12

(11) ¶ Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him: (12) And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

There can be no question but that this lamentation of David was real and sincere. And I take occasion herefrom to remark, and it is in my esteem a remark of no small importance, that what we meet with in David's Psalms, where he many times expresses himself harshly against his enemies, (as particularly Psalm 109th, which see) these expressions are to be considered, for the most part, as leveled against the enemies of GOD and of his church; and not the private foes of David. Very frequently he spake as under the Spirit of prophecy; and the Reader will do well upon all occasions of this sort, to make a proper distinction between the private feelings of the man, and the public Spirit of the Prophet. See 139:19-22.

2 SAMUEL 1:13-16

(13) And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite. (14) And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed? (15) And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. (16) And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

Think Reader! (for I pass over all the lesser considerations connected with the event of this Amalekite's death) think if David considered this act so atrocious, because it was leveled against the LORD's anointed, what unparalleled impiety must that have been in the crucifiers of the LORD JESUS, the only begotten and anointed Son of GOD! And yet, dearest JESUS! such was thy matchless love and pity, that on some of these very men, whose hands were embrued in thy blood, thou didst send down the gift of thine HOLY SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost, that by pricking them to the heart they might cry out for redemption and obtain it. Oh! heavenly LORD! Oh Son of David, and David's LORD, what a precious view of thy mercy doth this afford! See Acts 2:22, 23. 37, &c.

2 SAMUEL 1:17-18

(17) ¶ And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: (18) (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.)

Probably David, in the first paroxysms of his grief, expressed himself in a strain like those pathetic parts of the elegy which follow. What this book of *Jasher* means is not generally understood. It hath never been handed down to the Church. And whether the Bow which he commanded to be taught,

means the bow of the battle, or of music, I cannot say. The use of the bow was known long before David's time. Jacob, in his dying moments, spake of the bow of Joseph his son. No doubt in his instance it meant the spiritual armory in JESUS's salvation. But whether David meant it so I know not. See Genesis 49:24.

2 SAMUEL 1:19-27

(19) The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! (20) Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. (21) Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had* not *been* anointed with oil. (22) From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. (23) Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. (24) Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. (25) How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places. (26) I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. (27) How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

To offer a comment upon the beauties of this elegy, would be to disgrace it. It is too highly finished in point of language, beauty, simplicity, and the expressions of all the finer feelings of the heart, to receive the smallest addition. But after paying all possible respect to it, as a poem which surpasses everything of the kind to be met with among profane writers, I must still remind the Reader that it falls far short of the other writings of David, and hath no claim to be classed

among them. And I hope, indeed, that the *pious* Reader will discover the vast inferiority in it to every one of those Psalms, composed under divine inspiration by this sweet Singer in Israel. For what is the subject itself compared to what they contain? The love of Jonathan or the death of Saul, how infinitely doth it shrink to nothing when brought in competition with his love which passeth knowledge, or his death which is the life of the world. Yes, thou blessed JESUS! one thought of thee, and of thy matchless excellency, surpasseth all other meditations as the light of the sun the faint taper of the night. And, if David called upon the daughters of Jerusalem to weep over Saul with tears of love because he clothed them with scarlet, and put on ornaments of gold on their apparel; with what love and tears of holy joy shall we look up to thee, thou precious Redeemer, who hast clothed us with the robe made scarlet in thy blood, and put on the everlasting ornaments of thy salvation, and righteousness, more precious than the gold of ophir, on our apparel, in which we shall appear before thee, and the FATHER, in thy courts of bliss for evermore!

REFLECTIONS

See Reader! in the beautiful conduct of David at Saul's death, how grace enables the believer to stay all enmity, and even to requite good for evil. Depend upon it, nothing but this can accomplish such a purpose; for it is the sole work of GOD the HOLY GHOST.

But let us, in the view of this chapter, go further and remark, that as nothing but grace can throw down all the jealousies of life in our competition with others, so nothing but the same

divine principle can reconcile us to our death. Until we know JESUS truly and savingly, we can neither think of death with comfort nor meet it with fortitude, Yes, dearest JESUS! it is thy death, which hath overcome death; and thy blood which hath taken out its sting. Oh! grant me grace ever to be keeping thy triumphs for thy people in view, and never to look at death but with a steady eye also to thee. Thy victory over death, hell, and the grave, is the everlasting consolation of thy people; and death, no more than life, or principalities, or powers, shall be able to separate from thee. *Through death thou hast destroyed him that had the power of death, and hast delivered them who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage.* Oh! thou dearest LORD! give me to see the full privilege of thy triumphs; that my iniquity is pardoned, and my sin covered; that death hath no terrors, nor the grave any alarm; let me hear that blessed voice of thine, and my soul will rejoice in full assurance of faith: *Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and death. Amen.*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

This chapter contains the relation of David's accession to the throne of Hebron, A party however is formed by Abner the Captain of Saul's host, in favour of Ish-bosheth, Saul's son; which became the source of a long contention between the house of David and the house of Saul. David reigns in Hebron, and Ish-bosheth in Mahanaim.

2 SAMUEL 2:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

If the Reader will again, in this chapter, consult the 12th chapter of the first book of the Chronicles, from the 23rd verse to the end, he will there discover the means, under GOD, by which David's kingdom became established. David consulted GOD after the death of Saul, what steps he should take, as this verse relates. Oh! how sweet and profitable it is to do so in everything. Reader! do turn to those two precious verses, and endeavor to keep them in your memory, for the mind to turn upon all occasions of your life: I mean, Isaiah 42:16. and Proverbs 3:6.

2 SAMUEL 2:2-3

(2) So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite. (3) And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

Observe how a prudent man, not only attends to his own personal concerns, but to the concerns of his family. There is nothing said of his children, neither can we learn from the word of GOD whether David had any at this time. Indeed as his first born was born in Hebron, it should seem that this event took place *after* he came to the kingdom. See Chap. 3:2.

2 SAMUEL 2:4

(4) And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabeshgilead *were they* that buried Saul.

Our LORD sprang out of Judah. Is it not worthy remark, that this should be the first of all the tribes to acknowledge David as their king? *Hebron* was appointed by the LORD for David's court: perhaps it might be more considerable than any other in point of bulk, as a province at that time; for it should seem that it had *many* cities for David's household to dwell in.

2 SAMUEL 2:5-7

(5) And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him. (6) And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. (7) Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

There was certainly a great affection of the mind in the person of David, and which manifested itself upon various occasions. This remembrance of the men of Jabesh Gilead perhaps more particularly, for the love they bore Saul and Jonathan is an instance of it. And there is another mentioned, 1 Chronicles 12:16, 17.

2 SAMUEL 2:8-9

(8) ¶ But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; (9) And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

The opposition made to David for the crown was in fact made against the government of GOD; for all Israel could not but know, that David had been long before both appointed and anointed as the successor of Saul in the kingdom. And one

might have thought, that the success of David against the Philistines, and the awful end of Saul, would have prompted all Israel as one man to have fled to David, the moment Saul was dead, to have called him to the government. But alas! what punishment, or what distresses are heavy enough, unsanctified by the LORD, to bring home the heart to him? But Reader! let us not stop here in our improvements on this view of things in Israel. Was not David, in this instance, as in many others, a lively type of the ever blessed JESUS? When the LORD JEHOVAH set CHRIST as his king in Zion, did not *the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing, against the LORD, and against his anointed?* Psalm 2:1. Precious JESUS! make me one of thy happy subjects, with holy joy and thankfulness to bend my knee before thee, and with the heart confess, that JESUS CHRIST *is LORD and king to the glory of GOD the FATHER!*

2 SAMUEL 2:10-11

(10) Ishbosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. (11) And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

There is no very easy method of ascertaining from whence these dates commenced, or how to reconcile the seven years and half of David with the two years of Ishbosheth. But it may serve to teach us that during this opposition many grievous events to persons, and families, and tribes, must have taken place. While the confederate powers of sin, the world, and Satan join in opposition to the reign of grace in the soul; the believer finds many sharp conflicts, which make him groan and go heavily.

2 SAMUEL 2:12-17

(12) And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. (13) And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. (14) And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. (15) Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. (16) And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon. (17) And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

This Abner was uncle to Saul, and no doubt covered his pretence under a sense of duty: but what a flimsy covering in opposition to the sovereignty of GOD. The first meeting of the two armies appears to have been by way of challenge. Similar perhaps to that of more modern duels, in which men to avoid the sneer of fools, venture to brave Omnipotency, and plunge unsent and uncalled before their time into everlasting misery; of every one of which it may be said, as was in after days said of this very Abner; *Died Abner as a fool dieth!* 2 Samuel 3:33. The sinful *play*, as it is here called, soon became serious work, and terminated in a bloody battle, so that the place of the slain was called Helkath-hazzurim; that is, the field of hardy men.

2 SAMUEL 2:18-23

(18) ¶ And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as a wild roe. (19) And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. (20) Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, *I am*. (21) And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to

thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. (22) And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? (23) Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

This event of the flight of Abner and his army, and the pursuit of Joab's army after him, is very properly introduced here by way of relating the death of *Asahel*. Perhaps a youth of more courage than prudence against so expert an old soldier as Abner. The circumstance of every one that came to the spot whence he died, stopping, seems to have been from the gracious goodness of God, because it thereby retarded the pursuers, and afforded time to Abner's army to escape. I believe there are a thousand, and perhaps ten thousand, such events in every man's life, which we call casual; but which, by a kind of preventing providence, minister to the LORD's design, in bringing about other events with which themselves apparently have nothing to do.

2 SAMUEL 2:24-28

(24) Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. (25) ¶ And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. (26) Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? (27) And Joab said, *As* God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. (28) So Joab blew a

trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

The ground which Abner gained, and the blessing of the sun going down, gave time for each party to consider. Pauses in life, as on numberless occasions, are precious things. Abner's address is well ordered, though not founded in truth. He had began the quarrel. He had proposed first the play by which the after battle was brought on. Joab's answer is a noble one, and most generous towards a falling enemy, though he takes care to lay the blame wholly where it was due. If he had not first spoken, there would have been no battle; and if he had not *now* spoken, Joab's forbearance would have been manifested in the morning the same. But Reader, in praising Joab, do not fail to discover the hand of a gracious God in the event. Here would I ever keep *a* fixed eye.

2 SAMUEL 2:29-32

(29) And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim. (30) And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. (31) But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and threescore men died. (32) And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which *was in* Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

The separation of the two armies, and their return to their respective places, for the present put a stop to the war. But Reader! there is no truce, no respite, no cessation in that war, which sin and Satan make against the holy army of our spiritual David. When once the christian soldier hath buckled on his armour he never puts it off till he is undressed by

death. Dearest JESUS! do thou arm me for the fight, that *I may endure hardness as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST*. 2 Timothy 2:3.

REFLECTIONS

Behold Reader! in the instance of David in this chapter, that the death of one enemy only makes way for the appearance of another. If Saul be dead, Saul hath a son still to persecute and harass the life of David. If the LORD in mercy delivers his people from this or that trial; others shall succeed. *They that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS must, and shall, suffer persecution*. It is, as our adored Redeemer told his disciples, and all have found it, *through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom*. Though David was elected by GOD himself to the kingdom, yet long conflicts he must go through before he gets even a prospect of obtaining it: and when all opposition in the death of Saul seemed for the time to have died away: yet new *Sauls* arose to oppose. Yes! depend upon it, Reader, the chosen of GOD will never in this world be without the opposition and malice of the enemy. It is and must be so. Nay indeed, it forms one of the very evidences of their character. Let you and I therefore mark this down in large letters, for our every day's memorandum; and let those sweet words of CHRIST not only reconcile our hearts, but cause them to rejoice in the blessed testimony. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen ye out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*. Blessed JESUS! May I have these sweet marks, and carry about with me these precious assurances of

thy love, to help my mind on to a continually rejoicing in thee and thy great salvation.

But let me not dismiss this Chapter before that I have taken from it another delightful lesson. Did David bring up with him, when the LORD appointed him to go up to Hebron to his kingdom, did he bring up with him all that appertained to him, and leave nothing behind? And shall not my soul rejoice in the blessed certainty, that my David, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST, my king and my GOD, will bring up to that kingdom he is gone to take possession of in eternal glory, all his followers? Is JESUS now in the Hebron of Hebrons, in the heaven of heavens; and will he be satisfied there, while any of his household are left below? Shall there indeed an hoof be left behind in the spiritual Egypt, in the *Ziklag* country of the Philistines? No, thou dear Redeemer, thou saidst thyself before thy departure, that thou didst only go before to take possession of it in thy people's name. Thou art gone *to receive a kingdom, and wilt return*. Oh! for faith in lively exercise to believe *the record which God hath given of his dear Son*. Shortly thou wilt come to take me home to thyself, that where thou art there may I be also. Never, never my soul, lose sight of these sweet words of my JESUS; but let their animating assurance have a living influence upon all thy words, and thoughts, and actions. FATHER, *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. That they all may be one as thou FATHER art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. I, in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in me, and that the world may know*

that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

The account of the struggle on the part of Saul's family for the kingdom with David, is continued in this Chapter. A quarrel takes place between Ishbosheth and Abner. The latter makes overtures to David. David's treaty with him. Abner, while attempting to bring over Israel to David's interest, is slain by Joab. David's distress at this event. These are the principal points related in this Chapter.

2 SAMUEL 3:1

(1) ¶ Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

The event as here related, of the decline of Saul's interest, and the increase of David's, is just as might have been expected. But I pass over the historical part of the relation, to call the Reader's attention to an infinitely more important object veiled under the history, and to direct him to the very precious instruction, spiritually considered, contained in it.

The long war which subsisted between the house of Saul and the house of David, may serve to teach us both the length and strength of the battle which is carried on in the heart of the awakened believer, in the different dispositions of nature and grace. There is indeed long war, and dreadfully hot re-encounters, by reason of these contending powers. Speak, ye

long tried, long exercised souls, who feel their force, and say what it is, for I have no ability to describe it. But what a relief to the soul is the consideration, (and I would charge it upon the mind of every one groaning under it,) the issue of this war, is not doubtful. Your exercises are not for trial, as to the event; but for trial as to the proving the graces given you. JESUS, your spiritual David, hath already conquered for you, and in your name: and you must shortly be made more than conquerors through him and his victory. And in the mean time it is a precious thought, and ever to be cherished with the most grateful affection in the heart of the believer; though you see so little increase in the life of faith and grace, compared to what you wish; nay, as it seems to appear to you, matters sometimes grow worse and worse; yet in the strength that is in CHRIST JESUS, and your views of him, nature, like the house of Saul, is giving way; and grace, like the house of David, becoming every day more triumphant. That promise is absolute, *The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* Job 17:9.

2 SAMUEL 3:2-5

(2) And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; (3) And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; (4) And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; (5) And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

The sacred historian hath given a list of six of David's children. Strange that David should have multiplied wives, contrary to the law of his GOD; (see that strong precept,

Deuteronomy 17:17.) What a source of vexation did it open in his family!

2 SAMUEL 3:6-11

(6) And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul. (7) ¶ And Saul had a concubine, whose name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ishbosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? (8) Then was Abner very wroth for the words of *Ishbosheth*, and said, *Am* I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman? (9) So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; (10) To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba. (11) And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

I only detain the Reader to Remark, in a view of the contents of these verses, what a poor sinful, time-serving creature Abner must have been. He here confesses David's right to the kingdom, as appointed by the LORD: so that he acted contrary to his conscience. It is not said whether the crime *Ishbosheth* charged him with was true or false. But his resentment was unbounded. Having taken up *Ishbosheth's* cause, without regard to GOD'S laws, he as easily drops it, without an eye to the LORD's approbation.

2 SAMUEL 3:12

(12) And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

Who should have thought at the onset of Ishbosheth's being set up as king against David, that the very man who set him up would become the very instrument to put him down. Reader! do not fail to observe how the LORD can make the minds of bad men minister to the very opposite to what they propose. The *wrath of man shall*, whether it wishes or not, *praise him*. Psalm 76:10.

2 SAMUEL 3:13-14

(13) And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face. (14) And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

Is not this a sweet feature in David's character, his love to Michal. She was his first wife—his lawful wife—his purchased wife, dearly bought; and most evident it was, he loved her. And why should not this remind me of *thy* love, thou dearest Husband of thy people? Though I have wandered from thee, and left my first love, and have had other lovers, and have; one after them, yet shall David send for his Michal, and will not JESUS demand his spouse, which he hath betrothed to himself forever, and which he hath purchased with a price no less dear than his own most precious blood? Be comforted, my soul, amidst all thine unworthiness, JESUS still loves; *he hateth putting away*; he will send for thee, and bring thee home, now he is king over all in heaven and in earth.

2 SAMUEL 3:15-16

(15) And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish. (16) And her husband went with

her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

There is somewhat affecting in this relation. *Michal* must have been dear to *Phaltial*; and yet, from her conduct to David afterwards, she doth not appear to have been very amiable. See chap. 6:16, 20.

2 SAMUEL 3:17-19

(17) And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you: (18) Now then do *it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. (19) And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

The earnestness with which Abner had entered into the interest of Ishbosheth, is now manifestly as violently against him. But in all this, though he makes use of an argument to prove that it was of the LORD's designs, to make David king, yet the conduct of Abner was not directed to the divine glory.

2 SAMUEL 3:20-21

(20) So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast. (21) And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

Whether David considered Abner in the light of an instrument in the LORD's hand, I know not; but we hear nothing in this affair of seeking counsel from GOD. See, Reader! what a poor

thing in itself the heart of man is; and that grace is no self-acting principle.

2 SAMUEL 3:22-25

(22) ¶ And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. (23) When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace. (24) Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? (25) Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

Though perhaps Joab's displeasure was expressed rather too violently, yet certainly it was blameable in David to countenance a traitor, such as Abner had proved himself to Ishbosheth. David felt the ill effects of such a conduct in *Doeg* the Edomite, upon a former occasion. 1 Samuel 22:9.

2 SAMUEL 3:26-27

(26) And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. (27) And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

It may be said of Joab as of Abner, bloody men were they both. What an awful picture, in all eyes, do such characters afford of the dreadful fall of man!

2 SAMUEL 3:28-29

(28) And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of

Abner the son of Ner: (29) Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

Very proper as it was, and becoming in David, to make an appeal to his own innocency respecting the death of Abner, lest the world should have been tempted to suspect that David sent for Abner only but to murder him; yet the imprecations which he made use of were highly reprehensible, because they were not sanctioned, as we learn, from divine authority. Dearest JESUS! how doth thy bright example of mercy strike our view, in that on the cross thou didst pray for pardon, even for thy murderers!

2 SAMUEL 3:30

(30) So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

It should seem that *Abishai* was privy to the deed of Joab. Paul considered himself as guilty of Stephen's death, because he was standing by, and consenting to it. Acts 22:20.

2 SAMUEL 3:31-37

(31) And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier. (32) And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. (33) And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? (34) Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, *so* fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him. (35) And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. (36) And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.

(37) For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

Perhaps there was a great propriety in this attention of David, respecting the death of Abner. He did all he could to testify his total disapprobation of the deed of Joab, and at the same time to inculcate an humbling lesson of the frailty and uncertainty of life among his people. But if David lamented over the death of such a man as Abner, judge how suited the pious lamentations of the people are over the deaths of the LORD's faithful servants and ministers. Whenever a faithful servant of the LORD JESUS is called home, the Church below sustains a loss, because thereby so much grace is withdrawn from the public stock, as the LORD had blessed that servant with. It may be truly said, that in the funeral of such men we bury part of CHRIST's body. The LORD then takes back the boon he had lent. Oh! how ought we to improve, and mark down in our mind, the precious truths they teach, that when they themselves cease to be, their labours and gracious words may survive them, that so *being dead, they may yet speak*. Hebrews 11:4.

2 SAMUEL 3:38-39

(38) And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? (39) And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

What David meant by this expression, that the sons of Zeruah were too hard for him, I know not, unless it was that they were too mighty in themselves and important to his interest at present, to punish, as he wished, this sin. But, in either sense, it was no compliment to David's love of justice

or his faithfulness. And we find that this event was so deeply impressed upon his mind, that on his death bed he gave charge to Solomon to punish it. See 1 Kings 2:5, 6.

REFLECTIONS

This whole chapter, except what the first verse of it teacheth, serves to show the Reader and Writer what a mass of treachery, deceit, and evil, the human heart is made up of. Alas! alas! what a state is man reduced to by the fall. Oh! blessed JESUS, how is thy glorious redemption-work raised to our adoration and delight, in the contemplation of it; since but for thy gracious undertaking, all mankind must forever have remained under this mass of guilt and ruin. Blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST!

Before we dismiss our review of this chapter, methinks I would have the Reader, as well as myself, pause once more over the consideration of the serious thought induced in the contemplation of the long war between the house of David and of Saul: and let each for himself enquire to which, spiritually viewed, we belong. Then when this point is ascertained, if happily through grace we are of the house and lineage of our Almighty David; let us advance one step further, and examine whether, in the long contests between grace and corruption, nature is waxing more and more feeble, and our better part is renewed day by day?

Reader! depend upon it a real follower of JESUS CHRIST dreads above all things, lest in the end, he should be found mistaken concerning himself in his estimate of an interest in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Are you really, truly, heartily, willing to know?

Go before the throne—present yourself now just as you are for judgment. —Are you resting upon any presumptive evidence of what you suppose yourself to have experienced in times past, of awakening, convincing, converting grace; or are your sole hopes founded upon the blessed assurances of JEHOVAH's covenant love and faithfulness solely secured to poor sinners, in the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST? If the *latter* be your *experience*, and not the *former*; if self, with all its feelings, supposed enlargements, joys, and the uncertain ups and downs of the soul, be out of the account; and JESUS, the LORD alone, be exalted in the day you present yourself for judgment; this will confirm, in the long war between grace and corruption, that the house of David is getting stronger and stronger; and that of Saul is waxing weaker and weaker! LORD JESUS! I would say both for myself and Reader, *Search us, O GOD, and know our hearts; try us, and know our thoughts; And see if there be any wicked way in our souls, and lead us in the way everlasting.*

CHAPTER 4

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A melancholy relation this chapter hath of the murder of Ishbosheth by two captains in his band. After they had perpetrated the deed they hastened with the head of Ishbosheth to David, who so far from approving of what they had done, ordered their execution. These are the principal points here related.

2 SAMUEL 4:1

(1) ¶ And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

We hardly know what to make of the character of this son of Saul; certainly there could be but little regard to the law of the LORD in his heart; for had he revered GOD'S ordination, he would not have suffered Abner to have opposed the succession of David to the kingdom.

2 SAMUEL 4:2-7

(2) And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin: (3) And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.) (4) And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth. (5) And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. (6) And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. (7) For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

But, whatever the real character of Ish-bosheth might be, the conduct of those brothers we cannot be at a loss to gather. Wherefore the account of the city to which they belonged is inserted here, by way of a parenthesis, is not certain, unless it be to mark their atrocity still more in that being *Benjamites*, they ought to have had more love to the house of Saul, who was of that tribe. The account of *Mephibosheth*, which is

given here, though short, is interesting. The lameness, induced by the event of the battle on the day of Saul's death, and Jonathan being the father of Mephibosheth, may serve to show how the sin of the parent involves the children in the consequent punishment. Alas! how evident is it, that the whole nature is fallen, when the whole nature groans from being universally implicated in the fall.

2 SAMUEL 4:8-11

(8) And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed. (9) ¶ And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, *As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,* (10) *When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:* (11) *How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?*

Observe; with what faith and assurance David speaks of redemption. Not as a thing *to be* done; but as a work *already* accomplished. Sweet thought this! So concluded holy men of old. "Blessed, (said Zacharias) he the LORD GOD of Israel, for he hath visited, and redeemed his people. Let thy servant, (said Simeon) depart in peace according to thy word! for mine eyes *have seen* thy salvation". Luke 1:68. 2:29, 30. The just detestation of David at this horridly cruel and unprovoked deed of Rechab and Baanah, could not have been expressed in a stronger manner.

2 SAMUEL 4:12

(12) And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

Doth not David's just decision and judgment on those murderers, serve to remind us of the awful sentence which JESUS, we are assured, shall one day pass on the wicked, when *they shall be driven from his presence with everlasting destruction*. It is an awful thought, but ought to be kept alive in the remembrance, that the very gracious name of GOD as JEHOVAH ALEHIM; that is, JEHOVAH in Covenant with his people by CHRIST, is as solemnly engaged as the denouncer of *wrath*, as in the covenant *promises* of redemption. JEHOVAH at the right hand of ADONAI (the believer's LORD and stay) *shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath*. Psalm 110:5.

REFLECTIONS

The sudden and unexpected death of Saul's son, while dreaming of an earthly kingdom, may serve to furnish out, both to the Reader and Writer, an important reflection on the sure, but uncertain, coming of our latter end. There is but one security against the evil of that day; and that is, an interest in his blood and righteousness, who by his death hath overcome death, and by his resurrection hath secured the resurrection of his people. That precious, precious scripture, is a motto to be worn in the bosom of the faithful, and to be fixed in the largest characters over the couches of believers; CHRIST *was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation*. Thus to be found in CHRIST, is to be found in

peace before him. And in this case, sudden death is sudden glory.

Reader! if JESUS be your hope, your trust, your confidence, your rock, you can never be moved. For how can the soul be naked which hath CHRIST himself for his covering? *I know* (says Paul) *whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* What day that might be Paul knew not; but every day he was looking out for it. *I protest* (says he) *by your rejoicing which I have in CHRIST JESUS our LORD, I die daily.* Blessed Paul! what a happy reckoning did he make of it. And what assurance was founded in it. Reader! let you and I keep JESUS always in view; let us set this precious Redeemer always before us; and depend upon it, living *upon* him, and trusting wholly *in* him, for his atoning blood and justifying righteousness, our departure will be in peace, though the signal be given for our removal without a moment's warning. It is but to close the eyes of the body to this world, and the soul will open them in glory. *Blessed* (says JESUS) *is that servant, whom his LORD, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

CHAPTER 5

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This Chapter opens with a brighter prospect to David's life and reign than any before. All the tribes of Israel now come to him, claiming relationship, and offering him the whole kingdom. David is anointed. He goeth forth to war; builds a city; receives from the king of Tyre both materials for building

and builders; is established in his kingdom; takes to himself more concubines and wives; his children are increased; fights with the Philistines, and is encouraged by the LORD. These things are related in this Chapter.

2 SAMUEL 5:1-3

(1) ¶ Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh. (2) Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. (3) So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

The time was now arrived when all Israel, as one man, should set their eyes towards David as their king. Though David had been so long exercised with difficulties, yet there is a set time to favor every son and daughter of Zion. No doubt it seemed a long time to David to wait the fulfillment of the LORD's promises concerning him. Reader! it appears thus to all the spiritual seed of David! How long, how long? is the fervent cry of the awakened soul amidst his sharp exercises! But depend upon it, in your instance, as well as David's, the LORD's time is the best time. Sooner than the LORD appoints, would neither answer your purpose, nor his glory. But is there not beside this, a beautiful representation of the advancement of our JESUS to his spiritual crown over all Israel, and indeed over every son and daughter of his Israel? From the first moment that he manifests his grace in the heart, and that promise, to make his people kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, is revealed to the soul, is it not, like David, a long and tedious expectation before JESUS gains the entire sovereignty? Even like David, after being brought to Hebron, many of the

provinces stood out, and set up their Ish-bosheth; so our hearts too long and too frequently rebel, set up rivals, and attempt to divide the empire with the LORD. But, blessed JESUS, grant that like all the tribes of Israel, thy people may at length all come to thee, to be under thy full government. And we would claim thy dominion over us by the same endearing argument as they did David's; surely we are thy bone and thy flesh; thou hast taken our nature, and married us to thyself; thou hast fought our battles also; thou hast conquered sin, death, hell and the grave; and thou hast done all these things for us and our salvation; condescend then, dearest JESUS, to be our king and our GOD. For in thee we behold the precept given to Moses can only be fulfilled; thou art the king, which the LORD our GOD and FATHER did choose; thou art from among thy brethren, and not a stranger, therefore thou, and thou alone, are suited both by law and gospel to be our king. See Deuteronomy 17:15.

2 SAMUEL 5:4-5

(4) David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. (5) In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

Was there not somewhat similar to our spiritual David in all this? JESUS entered on his public ministry at about the age of thirty. See Luke 3:23. And as Hebron was the city of the priests, and Jerusalem the city of the kings, were not these shadowy representations of the gospel state? Joshua 14:14, 15. Revelation 21:10.

2 SAMUEL 5:6-9

(6) ¶ And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. (7) Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David. (8) And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain*. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. (9) So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.

Israel had suffered the Jebusites to remain among them contrary to the LORD's command, and therefore they became a snare to them as the LORD had said. See Judges 1:21. Deuteronomy 7:16-18, &c. It should seem that the *Jebusites* had so fortified Jerusalem, that even blind men and lame (speaking after the manner of men), might defend it. But some have thought by the blind and lame here spoken of, is meant the images and figures on the walls. But I conceive that an higher and more interesting illustration may, without violence, be given to the passage, considered spiritually, and with an eye to JESUS, of whom David was, in many points, an eminent type. Till JESUS takes away the blindness of our eyes, and cures the palsied faculties of our mind, there is no entrance for him in the strong holds of the heart, while the strong men armed keepeth the palace. But, when he comes, and opens both the blind eye, and heals the crippled state of our souls, the strong holds of sin and Satan are thrown open, and thrown down. Come, then, LORD JESUS, come to thy lawful dominion; take possession of the city of thy people, both as the gift of thy Father, the purchase of thy blood, and the conquest of thy Spirit; and do thou dwell in us, and call it, as it rightly is, thine own, *the city of the living GOD*; build both

inward, and outward, and round about; and *upon all the glory let there be thy defense*. Isaiah 4:3-6. 1 Corinthians 6:19, &c.

2 SAMUEL 5:10-12

(10) And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts *was* with him. (11) ¶ And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house. (12) And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

How delightful it is to read of David's greatness, when we learn at the same time, that David's LORD made him so. It was the same grace towards David, which inclined the heart of *Hiram*, king of Tyre, to minister to David's accommodation. Sweet is that promise, and abundantly sure; *when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*. Proverbs 16:7, And still more in a spiritual sense, the LORD hath promised his dear Son, concerning his people, that *the sons of strangers shall build up the walls of his Zion, their kings shall minister unto him; they shall bring the forces of the Gentiles, and their kings shall be brought*. Isaiah 60:10, 11. But what I beg the Reader particularly to notice in this account of David, is that David perceived the LORD's hand in all his advancement. Oh! Reader, what a mercy was this! It was this distinguishing mercy which crowned and sweetened all. Thousands there are upon earth, surrounded with blessings, but who live unconscious of the LORD's hand in the gifts. And tens of thousands who live only to abuse them. Nay, Reader, many among the LORD's people lose much of the sweetness of his precious gifts, from forgetting to eye his hand in them. LORD! I would say, both for myself and Reader, open thou our eyes to see thy

gracious goings forth, and as gracious comings in with thy blessings; that we may enjoy JESUS *in* his blessings, and all blessings *for* his sake. But, Reader! we must not stop here in our improvement on this view of David. Was not David, very eminently here, a type of his Almighty Saviour? Was David exalted for his people's sake, and was his throne established over Israel; and shall not my faith take wing, and fly up to the contemplation of thee, thou risen and exalted JESUS, who art purposely exalted *as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins?* Yes! blessed LORD! thou art indeed exalted, *far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion!* GOD our FATHER hath highly exalted thee, and given thee *a name above every name.* And dearest, blessed JESUS, if thou art thus exalted, and thus lifted up, do I not know (for thou hast thyself spoken the words) that it is *to draw all thy people unto thee.* Not for thyself, but for Israel's sake; for thy glory as GOD, one with the FATHER, could receive no exaltation, no increase; but, as King of thy people, and their Mediator, the LORD our GOD hath made thee his first-born, *higher than the kings of the earth.* Psalm 89:27. John 12:32.

2 SAMUEL 5:13-16

(13) And David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David. (14) And these *be* the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, (15) Ithar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia, (16) And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.

We may well blush in the perusal of what is here said of David. Alas! what is man in his highest exaltation, and

wherein doth he differ, considered in himself, from others. Reader! recollect, that though grace refines the spiritual part, it doth not renew the bodily. David's many wives and concubines producing many children, must produce trouble. Every fruit from the root of sin must be bitter. The sequel of David's history manifests this in an eminent degree. If the reader wishes to anticipate this subject, and see how those sins brought forth trouble, he may consult 2 Samuel 15:10-16. 16:21, 22.

2 SAMUEL 5:17-19

(17) ¶ But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to the hold. (18) The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. (19) And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

It is beautiful to trace David's steps, when he acts like himself, in consulting the LORD. Reader! depend upon it, the more the believing soul keeps up communion with JESUS by prayer, the more he will be conformed to the lovely similitude of JESUS, in life and conversation. Reader! do observe, though David knew that his kingdom was established by the LORD, and, that the LORD had guided him all his life long, yet, now he is established, he doth not remit seeking counsel from the LORD. Our security and interest in JESUS, so far from relaxing our need of him, renders him increasingly necessary, and increasingly precious. Oh! thou dear LORD! is it not, that the more I know of thee, the more I may see my need of thee, and the more I desire my whole heart and soul to be drawn unto thee? Be it so with me, dearest JESUS! But reader,

observe how ready the Philistines are, the moment David is crowned in Jerusalem, to come up against him. Here again, we see David a type of the ever blessed JESUS. No sooner doth the poor sinner crown JESUS for his King, but the enemy comes forth against him, And was it not so by the church at large? When JEHOVAH set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, *the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the LORD and against his anointed.* Psalm 2:2, 6.

2 SAMUEL 5:20-21

(20) And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim. (21) And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

Here is the issue of the battle. David conquers in the name of the LORD, and to the LORD gives all the glory. *Baal-perazim* signifies *the LORD of the breaches*. The leaving their dunghill gods behind them, and the burning of them by David, shows very plainly what they were. It is worthy remark, that when in the awful war, in which the LORD delivered Israel into the hands of their enemies for their sins, and even suffered the ark of GOD to be taken, the presence of the ark consumed the Philistines. In this, their contemptible gods falling into the hands of Israel, were themselves consumed. David's burning of them was in obedience to the divine command. See Deuteronomy 7:5.

2 SAMUEL 5:22-25

(22) And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. (23) And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; *but* fetch a compass behind

them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. (24) And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines. (25) And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

Observe how variously GOD works. And observe also, how the LORD's servants keep up their intercourse with heaven, by prayer. David still seeks to GOD: and GOD still answers him. Is there not somewhat which leads the mind to the contemplation of the SPIRIT'S work upon the heart, in this direction concerning the sound of a going in the mulberry trees? The HOLY GHOST, in his descent upon the minds of the apostles, came down in the sound *of a mighty rushing wind*. And what is it now? The *taking of the things of JESUS and showing them to the people*. Depend upon it, reader! it is the work of the HOLY GHOST, when at any time your heart is led to see and feel your need of JESUS; his fulness, and all-sufficiency to supply; and you are secretly inclined to come unto him. *Draw me, (saith the Church) and we shall run after thee*. Song Of Solomon 1:4.

REFLECTIONS

Before *we* quit this very instructive Chapter, let us, my christian friend, look at it once more; and while we view the zeal of all the tribes of Israel in anointing David king, let you and I see whether we have manifested an equal readiness to bend the knee to the sceptre of grace before our JESUS, and crown him LORD of all. It is GOD the FATHER that hath constituted him in his mediatorial glory, King in Zion; while, in

the fullness of his GODHEAD he is one with the FATHER, Universal LORD over all, GOD blessed for evermore. And in his Almighty hands are the issues of life and death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. Yes! blessed JESUS, thy kingdom is thy church; thy body, thy fair one, thy spouse: thou art of our kindred, and we of thine, *thy bone and thy flesh*. Thou hast fought, and art still fighting for us all our battles. Thou hast led us out, and brought us in. Thou feedest thy people with thyself, for thou art both the bread of life, and the water of life. And surely the love, the service, the voluntary homage of thy people, when thou hast made them willing in the day of thy power, is thy lawful, just, and proper right. And when thou hast taken away the blind, and the lame, and entered by thine own Almighty arm and power, into the strong holds of Zion; oh! LORD JESUS, do thou dwell there, and make our souls and bodies thy temple of abode. Reader! have you and I thus bent the knee to JESUS? Have we crowned him with the crown of free grace, in ascribing all salvation to him? Is he dear, is he precious, is he the altogether lovely, is he the LORD our righteousness? Dearest JESUS! give both him that writes, and him that reads, grace to say amen: and let every high thing that would exalt itself against his sovereignty be brought down, and every thought *brought into captivity to the obedience and love of CHRIST*.

CHAPTER 6

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This is an interesting Chapter, and considered as typically, in some points, referring to JESUS, demands our attention the

more. We are here informed of David's intention of bringing up the ark from where it had long been in obscurity, during the troubles of Saul's reign, to David's new city. In the accomplishment of this purpose, David meets with an humbling, and most distressing providence.—His behaviour upon it,—the attempt afterwards renewed, and succeeds,—the joy of David and the people on the occasion,—the behaviour of Michal, David's wife,—his displeasure. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

2 SAMUEL 6:1-2

(1) ¶ Again, David gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. (2) And David arose, and went with all the people that *were* with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth *between* the cherubims.

It is remarkable that we have met with nothing in relation to the Ark, from the time of its return out of the Philistines' territories, (as recorded 1 Samuel 6:1 to the end) excepting, that Saul is once said to have called for it, until this which is now mentioned. See 1 Samuel 14:10. Twenty years it was lodged in *Kirjath-jearim*. 1 Samuel 7:1, 2. But do observe, with what honourable terms it is spoken of; *the Ark of GOD; whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubims*. Was not this most clearly typical of CHRIST? Is not JESUS both the Mercy-seat, the Propitiatory, the Propitiation, and the sole manifestation of the divine presence? Do not all petitions go up *on* him? And are not all communications made *from* him? How sweetly doth one pray to this effect; *Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength*. Psalm 130:8. I refer the reader, on this most interesting subject, to what hath been already

advanced upon it in the commentary on these passages; Exodus 40. Deuteronomy 10. Joshua 3. The design of David in fetching the ark, is more particularly mentioned, 1 Chronicles 13. where a whole chapter is filled in relating it, how David conferred with the leading men of his nation on the subject; to which I refer the Reader.

2 SAMUEL 6:3-4

(3) And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. (4) And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

I always feel concern, when David undertakes any thing without first consulting the LORD. We read of his conferring with his captains on the removal of the ark, but nothing is said of his communion with the LORD of hosts. Here seems also another error in the first commencement of this weighty business. If the Reader will turn back to Numbers 4:15, with Numbers 7:9, and compare both with Exodus 25:14, he will then discover how sacred the removal of the ark was to be considered, and only to be borne on the shoulders of the priests. How then could they dare to put the ark of God upon a cart?

2 SAMUEL 6:5

(5) And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of *instruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

Some have thought that David composed the 68th Psalm for this occasion. If so, there is much of CHRIST in it, which plainly

proves how well informed the mind of David must have been concerning JESUS. It is remarkable that David opens the subject in words similar to those of Moses upon the like occasion. See Numbers 10:35, 36. And from hence, it is as evident, the mind of Moses had the same views. I cannot stay in this place to particularize: but, if the Reader will turn to the 68th Psalm and to notice no more, will compare only the 18th verse with the triumphal ascension of JESUS, and call to mind what those ascension gifts Of our JESUS are, and how they have been bestowed, and still are bestowing; I think his mind will be led to admire the faith of the patriarchs, equal to that of the highest modern christians. See Hebrews 11:24-28.

2 SAMUEL 6:6-7

(6) ¶ And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook *it*. (7) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God.

It is not very easy to account for this awful judgment, any further than that *Uzzah's* touching the ark had been expressly forbidden by the LORD, and the punishment was said to be death. See Numbers 4:15. The sons of *Kohath* were to bear it, but not to touch any holy thing. Whereas Uzzah did not bear it; but touched it thus reversing the commandment. But, it will be said, perhaps, in extenuation of his sin: was not, the ark in danger of falling, had he not done as he did? To this it must be answered, that is nothing to the softening Uzzah's positive disobedience of the LORD's command. The ark of GOD needs not an arm of flesh to keep it from falling. But, Reader, let the offence beside be what it may, Uzzah dies for his presumption. And let it teach us this solemn lesson: how

awful the LORD is, and how dreadful to offend. Oh! thou blessed JESUS! what eternal thanks are due to thee for thy gracious interposing in salvation work, that thy people die not everlastingly.

2 SAMUEL 6:8

(8) And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day.

Is not this an awful account of David? Was he displeased with GOD? *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* How different was Aaron's behaviour at the death of his two sons, *Aaron held his peace.* Leviticus 10:3. David had other thoughts under the humbling providence afterwards, when driven from his throne by his ungodly son. *Here I am* (said David) *let the LORD do to me as seemeth good unto him,* chap. 15:26. But poor man, like another Jonah, when grace was not in exercise, he ventured to arraign GOD's proceedings. But how gently did the LORD deal with David; and how graciously did he expostulate with Jonah! See Jonah 4:9. *Perez-uzzah*, means the breach of Uzzah.

2 SAMUEL 6:9-11

(9) And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me? (10) So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite. (11) And the ark of the LORD continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obededom, and all his household.

David's humbleness and holy fear was proper on this occasion; but his want of faith was again reprehensible. This is but a short character given of *Obed-edom*, but it is a sweet

one. Reader! the ark evidently typified CHRIST. Whoever presumes to think, like Uzzah, that the Ark of GOD is in danger; that this poor arm of flesh can help JESUS; like Uzzah, presumes, and like Uzzah, will die. But, whoever like Obededom, receives a whole CHRIST into his house, into his heart; the LORD JEHOVAH will bless that man, that house, that family, for JESUS's sake. Oh! precious Redeemer! come thou and make thy abode in my house, my heart, and all that belong to me.

2 SAMUEL 6:12-13

(12) ¶ And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness. (13) And it was *so*, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

No doubt the blessing of Obed-edom's house and family led David to conclude that the LORD's displeasure was removed. If the Reader will compare what is here said with the 15th chapter of the first book of Chronicles he will discover the sense David had of the cause of GOD's displeasure concerning Uzzah: *we sought him not in due order*. David, it should seem, had not asked counsel of GOD about the removal; and that removal was done, not only lightly and indifferently, but presumptuously; observe how the solemn service now commenced, with sacrifices. Yes! dearest JESUS! thy one all-sufficient sacrifice is the grand restorer of peace and reconciliation. Thou! *Thou hast made our peace in the blood of thy cross*. And David's, and the people's eye, were to thee in those sacrifices, as *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.

2 SAMUEL 6:14-15

(14) And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod. (15) So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpeter

I hope the Reader will have grace to distinguish the holy joy and fervor of David's mind which gave birth to this action of his body in *dancing before the LORD*; from *modern dancing*, which is frivolous, sinful, and has a tendency to provoke lustful affections. It is impossible, I should conceive, that anyone who beholds David engaged in so sacred a solemnity as this; and, especially, after the awful event of *Uzzah's* death, can for a moment be led to suppose that the dancing of David before the LORD hath the smallest affinity to the Stage, or Assembly-dancing of poor, sinful, unawakened, vain, and frivolous creatures, that consume their precious time, and dance away their immortal souls, too frequently, from the card-room, and the midnight assembly, to the awful silence of the grave. The dancing of David in this place formed a part of sacred worship. It was the gesture of the body, and the manifestation of rapture which filled the whole soul, by way of testifying praise and thankfulness to GOD. Reader! should it be your case to meet with any idle or disorderly person, that from this account of David's dancing before the LORD presumes to bring it forward as an apology for dancing: state this circumstance, I beseech you, in its proper light, give them to see the mighty difference here shown. And let them learn that nothing upon earth differs more than what is here mentioned of the holy joy of a devout soul, which, like the heavenly bodies, move round in their several orbits with harmony to the praise of the Great Maker;

from that sensual folly of a corrupt mind, which moves only to the sound of unmeaning music, dissipating everything that is serious in themselves or others, at once reproachful to man and sinful before God.

2 SAMUEL 6:16-19

(16) And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. (17) And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. (18) And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. (19) And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

It should seem that the Ark of the LORD at this time had no fixed spot for its abode. Moses had, in his days, prepared a tabernacle at *Gibeon* for it. But so many years had passed since that period, and moreover, the Ark was so long in *Kirjath-jearim*, that as the Ark itself seems to have been overlooked (except, no doubt, by the faithful few) it is not to be wondered at the place was lost. David therefore pitched upon a spot for it, and no doubt hallowed it; for those burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, imply as much, as well as thanksgiving. And some have thought that it was at this time David composed that beautiful Psalm the 132d. Though others ascribe it to Solomon, who is said to have written it at the dedication of the Temple, because he closes his prayer on that occasion with some of the words of this Psalm. Compare 2 Chronicles 6:41, 42. with Psalm 132:8-10. But this is no

certain conclusion. For this might be accounted for by supposing that the son quoted the words of his father. Be this however as it may, the Psalm itself is so precious, and contains in it so much in allusion to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, which the Ark typified, that I beg to refer the Reader to a diligent review of it upon the present occasion. The feasting with, and the presents David made to the people upon this service, serve to show us what ground there is for holy joy in all our religious ordinances. Paul beautifully observes, upon this subject, *the kingdom of God*, that is, the kingdom of grace in this life, leading to the kingdom of glory in another, *is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST*. Romans 14:17. And Reader! if it was so in the days of David in their holy solemnities and sacrifices, which at the best were but a shadow of good things to come; with what holy joy ought believers in CHRIST, who is the whole sum and substance of all the offerings under the law, to rejoice before GOD; and especially, in the celebration of the supper, that glorious soul-reviving, soul-strengthening, soul-comforting *feast, which is a feast upon the sacrifice the Son of GOD once offered, and by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Hebrews 10:14.

2 SAMUEL 6:20-23

(20) ¶ Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! (21) And David said unto Michal, *It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD*. (22) And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them

shall I be had in honour. (23) Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

I did not notice, in its place, the conduct of Saul's daughter, because the subject is again reviewed and enlarged upon in these verses. The Reader of discernment, who is a partaker of grace, will not fail to observe, I hope, in this conduct of *Michal*, the real cause from whence it sprung. It certainly was from the same sad stock of the enmity in the seed of the serpent to the seed of the woman, which gave rise at the first, and hath run through the whole race ever since, to all the conflicts between grace and corruption. Hence Cain was wroth and his countenance fell. Genesis 4:5. Hence Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing. Genesis 27:41. Hence Michal disliked the Ark, and her husband's love to it was hateful. In the conduct of David towards his wife, on this occasion, we see how his natural temper got the better of grace. Surely it was neither generous nor becoming to upbraid a daughter with the gracelessness of her father; much less to vaunt himself upon the LORD's predilection of him to her father. But we see in this instance a renewed example of human infirmity. Where shall we turn our eyes to see a perfect pattern of unsinning obedience, holiness, and grace, but to thee, thou blessed JESUS, who in all the revilings thou didst receive, reviledst not again, See Isaiah 53:7. 1 Peter 2:23.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! think how wretched and low must have been the state of Israel all the while they were without the Ark, the symbol of GOD's presence. No doubt many a pious Israelite

sighed in secret on the occasion. Oh! my Brother! think what a sorrowful heart-breaking event would it be to this happy land of ours, if for the sins of the people the LORD should be pleased to remove the golden candlestick out of place! Even in the bare prospect of it, the heart trembles! Our sweet sabbaths, our solemn feasts, our gospel privileges, and ordinances; once over! And yet, is not the sin of the land enough to call for these tokens of divine displeasure? Who can consider the GOD of all grace, and the FATHER of all mercies, so continually affronted as he is, but must tremble for the consequences. if the soul of Lot was vexed from day to day by the filthy conversation of the wicked; well may rivers of water run down the eyes of the faithful, because men keep not GOD'S law.

But Reader! amidst the awful contemplation of such an event may it be your comfort and mine, that should the LORD *lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*; though we lose the Ark, GOD'S people cannot lose him whose symbol the Ark was. Oh! let you and I fetch up the Ark of GOD, even JESUS, to our hearts and to our houses: It is his presence alone which gives a real blessing to ordinances; and without his presence the best of ordinances are nothing. And, O LORD GOD, grant, that neither of us, like *Uzzah*, may presumptuously give a wrong touch unto the Ark, nor vainly think that the Ark of GOD needs our feeble hand to its support. Do thou, LORD GOD, direct all our approaches unto thee, and direct them that they may be after the due order which thou hast enjoined. And then, if the Michals of the present hour despise our joy, and contemn our raptures, let them; it will only serve to manifest yet more whose we are,

by the persecutions of the ungodly. And oh! for grace in full exercise, not like David, on this occasion to return *railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing*. May we pass on through *evil report as well as good report*; and in all our lesser trials, seek, dearest JESUS, a portion of thy SPIRIT, that we may *go forth unto thee, without the camp, bearing thy reproach*; rejoicing that *we are counted worthy to suffer shame for thy name*.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

This chapter affords a pleasing view of David's mind. His zeal for GOD'S honour and glory, prompts him to the desire of building an house for the LORD. He confers with Nathan the prophet on the subject. The LORD at night reveals his will on this occasion, and commands him to communicate the same to David. Upon receiving this message, David goeth in before the LORD, and offers a Most delightful prayer.

2 SAMUEL 7:1-2

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies; (2) That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

How much the soul of David longed to glorify the GOD of his mercies, is very evident from what is here related of him. Here he was a type of the ever-blessed JESUS, whose zeal for the honour of his FATHER'S house is said *to have eaten him up*. See Psalm 69:9. compared with John 2:17. Reader! I venture to believe that it is no small testimony of our being of the

house and lineage of our glorious spiritual David, when from a love to his cause and to his person, we feel somewhat as David here felt, a certain painful concern in eating our morsel alone, and would wish that JESUS's poorest members were all partakers with us of his bounties.

2 SAMUEL 7:3

(3) And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart; for the LORD *is* with thee.

Had the prophet first made it a subject of prayer, his directions would have been better. The LORD being with his people, as indeed he always is, doth not supersede the necessity of asking continually his wisdom to guide us. Paul's advice, under the command of GOD the HOLY GHOST, is expressed to this point; *in all things by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, our requests are to be made known unto GOD*. Observe, Reader! the advantages we derive on this point, as well as all others, in the blessed dispensation of our JESUS. Philippians 4:6, 7.

2 SAMUEL 7:4-7

(4) ¶ And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, (5) Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? (6) Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. (7) In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

How beautiful a view do these verses afford, of the LORD's watching over his people. No doubt, the LORD inclined the heart of David to this intention, for *the preparations of the*

heart are from the LORD. And by thus awakening in David's heart this desire, it tended to open this gracious communication from GOD to him. The LORD was pleased with the intention, as we find it is recorded, 1 Kings 8:18, but would not allow the deed. The LORD had other work for his servant; he would permit him to make preparations for the temple, and the temple-service, in laying up gold and silver for the expenses of the building, and in composing psalms and hymns for the service; but his son Solomon, as a type of JESUS, was to be the builder. See Hebrews 3:4. Observe, with what wonderful grace and condescension the LORD speaks of himself, in that the Ark, the symbol of his presence, had been within a poor tent and tabernacle. Reader! do not overlook the sweet and precious spiritual sense of this blessed truth. Our nature is indeed a poor and wretched tent and tabernacle; and yet JESUS made it his dwelling, when he came to tabernacle among us. Precious LORD! thou hast dwelt in no other; thou dost now dwell in no other; but in the heart of every poor sinner whom thou hast brought out of the spiritual Egypt of our fallen state. Leviticus 26:11, 12. compared with 2 Corinthians 6:16.

2 SAMUEL 7:8-16

(8) Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: (9) And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. (10) Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, (11) And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused

thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. (12) And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. (14) I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: (15) But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. (16) And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

This is a most gracious message from GOD to his servant, both in leading him back to the general review of the mercies the LORD had already shown him, and in leading him forward to the view of the blessings yet to come. Reader! I stop you in the account of them just to observe, that one of the sweetest and most precious offices of the HOLY GHOST in glorifying the LORD JESUS, by taking of the things of JESUS, and showing to his people, is when he kindly acts as *the Remembrancer of JESUS*, in bringing again to the recollection what our ungrateful and forgetful hearts so easily suffer to slip out of our minds. And do be frequently looking out for testimonies a his gracious work in this precious office, in *your own* experience. David is here properly reminded of the great things the LORD had done for him. His history is traced back to the sheepecotes, from whence the LORD took him: his victories over all his enemies; the high dignity to which the LORD had brought him; the blessings he now enjoyed; the blessings opening before him; the blessings in his family, in his people, in his kingdom; the recompense the LORD would make him for the intentions he had of erecting an house to the LORD; that the LORD would build him a sure house, and establish his

kingdom to his children forever, and bring him down in quietness and serenity to his grave, when the number of his days was filled. These were such gracious acts of love and mercy as could only flow from the free, sovereign grace, and loving-kindness of the LORD; and therefore he could find no cause for them in the merit of man. But, when we have paid all due attention to what is here said, as it refers to David, in his own person and household, I hope the Reader will find yet an infinitely richer subject in looking at the whole spiritually, as it referred to the person, and kingdom, and seed, of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the spiritual David, of whom here most eminently this king of Israel could be no other than a type. For never could it be said in reference to David the son of Jesse, that *his throne should be established for ever*. Here then, Reader, let us in this point of view regard the subject, and behold, in the person of the LORD JESUS, (who according to the flesh was of the seed of David) the LORD of that kingdom, which, as Daniel prophesied in after ages, *the God of heaven would set up, which should never be destroyed, but endure forever*. Daniel 2:44. Of JESUS, and no other, could this be said, and of him it is literally and strictly true; for so the angel in his salutation to Mary declared, that *he should be great, and be called the Son of the Highest; and the LORD GOD hath given unto him the throne of his Father David. He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end*. Luke 1:32, 33. It is true indeed, that what the LORD ordered Nathan to tell David, in the latter part of this message concerning *his committing iniquity*, cannot be applied *personally* to JESUS; for *he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*. But yet, *he was made sin for*

his people, though he knew no sin himself: and as such, suffered in our stead and law room, *the stripes of men*. And as to his mystical body, his spiritual seed, they do feel the awful effects of sin by the fall. So that in this sense the passage may be accommodated to him also. Blessed JESUS! how sweet and refreshing to my soul, amidst all the dying circumstances of kingdoms, and men around, is the thought, that *of the increase of thy government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it for ever*. Isaiah 9:7.

2 SAMUEL 7:17

(17) According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

How delightful it is to faithful servants, ministers, and prophets, when they have gracious tidings to communicate to the people!

2 SAMUEL 7:18-29

(18) ¶ Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? (19) And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? (20) And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. (21) For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them*. (22) Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (23) And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods? (24) For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a

people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God. (25) And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said. (26) And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. (27) For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. (28) And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: (29) Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it*: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

I admire the conduct of David upon this occasion. He doth not answer the prophet. He sends not back his grateful thanks by the hand, or mouth, of Nathan. His business was with the LORD himself. It would have been robbing GOD of his honour, and David's own soul of his joy, to have conveyed what he had to say by him, or by any man. Reader! You and I have a man, the man CHRIST JESUS, our precious Mediator, by whom we may offer up the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually. Hebrews 13:15. But then this man is GOD also; *one with the FATHER, over all GOD blessed for ever*. In whom, through whom, and with whom, all prayers and praises are presented and centre. But in the days of David this glorious High Priest was not so fully known, not so clearly revealed. Observe David's words and manner in this delightful prayer. It seems as if his whole heart was turned upward, and going forth in all the affections of gratitude, love, and praise. Every part and portion in this conduct of David is interesting. He went in, it is said, before the LORD; perhaps, in before the ark. He sat down before the LORD. Like the Church, when sitting under

the shadow of the tree. See Song Of Solomon 2:2. The posture of solemn meditation. His whole soul occupied in the thought; in whose presence he then was. After due deliberation, not rushing at once, as the unthinking horse rusheth into the battle. David opens his mouth in prayer. How humble and lowly his beginning. What can he say? what ought he to say, by way of expressing the humblest views of himself, the highest thoughts of GOD? He then begins to advert to the LORD's favors; but, as if it were impossible to enumerate them, he breaks out into the admiration, that the LORD had not done with blessing him, but hath spoken of a great while to come. Swallowed up in the contemplation, he leaves the subject of the gifts to admire and adore the giver; and after praising GOD'S glory, and expressing his veneration for the LORD GOD of Israel, he concludes with expressing his entire confidence in GOD'S covenant promises, and in the assurance that the LORD will do as he hath said. Whether David saw as much as you and I do, Reader, in the prospect of the LORD JESUS, and his spiritual and eternal kingdom, I cannot take upon me to say. But to us, who are enabled to read those promises of GOD to his Old Testament saints, now explained in the New Testament dispensation; nothing can more fully manifest the faithfulness of JEHOVAH in these gracious promises; nor anything more highly calculated to confirm our faith in GOD'S mercy through CHRIST, in whom *all the promises are yea and Amen.* 2 Corinthians 1:20.

REFLECTIONS

I would pause over the perusal of this chapter to admire the blessed properties of grace, in disposing the heart of David to

such a frame of thankfulness, and grateful affection to GOD. It is sweet to see the mind brought into this suitable frame, to discern from what source all our mercies flow, to give the author of them all the glory, that while we receive all the benefit, GOD may have all the praise.

But I would pause yet more, to admire the blessed tokens of distinguishing grace, and above all, the Great Author of that grace, whose infinite benignity and condescension shines yet more and more bright (like the heavenly bodies in the darker nights) from being manifested, notwithstanding all the unworthiness of the objects of his clemency. Yes! Great Source and Fountain of all the sure mercies of David! it is from the covenant love, and faithfulness, and grace, given us in CHRIST JESUS, thy ever dear, and ever blessed Son before the world began, that this kingdom promised to David and his seed, is made sure, permanent, and eternal. Even thee, thou blessed JESUS, in thy glorious mediatorial fulness, and finished salvation, art the gift of GOD our FATHER. And no less, the HOLY GHOST, with all his saving gifts and graces, and influences, cometh forth to thy people as the Sent, both of the FATHER and the SON. LORD GOD! make this sure house thou didst promise to David and his seed, sure to my soul. And amidst all the unworthiness of my heart, let thy promise, like thyself, be my constant comfort and support. Though thou hast said, if the children of the LORD JESUS commit iniquity, and break thy statutes; though they break thy laws; yet thou wilt not break thy promised mercy. Though thou visit our sins with the stripes of men; yet thy covenant wilt thou not break, nor alter the thing which is gone out of thy lips. *Thou hast once sworn by thy holiness thou wilt not lie unto David.* Oh! precious

promise of a more precious promising GOD in CHRIST! *Be it unto me according to thy word!*

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

We have a very different view of David in this chapter, from the view we had of him in the former. There we looked at him in his communion with GOD; and here, in his conflicts with men. Here are his conquests over the Philistines; the Moabites, Zobah, thy Syrians, and the Edomites. Here is also, the account of the rich gifts made to David; his courts of Justice, and his officers. So that altogether we see David here in a state of prosperity.

2 SAMUEL 8:1

(1) ¶ And after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

It should seem, that this victory of David's was fought by him. He did not, as in former battles, defend himself against the Philistines, but he went in quest of conquest. Thus, in spiritual warfares, when the LORD hath given us rest, as David had, from the enemies around, the same LORD gives us strength to wage war with the remaining *Canaanites* that are in the land. Let the reader remember GOD'S promise to Israel, that he would by little and little drive out all their enemies before them; and here he will see the fulfilling of that blessed promise. Deuteronomy 7:22. *Metheg-ammah*, was probably so called, from having been a frontier garrison to the

Philistines, and an awe upon Israel in the times of their humblings. The word *Metheg*, signifies a curb or bridle. Some have thought that this *Metheg-ammah* was *Gath*. Here it was, most probably, that Jonathan smote the garrison. See 1 Samuel 13:3.

2 SAMUEL 8:2

(2) And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts.

This conquest over Moab, seems to have been the fulfillment of Balaam's prophecy. See Numbers 2 Samuel 24:17.

2 SAMUEL 8:3-4

(3) David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates. (4) And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them *for* an hundred chariots.

Here is another fulfillment, if not of prophecy, yet at least of promise. The extent of these kingdoms reached towards Euphrates, and the LORD's promise to Abraham and his seed, was to extend from the river Egypt to Euphrates. See Genesis 15:18. David appears to have composed a song of praise on this occasion, as appears by the title of the 60th Psalm. It is one of David's *nichtams*; that is, his golden Psalms. *Aram-naharaim*, signifies the city of rivers, perhaps so called, from its being well supplied with rivers. Damascus was the metropolis of Syria. Hence the haughty Syrian disdained the sacred river Jordan, while extolling *Abana* and *Pharpar* beyond it. See 2 Kings 5:12. The destruction of the chariot

horses, seems to have been done in conformity to that law of GOD, which forbad the Israelites from increasing their cavalry, lest they should thereby be tempted to put their trust in horses and chariots, See Deuteronomy 17:16. Psalm 20:7.

2 SAMUEL 8:5-8

(5) And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. (6) Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, *and* brought gifts. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went. (7) And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. (8) And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

The victories of David in those instances, and the treasures of gold and brass, pleasing as they are in the account, are abundantly heightened in that principal circumstance here spoken of, that the LORD JEHOVAH preserved David *whithersoever he went*. Reader! what a sweet thought is it, to be always under the eye, upheld by the arm, directed by the hand, and beloved in the heart of our blessed and all powerful JESUS! And yet it is no more than what is really the case. *Such honor have all his saints*. For, if I am GOD'S property, I shall be GOD'S care. Surely if JESUS hath purchased me with his blood, it must imply, that from so dear a price, the object of his purchase must be dear to him also; and he will preserve it whithersoever it goeth.

2 SAMUEL 8:9-12

(9) ¶ When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer, (10) Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him: for Hadadezer had wars with

Toi. And *Joram* brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass: (11) Which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued; (12) Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

Here is another sweet and interesting relation of David's zeal for the LORD, in his dedicating the spoils of his enemies to the service of his best of friends. It was the LORD that made David victorious; and therefore, David thankfully consecrates the whole of his gain to the LORD's service. And if I do not mistake, in all this he was a type of the LORD JESUS; of whom it is said, in allusion to the gospel church; that *the multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah: that gold and incense shall be brought; for brass, gold; and for iron, silver; and for wood, brass; and for stones, iron:* meaning, no doubt, that such revenues of praise should pour in upon the church of the LORD JESUS, that *in every place incense should be offered unto his name, and a pure offering.* See Isaiah 60:5, 6, 16, 17. Malachi 1:11.

2 SAMUEL 8:13

(13) And David gat *him* a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, *being* eighteen thousand *men*.

The high reputation of David is again noticed in this battle with the Syrians, in the valley of Salt. And whoever reads with attention, David's holy triumph upon the occasion, which he wrote upon it, will be enabled to form suitable ideas of the well-founded reason. *Who will lead me* (says he) *into the strong city? Who will bring me into Edom?* David in this song asks the question, and answers it himself. GOD will. It is thou

which goeth forth with our armies. And hence, in the confidence of this, David considers himself, even before the battle, as already in possession of the territories of the enemy. *God hath spoken in his holiness; (saith he) I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver. Moab is my wash pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.* See Psalm 60:6-8. How beautiful it is to behold the triumphs of faith realizing the promises, and absolutely entering upon the enjoyment of blessings by anticipation before they come. Reader! may not all true believers in CHRIST do the same? If we heartily believe the record that GOD hath given of his Son, may we not exultingly cry out; JESUS is mine; GOD the FATHER is mine; the HOLY GHOST is mine; all blessings in providence and grace, in heaven and earth are mine; for I am CHRIST'S, and CHRIST is GOD'S, 1 Corinthians 3:22, 23.

2 SAMUEL 8:14

(14) And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

May we not spiritualize this passage, and truly say, in allusion to the holy war, when the LORD hath subdued the corruptions of our nature by the conquests of his grace, doth not the HOLY SPIRIT garrison our souls with his divine presence, and convert the very weapons, our time and talents, which in a state of nature, we brought forward as the artillery against heaven; doth not the LORD convert these very things to his own glory and service?

2 SAMUEL 8:15

(15) ¶ And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

How delightful to see, and again to have it marked to our notice, to whom David owed all his blessings. And his reign so prosperous, so ordered, so conducted! Surely the LORD was with him. But, Reader, again behold in it, the peaceable kingdom of JESUS strikingly represented; and all David's victories types of the triumphs of David's LORD in the conquests of his cross. It is JESUS who *spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*. Colossians 2:15. Yes! dearest LORD, we now sing the glories of thy reign of grace; and by and by we shall sing that song of thy reign of glory in heaven. *Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our GOD, and the power of his CHRIST*. Revelation 12:10.

2 SAMUEL 8:16-18

(16) And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; (17) And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was* the scribe; (18) And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

The officers and servants in David's court, are here made honourable mention of. But oh! how infinitely more honourable are the followers in the court of JESUS, *whose names are written in the book of life*. There, LORD, be it my portion to be found, when *thou cometh to make up thy jewels*. Philippians 4:3. Revelation 20:15. Malachi 3:17.

REFLECTIONS

While I behold the victories of David, upheld by the arm of Omnipotence, and the LORD his GOD preserving him whithersoever he went, oh! for grace to look unto the same covenant GOD in CHRIST, that I may go forth against all the spiritual enemies of my salvation, conquering and to conquer; upheld by his Almighty arm, and kept by his gracious power from all danger, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. And, LORD! do thou endue my soul with the same spirit as thy servant David, to consecrate all gifts, and all attainments to thee, the bountiful Source and Giver of all; that both gain and substance may be cheerfully offered unto thee, *the LORD of the whole earth.*

But chiefly, while I read those victories of David, oh! let my soul pass over the review of David king of Israel, and behold JESUS the King of heaven and earth, going forth thus against all the powers of darkness, the confederacies of earth and hell, in the salvation of his people. Yes! dearest JESUS, I do behold thee as the Great Captain of salvation, boldly waging war with sin, with Satan, and the host of foes in our corrupt and carnal hearts. But thy weapons are all spiritual; and thy victories all eternal. *Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for the rebellious, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.* And now, LORD, having slain thine enemies thyself; it is thou which leadest on thy people to the same victory over them, by the sovereignty of thy power. Do thou, blessed JESUS, lead me on, and bring me through, and make me more than conqueror; and in all my spiritual warfare, let me set thee, *the LORD, continually before me, for if thou art on my right hand, I shall not be moved.*

CHAPTER 9

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This chapter continues the history of David, and is directed to that part of his character which represents the amiableness of his mind, in his kindness towards the house of Saul. Finding, on enquiry, that Jonathan had left a son behind him, David searcheth him out, makes suitable provision for him, and sets him at his own table.

2 SAMUEL 9:1

(1) ¶ And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

It should seem by the expression, *Is there yet any left of the house of Saul?* that he had before this been showing kindness to his family. Indeed, it would otherwise imply inattention in David, instead of kindness; for many years must have now passed since his accession to the throne. No doubt, he was not established in the kingdom for many years after the death of Saul, in consequence of Ish-bosheth's pretensions to the kingdom: but, after all Israel anointed David king at Jerusalem, and he had gone forth in the destruction of Israel's enemies, as related in the preceding chapter, David seems to have paid an early attention to the wants of Saul's house.

2 SAMUEL 9:2-7

(2) And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant *is he*. (3) And the king said, *Is* there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is* lame on *his* feet. (4) And the

king said unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar. (5) Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar. (6) Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! (7) And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

This is an interesting account of David's friendship to Jonathan, in the remembrance of his son. There is great kindness, great generosity, and the noblest way in the conferring it. Not content with taking him into favour, giving him a princely allowance, equipage and servants, he brings him to his table. But, Reader, doth not your heart run away in the contemplation of an infinitely higher prospect of generosity, in which you yourself bear a part? Yes, I am sure you do, if so be you know anything of JESUS, and are yourself the well-known object of his kindness and favour. Need I remind you to look back to the ruined circumstances of your family, in order to bring to your recollection what David's LORD hath done for you. Did not JESUS first seek you out? Did he not himself fetch you out of the house of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, poverty and ruin? and hath he not shown the utmost kindness in redemption; brought you to his table, to his banqueting house, and placed his banner over you, of love? Doth he not, even now, again and again, say to you, *Fear not, for I will surely show you kindness;* or, to use his own most precious words; *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.* Isaiah 43:1. Precious! precious! JESUS! never let me read the kindness of one poor sinner to another, without calling to my

remembrance, the love of the Saviour to my own soul; for surely all generosity, all mercy and compassion, falls to the ground as nothing, compared to thine unequalled love to our poor nature!

2 SAMUEL 9:8

(8) And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am*?

This conduct of Mephibosheth bespeaks a very humble soul. David had expressed much the same language when he began to be first noticed by Saul. See 1 Samuel 18:18. But it is still more beautiful and becoming when expressed as the language of grace, from a poor sinner brought into favour with the LORD JESUS.

2 SAMUEL 9:9-13

(9) ¶ Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. (10) Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. (11) Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons. (12) And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name *was* Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants unto Mephibosheth. (13) So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

If we spiritualize those words of David to Ziba, in reference to the poor exiled sinner brought home, and fed, and sustained, and nourished by the LORD JESUS, the language is sweet; but

not more sweet than true. See! saith the LORD JESUS, I have supplied all thy need; washed thee from thy sins, clothed thee with my robe of righteousness; all that pertained to thy first father, Adam, in a state of innocency, I have restored to thee; thou shalt have food enough to eat; and above all, thou shalt eat at my table. Blessed JESUS! give us grace to believe in thee, and to depend upon thee; for surely the kindness of David to Mephibosheth is but a faint resemblance of thy love to us, who not only didst love us to give us of thy bounty, but so loved us as to give thyself for us, *an offering, and a sacrifice to GOD, for a sweet swelling savor!* Ephesians 5:2.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! In the view here presented of David's generosity to the family of Saul, do not fail to remark the sweet and sure properties of grace. Depend upon it, *if a man have not the Spirit of CHRIST he is none of his.* And how shall you and I testify that the Spirit of CHRIST dwelleth in us, but by a conformity to the actions of the Son of GOD? If David, therefore, sought out the ruined family of Saul, and took them into favour, shall not you and I seek out the scattered sheep of JESUS, and bring them home to his fold? Can I behold one of those precious souls for whom CHRIST died, in circumstances of distress, and feel nothing like what actuated the Son of GOD, in commiserating and relieving the sorrows of our common nature? Surely, I behold in every one of them thine image, blessed JESUS; and methinks I hear thee say, *Inasmuch as ye have shown kindness to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have shown it unto me,* But oh thou David's LORD, from whom David received the very grace which

prompted him, and enabled him, to show grace unto others; do thou regard me as the Mephibosheth of the fallen house of our first father. I am, by nature, lame in both my feet, a cripple from my mother's womb: I bow myself before thee, overpowered with astonishment that thou shouldst look upon such an unworthy creature as I am. And wilt thou indeed, dearest JESUS, take me home to thy table? Wilt thou cause me to eat bread in thy presence? Oh! for grace to live *upon* thee, as well as *with* thee; to entrust in thine hands, with full assurance of faith, all the concerns of my salvation. And, while I eat at thy table below, to live in the glorious expectation and confidence of the arrival of that blessed day of GOD, when thou wilt come and take the home to thy table above to be eternally supplied at those *fountains of living waters*, where GOD *hath wiped away all tears from all eyes*.

CHAPTER 10

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In following David's history, we are here again presented with the relation of war. David sent a friendly message to the king of the Ammonites; but he receiving it unfriendly, and treating the ambassadors of David ill, David enters upon a war with him, and entirely defeats the king of Ammon, and the Syrians, whom he had called to succour him.

2 SAMUEL 10:1-2

(1) ¶ And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. (2) Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort

him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

What kindness David had received from *Nahash*, is not easy to say, for he had been a bitter enemy to Israel, as we read 1 Samuel 11:1-4; but perhaps it might be upon some occasion when David was fleeing from place to place to avoid Saul. His motive, however, was good, in sending his servants to comfort his son. But what motive, excepting pure grace and mercy, prompted the infinite mind of our GOD to send his servants as ambassadors to us? We have shown no kindness, but rebellion all our days. And yet the LORD hath sent, and is continually sending the ministers of his gospel, praying us in CHRIST's stead, to be reconciled to GOD. Wonderous mercy! 2 Corinthians 5:20.

2 SAMUEL 10:3-4

(3) And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? (4) Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.

Alas! do we not see, in this vile reception of the servants of David, a representation of the faithful servants of the Son of David, in the preaching of his word in all ages? What Paul said of himself and his companions, may, more or less, be said of all that preach the pure gospel of JESUS; *we are made a spectacle unto the world; being defamed, and as the filth and the offscouring of all things.* 1 Corinthians 4:9, 13.

2 SAMUEL 10:5

(5) When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

And how doth JESUS graciously deal by his despised servants, but in the same tender way? Tarry till I come. *Be patient, brethren*, (says an apostle) *unto the coming of the LORD*. See James 5:6-8. Luke 21:19.

2 SAMUEL 10:6

(6) ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehab, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.

Spiritualizing still the subject, we may in this verse behold the folly, as well as sin, of men, in setting up resistance against the LORD. *Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?* Job. 9:4.

2 SAMUEL 10:7-14

(7) And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men. (8) And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field. (9) When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians: (10) And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon. (11) And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. (12) Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good. (13) And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him. (14) And

when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

In like manner, the servants of our Almighty David, when sent forth by him, and his divine presence accompanying them, are sure of victory. It is a precious thought, and never to be forgotten by the christian warrior, the issue of his warfare is not doubtful, but sure. What JESUS hath purchased by his blood, and GOD our FATHER hath engaged for in his covenant, can never subject the event of redemption in his people to uncertainty. Tried, CHRIST'S soldiers may be, and tried they will be: but they *must* finally overcome. JESUS hath made the conquest; and they overcome not in themselves, but in *the blood of the Lamb*. Revelation 12:11.

2 SAMUEL 10:15-19

(15) ¶ And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together. (16) And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them. (17) And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him. (18) And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there. (19) And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

Here is a second battle, and the issue of it the same. Yes! The nations of the earth may join and wage war against the LORD, and against his Anointed; but they must all submit, and bow down to the cross. Here was that remarkable promise to

Abraham now fulfilled: Genesis 15:18, &c. And as this was all typical of the complete salvation by the LORD JESUS, we look forward with the most firm, unshaken assurance, that the hour will come, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD, and of his CHRIST; and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Revelation 11:15. Amen. Even so, LORD JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! What a correspondence do we find, in all ages, in the circumstances of the people of GOD. The LORD said at the fall, that he would put enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; and how evidently do the effects of it appear. In civil, as well as in religious life, what false constructions are frequently put upon the best intentioned actions. And what unjust, and base foundations do men of the world sometimes make, like the children of Ammon against David, to cover over their hatred to the people of GOD.

But principally, against thy gospel, blessed JESUS! how do the minds of all the carnal unite to treat thy gracious offers with contempt, and to abuse thy precious salvation. Is it because thy offers are of no value; or because men need them not? Alas! What but the most consummate blindness, can suggest the one; or the most horrid deception of the mind, could give rise to the other. But oh! thou blessed Redeemer, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, do thou graciously hold forth the sceptre of mercy to my soul! Break down all the strong holds of Satan; give me to see, to feel, to embrace, to rejoice in the fulness, preciousness, and everlasting value of thy rich, free, and finished redemption. And in all the gracious

offers thou art making, of peace and friendship (as David did to the king of Ammon) to the souls of poor, ruined, and undone sinners; oh! LORD, accompany thine offers with thy saving power, and make them willing to be saved in thine own way and purpose. This, LORD, I know will be the case of all whom the FATHER hath given unto thee, and whose salvation thou hast purchased with thy blood and righteousness; but, blessed JESUS! cut short this work in righteousness: *Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou as the roe, or the young hart upon the mountains of Bether.*

CHAPTER 11

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This Chapter, which is still the prosecution of David's history, exhibits him in so painful a light, that for the honour of human nature, to say nothing of the honour of a child of God, we feel distress to add such a page to David's history. But the HOLY GHOST, for the edification and comfort of the church, hath caused it to be written; and we dare not, we wish not indeed, to extenuate, or to soften, a tittle of the whole transaction. Here is shown us David committing adultery and murder; endeavoring to pass off the fruit of his baseful commerce with another man's wife upon the unsuspecting husband; involving his army in the participation of his guilt, and after all, feeling no remorse nor compunction of heart for his crimes.

2 SAMUEL 11:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his

servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

The chapter opens well. The LORD had said, that an Ammonite or Moabite should not enter into the congregation of the LORD, even to his tenth generation. Deuteronomy 23:3. And therefore in the prosecution of the war, David was following up GOD'S will and precept. Deuteronomy 7:16.

2 SAMUEL 11:2-5

(2) And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. (3) And David sent and enquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? (4) And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. (5) And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I *am* with child.

This sin of David had everything in it that was aggravating. He had wives in abundance, for so in those days, the law, though not commanding, yet winked at it, or allowed it. He was getting in years at this time, not being less, at least, than fifty. The woman he lusted after, was not only the wife of another man, but of one of his faithful servants; and at the very hour when he was injuring him in the tenderest point, this servant was jeoparding his life for David in the high places of the field. He was, moreover, base, in the highest degree, to the woman whose chastity he violated; for certainly the rank and power of David became the great motive with her in prevailing over her honour. And, lastly, to mention no more, as a king, whose office it was to set a good

example; as a servant of the LORD; as one who had himself felt, in the case of his own wife, *Michal*, Saul's daughter, the very painful condition of a conduct so detestable in others; all these, and several more considerations, tended to give the most finished aggravation of David's transgression. Well may we exclaim with Job, LORD! *what is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?* Job 7:17.

2 SAMUEL 11:6-8

(6) ¶ And David sent to Joab, *saying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. (7) And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. (8) And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess *of meat* from the king.

Observe the progress of iniquity. This calling home Uriah was to hide David's infamy, as well as Bath-sheba's; contriving that Uriah's sleeping at home should conceal his crime by leading everyone to believe that Uriah was the father of the child. And observe, with what a plausible pretence, under colour of a regard for the success of his arms, David called the poor husband to answer this object. And to accomplish it yet more, as well as to show the high regard he had for Uriah, he sent after him a feast for his refreshment.

2 SAMUEL 11:9

(9) But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

Whether Uriah had any apprehensions about him, concerning his wife's fidelity; or whether, as a soldier, he did not choose

to separate from the rest of the king's guards; or whether the LORD overruled this business, so that David's guilt might be more palpable and glaring, I take not upon me to say. But so it was, that Uriah did not go home to his house that night.

2 SAMUEL 11:10-13

(10) And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from *thy* journey? why *then* didst thou not go down unto thine house? (11) And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou livest, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. (12) And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. (13) And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

By the servants telling David of Uriah's not going to his house, it seems they were in the plot; and, no doubt, someone, at least, must have been privy to David's vileness with Bathsheba. But David, still going on in a progression of evil, now reasons with Uriah on the subject. And, had not sin exceedingly, for the time, hardened his heart, the speech of Uriah was enough to have stung him to the soul. Still, however, bent on this dreadful business, David contrives a more effectual method, as he thought. For this purpose he brings him to his table, makes him drunk, that he might be the more unconscious what he did, hoping that this would effectually answer the design. But here again, no doubt the LORD's hand overruling, Uriah went not down to his house.

2 SAMUEL 11:14-15

(14) ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. (15) And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

Baffled in both attempts, David now proceeds to an act, at the very mention of which, nature shudders. To conceal his shame for adultery, he ventures on murder. And, that the world might know nothing of his sin with Bath-sheba, nor Uriah ever reproach him for it, he determines to have his brave and faithful servant murdered in the battle. Alas! alas! how desperately wicked is the heart of man by nature. Reader, do not fail to remember, that all men by nature are the same. Grace alone maketh us to differ. And even grace, though it renews the soul, renews not the body. Unless, indeed, it restrains the workings of corruption, what one man commits, another is as liable to perpetrate. Oh! LORD! help both him that writes, and him that reads, ever to keep in view that striking question; *Who maketh thee to differ from another?*

2 SAMUEL 11:16

(16) And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*.

What the thoughts of Joab were upon this occasion, is not said. But it is melancholy to observe how readily he fell in with David's command. Thus David added another sin to his vast catalogue, and brought Joab, the general of his army, into an accomplice with him.

2 SAMUEL 11:17

(17) And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Here is another dreadful aggravation beside the death of Uriah; for it seems that some of David's soldiers fell also. See, David, what a train of bloody business this adulterous act of thine hath induced.

2 SAMUEL 11:18-21

(18) Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; (19) And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, (20) And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? (21) Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

It should seem, from the apprehension Joab expressed of the king's displeasure, that he had no knowledge of David's adultery, and the motive for which he had wished the death of Uriah. From the king's letter, indeed, he saw that Uriah's death would be pleasing to him, and that the intelligence of this would soften his displeasure at the success of the Ammonites. The story of Abimelech, which Joab thought the king would consider a similar case to this of the death of Uriah, is related in the book of the Judges. chap. 9:50-55.

2 SAMUEL 11:22-25

(22) So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. (23) And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. (24) And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy

servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. (25) Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

Observe, how hardened the heart of David still remained. He hears of the death of Uriah, of the death of several of his brave servants, wholly on this account, for this dreadful sin of his. He hears of the triumph of the Ammonites in consequence thereof; and yet, in the midst of all, only sends a message to Joab, as if it was an ordinary event, and bids him be encouraged. What an awful state was he now in! Still hardened, unfeeling, and without the least remorse!

2 SAMUEL 11:26

(26) And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

What are we to think of this woman! The HOLY GHOST hath not remarked anywhere on her conduct. Was she so artfully seduced by David at the first, that she fell into his snares unconsciously? She sent unto him indeed, when the effects of their unlawful commerce began to manifest itself to her feelings; as much as to say, she looked to him for protection. For by the law she was liable to be stoned, Leviticus 20:10. But when Uriah came from Joab to the king we hear nothing of her sorrow, or of throwing herself at her husband's feet for pardon.

2 SAMUEL 11:27

(27) And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

The speedy marriage, and the birth of the child, probably made the matter notorious in the eyes of the people. But the chapter closes with what might well be expected, and alarming enough indeed in the relation, *The thing displeased the LORD*. Oh! what a matter for the most accumulated distress of soul, hath David been heaping up to himself from the dreadful events related in this chapter!

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let you and I make a most serious pause over the perusal of this chapter, and endeavor to gather the improvements from it which GOD the HOLY GHOST plainly intended the church should gather from the awful subject.

See! that the blessed SPIRIT hath suffered nothing to be kept back in the relation. Everything that can possibly tend to give it the most finished representation of infamy and sin is marked in it. And after the enumeration of adultery, with the art and baseness to conceal it; even leading to drunkenness, and to murder; not barely of one, but of many; we discover (and what is in the representation as awful a view as any) the most consummate boldness in sin, rioting in the fruits of it, in the marriage with the accomplice of his former shame, and a total insensibility and hardness of conscience, as if he had committed no evil at all.

And what may we suppose to be the intention of the HOLY GHOST in thus unfolding to the church's view the shame of David? Is it not, Reader, to teach every child of GOD those most useful, however humbling, lessons; that the best of men are but men, and as liable to fall into the worst of sins as the

unrenewed and unawakened. Corrupt nature; in the mass of flesh and blood, is the same in all. That the LORD's people are regenerated only in their better part, their spiritual faculties. The body still continues earthly, sensual, and tending to earth and sensuality. If therefore the affections of the body in the people of GOD do not break out, and show themselves as vilely as in the unregenerate; this is not from any greater purity in their earthly parts than others, but from the restraining grace of GOD. This is one precious design which we may venture to believe GOD the HOLY GHOST had in view, in causing this fall of David to be so particularly and fully recorded.

And there is another we may as confidently suppose intended by it, and that is, to teach the infinite importance of being always kept by sovereign grace. David himself was so conscious of it that he cries out in a fervor of the greatest earnestness, *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.* Depend upon it, my Brother, the withdrawment of GOD's Spirit from a child of GOD, though but for a short space, is the saddest evil in our pilgrimage state. GOD hath other ways in the stores of his omnipotency, of punishing the sins of his children, than casting them into hell. It is only, as no doubt it was in this instance of David, (in his first giving way to the lust of his corrupt nature, in looking wantonly on Bath-sheba) it is only for the LORD to suspend the operations of his HOLY SPIRIT, and the enemy, who waits for our halting, joining with our own hearts, and the world around, soon makes us to fall. And, if the LORD be withdrawn, the heart, like a cage of unclean birds, is open to the admission of every evil. And who knows

what a succession of sins, like those of David, treading one upon the heels of another, may follow during the LORD's suspension of the operations of his grace? How doth the heart, as in his instance, become more and more hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Oh! let us, like him, daily, hourly, minutely, if possible, pray, LORD! *take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from us!*

And, is there not a *third* sweet lesson, believers in CHRIST have, to draw from this view of David? Yes! blessed SPIRIT! I venture to assure myself that in thine own most lovely and gracious office, in glorifying the LORD JESUS, thou didst, above every other consideration, design to teach the church, in the fall of David, the infinitely precious doctrine of redemption by CHRIST JESUS; and that there is *salvation in no other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*. Oh! dearest LORD, let this view of David serve to impress on my soul this grand truth, in yet stronger and stronger characters. Give me to see, to feel, to be convinced, that if a man after GOD'S own heart, (of whom it is said by the word of truth itself, that *save only in this matter of Uriah he turned not aside from anything that the LORD commanded him all the days of his life*. See 1 Kings 15:5), if such a man needed redemption, oh! how infinitely endeared to every poor sinner's view ought to be the person, offices, relations, and characters of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Yes! thou dear Redeemer! with my latest breath, and earliest song, would I chant those sweet words, as the sum and substance of all my trust; *We have redemption through thy blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of thy grace*.

CHAPTER 12

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This chapter is a continuation of the same subject as the former; and relates the method the LORD was pleased to adopt for the recovery of David after his fall. Nathan the prophet is sent from the LORD to David; opens his commission with a parable. David's behaviour upon this occasion. The LORD's mercy; and his judgment in the death of the child which Bath-sheba bore to David. A relation in the close of the chapter of the war, and the event of it.

2 SAMUEL 12:1-4

(1) ¶ And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. (2) The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: (3) But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. (4) And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

I beg the Reader to remark, that a period of, at least, nine months (how much longer I will not determine) must have elapsed from the commission of David's adultery to this message of Nathan to David; because the child was born. During which time, it doth not appear that David had once expressed sorrow for his aggravated sins. Indeed, as the HOLY GHOST is wholly silent upon the subject, it should seem that all communion with the LORD must have been remitted. Reader!

do not forget to remark this, and to reflect on the very awful state to which a soul may be reduced by hardening the heart in sin! And do let me beg of you further to remark, how utterly incapable a man is to recover himself, if the LORD doth not recover him. Grace must first enter the heart before a sense of sin can take place in the mind. The LORD sent Nathan *unto* David; not David *sent* to call Nathan, or make supplication to the LORD. *Thou restorest my soul*, (saith David upon another occasion) Psalm 23:3. Without this awakening by grace, neither David, nor any other sinner, could ever awaken himself. If the Reader be not sensible of this, may it please the LORD to make him! The method Nathan took to awaken David to a sense of his sin, and to make him his own judge, was by means of a parable, most happily chosen, according to the general usage of instruction in the eastern world. It is probable that Nathan, as a prophet and teacher in the LORD's service, frequently adopted such a plan, therefore it lulled all suspicion in the breast of the king of any more than an ordinary subject. The parable itself is so plain in its allusion to the case of David in his late atrocity, that I do not think it needful, to comment upon it in the explanation. Uriah's one wife compared to David with his many wives, was but like the poor man with his ewe lamb to the many herds of his rich neighbor. So that to let his corrupt passions lead him to this act of oppression and cruelty was beautifully marked out in the case, as Nathan represented it.

2 SAMUEL 12:5-6

(5) And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:* (6) And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

David in this spoke the honest feelings of an unbiased mind. He knew the provision the law of God had made upon such occasions, and he gave sentence upon himself accordingly in condemning the supposed rich man! See Exodus 22:1.

2 SAMUEL 12:7-12

(7) And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; (8) And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. (9) Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. (10) Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. (11) Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. (12) For thou didst *it* secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

Here Nathan takes upon him, as a faithful servant of the LORD, the full authority belonging to him. And no doubt, but that he who sent the prophet; commissioned his word with power to David's heart, that he felt the force of the prophet's message too sensibly to attempt the smallest justification of himself. How affecting must have been to the heart of David the prophet's recapitulation of the divine mercies! And how awful the message of the divine sentence!

2 SAMUEL 12:13

(13) And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

Reader! observe how quick and immediate are the LORD's pardons upon the sinner's confession. One short verse contains both, *Oh! taste and see how gracious the LORD is.*

2 SAMUEL 12:14

(14) Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

Reader! think what a powerful argument that is, or ought to be, to restrain sin, when we consider how much the offences of the LORD's people give occasion to the adversaries of his cause to blaspheme. Surely! every child of GOD would rather die than bring reproach, by any evil conduct, upon the LORD's inheritance.

2 SAMUEL 12:15

(15) ¶ And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

The Reader should observe how the conference broke off abruptly. Nathan had executed his commission; and now left the monarch to his own reflections, bitter indeed as they must have been. He stayed not to soften what he had said; nor to soothe David under his trouble. Probably, as a good man, he retired to his house to pray for David. Here let ministers learn, after that they have executed their commission, and dealt faithfully with sinners, to retire to seek a blessing on their ministry from him who alone can render their labours effectual. It is more than probable, that when Nathan went to

his house, David retired to his chamber, and poured out his soul before the LORD in the devout and penitential expressions which we find penned in the 51st Psalm: the title of it saith as much; that it was *when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone in unto Bath-sheba*. It would swell the commentary to a length inadmissible, to point out the numberless breathings of a soul truly awakened to a sense of sin and deprecating the divine displeasure, which that Psalm contains. I must therefore suppress what otherwise I should delight to enlarge upon. But there is one circumstance in it which is not perhaps so generally noticed as it ought; and yet it is the very one which, of all others, testifies in the loudest strains the genuine repentance of David for his foul transactions; namely, that as the title of the Psalm also expresses it, it was directed *To the chief Musician*; perhaps David sent it to the singers in the temple service, that it might be set to music, and constantly sung when David attended the worship of the LORD, as a standing memorial of his unfeigned humiliation and sorrow for his crimes; and that he was constantly looking up to GOD for the pardon of them. Now, Reader, as oft as you think of David's scandalous fall, think also of his unequalled humility. Figure to yourself the king of Israel not only looking up to GOD in secret for pardon, but causing all the subjects in his kingdom to know what a sinner he had been, and calling upon the LORD in public to have mercy upon him. Surely! it affords the most complete view that any history ever afforded of real, true, and genuine repentance. See also Luke 22:61, 62.

2 SAMUEL 12:16-17

(16) David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. (17) And the elders

of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

Here is another evidence of the sincerity of David's mind. Humbleness of soul for sin makes the soul truly tender.

2 SAMUEL 12:18

(18) And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

The seventh day prevented the act of circumcision. No doubt David construed this also as a further token of God's displeasure.

2 SAMUEL 12:19-23

(19) But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. (20) Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. (21) Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. (22) And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? (23) But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

We cannot sufficiently admire the strength of David's faith on this occasion. Here is submission with holy thankfulness, as if conscious of God's wisdom, as well as God's love.

2 SAMUEL 12:24-25

(24) And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him. (25) And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

When we recollect that from this issue, after the flesh, CHRIST came, how mysterious and unsearchable are the ways of GOD. It is a subject which challenges our attention, and at the same time our reverence, that in two or three instances the LORD was pleased to mark the descent of the LORD JESUS, as if to humble all human pride, and to throw down all the proud reasonings of men. *Rahab* the harlot; *Ruth* the Moabitish damsel; and Bath-sheba the unfaithful wife of Uriah, were in the chosen race from whom, after the flesh, sprung the LORD and Saviour of our nature. Surely! here, if anywhere, it may be said, the LORD's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. See Matthew 1:5, 6. Ruth 4:13, 17. *Solomon* means peaceful: *Jedidiah*, beloved of the LORD. And in this we discover the grounds of this name, being so striking a type in many instances of him who is the Jedidiah, the only-begotten and beloved Son of his FATHER, *full of grace and truth*.

2 SAMUEL 12:26-30

(26) ¶ And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city. (27) And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters. (28) Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name. (29) And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it. (30) And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it *was set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

Though this relation is put in at the close of this chapter, it should seem that it must have taken place before Nathan's visit to David, and when his heart had not been melted down with true sorrow for his sin; for else the crown of the king of Ammon would have been a mere bauble in David's view after Nathan's visit.

2 SAMUEL 12:31

(31) And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

The harsh method David here adopted to the Ammonites, serves to confirm the observation made before. Spiritually considered, GOD'S people should bring indeed the corruptions of their own desperately wicked hearts under saws of iron, and make them pass through the fires to consume them; for these are the *Ammonites* with which our souls are most severely exercised and assaulted. Toward these I would show no mercy.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! give me grace in the perusal of this chapter to gather all the precious instructions thine HOLY SPIRIT mercifully intended, in the publishing such a record for thy church and people. Do thou, HOLY SPIRIT, graciously accompany thy written word with the influences of thy divine power, that it may be profitable to my soul, *for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

And here, first, cause me to learn, from this view of thy servant David, what my nature is, even in its highest attainments. The best of men, if left to themselves, may fall into the worst of sins. So I behold it here, and let the view of it humble my soul to the dust before thee.

In the next place; LORD, teach me also, from what I here discover, that a child of GOD when fallen cannot arise of himself. The first advance towards a recovery must come from thee. The conviction of this most certain truth is enough to make a soul go humbly all his days.

And, blessed GOD, when thou hast wrought these truths in their own living characters in my heart, oh! lead us to see that from the nature of thy blessed covenant, in the blood and righteousness of thy dear Son, thou wilt not leave thy fallen children in their low state, but wilt recover them for thy name's sake, and for thy righteousness sake thou wilt heal them. Thou wilt send some Nathan, some heavenly messenger; nay, blessed JESUS, thou wilt come thyself, and by the sweet influences of thy HOLY SPIRIT, in convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, thou wilt heal their backslidings, and love them freely. And though by afflictions thou mayest bring them down, yet for thine own sake thou wilt not cast them off. Unworthy, LORD, as we are in ourselves, yet in JESUS thou beholdest us with complacency. Though thou visit our offences with a rod, and our iniquities with stripes, yet thy loving-kindness wilt thou not take from him, nor suffer thy faithfulness to fail.

Here then, LORD, let my soul rest. And when I have gathered all these sweet and precious instructions from the relation the

HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give of David's fall and recovery, in the instances before me; when I have beheld every thing connected with it in a way of improvement, as it refers to his case, and as it concerns my own; let the whole have this blessed effect on my poor, fallen, corrupt, and sinful nature; to endear yet more and more the LORD JESUS to my heart, and to form him there, the one only sure and certain hope of glory. Yes! thou dear IMMANUEL! thou art the LORD our righteousness! for other righteousness the whole race of fallen Adam can have none. *In* thee do I trust; *on* thee do I lean; *to* thee do I come, and *with* thee pray everlastingly to be found. Be thou made of GOD to me, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that (according as it is written) he that glorieth let him glory in the LORD.*

CHAPTER 13

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In this Chapter is related the beginning of David's domestic troubles. Amnon his son ravisheth his own sister Tamar; and Absalom, another of his sons, murders his brother Amnon. David's extreme sorrow in consequence.

2 SAMUEL 13:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

It was among the punishments threatened David by the Prophet Nathan, for the adultery with Bath-sheba, and the

murder of Uriah, that the LORD would raise up evil against him out of his own house; and the love, or rather lust of Amnon, after Tamar, opened a source for this purpose.

2 SAMUEL 13:2

(2) And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

Observe, how fleshly lusts war both against soul and body: and of all the lusts of our poor fallen nature, this of uncleanness wars the most. How it levels us with the brute that perisheth. LORD! I would say, in the very thought of it, remember thy sweet promise; in which thou hast said, *I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.* Ezekiel 36:29.

2 SAMUEL 13:3

(3) But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab *was* a very subtil man.

What an awful thing it is to have, in what the world calls a friend, the worst of all enemies. Here is a subtle, ill-designing man, acting as an agent for Satan, and covering it under the mask of friendship. Reader! there is a friend I would earnestly recommend to you whose very wounds are faithful, who loveth at all times, and sticketh closer than a brother. Who can this be but JESUS? Concerning other friends I recommend nothing, unless it be caution in the choice of them. But if you make JESUS your friend, he will insure your choice in all others. See Proverbs 17:17. Proverbs 27:6.

2 SAMUEL 13:4-14

(4) And he said unto him, *Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me?* And Amnon said unto him,

I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. (5) And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand. (6) So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand. (7) Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat. (8) So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes. (9) And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him. (10) And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother. (11) And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. (12) And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. (13) And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee. (14) Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

I do not think it necessary to make any long comment upon what is here related. It forms but the same melancholy subject of the breaking out of our corrupt and fallen nature, only diversified according to the various passions of different men. Reader! it hath never been yet fully pondered, nor perhaps ever will this side the grave, what a deadly poison was infused into human nature by the bite of the serpent at the fall. And therefore, from the same cause, never till then will be thoroughly known the infinite remedy procured us by

the Person and Offices of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. What an awful example is here of a deep laid, diabolical scheme, by a brother against the chastity of his own sister!

2 SAMUEL 13:15

(15) Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

Can the mind conceive anything more detestable than this unnatural, cruel conduct? Reader! may we not pause over it and ask, is it possible for beings of such malignity to be found among mankind? Are there not here evidently traces of the infernal spirits? Are not those evil spirits which first tempt us to sin, the very first to accuse us before GOD? See Zechariah 3:1. Revelation 11:10.

2 SAMUEL 13:16-19

(16) And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her. (17) Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her. (18) And *she had* a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her. (19) And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

The renting of her garments was doubtless intending, not only as a token of grief, but of the injury she had sustained. It was an ancient custom in the loss of somewhat important, to rend the garment. Thus Samuel, on Saul's loss of the kingdom. 1 Samuel 15:27, 28.

2 SAMUEL 13:20

(20) And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

It should seem from the sequel of the history that, from the first moment Absalom heard of his sister's defilement, he determined to be revenged.

2 SAMUEL 13:21

(21) ¶ But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

Why did not David's wrath prompt him to punish the sin in his son Amnon? We hear nothing of this, neither of his bringing his affliction before the LORD. No doubt he connected with the subject of his son's incest the recollection of his own adultery. How beautiful the subject would have been, if David had been introduced as lamenting it before the LORD.

2 SAMUEL 13:22-29

(22) And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. (23) And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons. (24) And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant. (25) And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him. (26) Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee? (27) But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. (28) Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. (29) And the servants of Absalom

did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

What a renewed example is here of the malignity of the human heart? Well might our dear LORD tell his disciples, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of Luke 9:55.

2 SAMUEL 13:30-31

(30) ¶ And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left. (31) Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

Reader! remark the LORD's hand in this distress of David. Thus, like the former, was *evil raised*, as the LORD had said, *out of his own house*.

2 SAMUEL 13:32-33

(32) And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. (33) Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

Reader! remark the friendship of this Jonadab to Amnon. He knew, it seems, that Absalom had intended the death of Amnon for two full years together, and yet had never communicated the matter to his friend Amnon. Such is the world's friendship!

2 SAMUEL 13:34-39

(34) But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him. (35) And Jonadab

said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is. (36) And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore. (37) But Absalom fled, and went to Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. (38) So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years. (39) And *the soul of* king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

The sequel of this feast was mourning and sorrow. How innumerable have been the instances of such revellings in all ages! How quick sometimes the transition from the house of feasting to the house of woe. *Talmi*, king of Geshur, was a relation by the mother's side to Absalom. His mother Maacah was the daughter of Talmi. See chap. 3:3. And by his abode with the king of Geshur for no less a space than three years, he wore out in his father's mind the grief for the loss of Amnon; and his father's natural affection for him revived.

REFLECTIONS

Think, Reader, in the perusal of the history of Amnon's gratified lust, how wretched the man that is given up for a prey to his own corrupt passions! Think also, in the sudden departure of his soul into eternity, in the moment of sin and drunkenness, what an awful termination to a life of iniquity; and how horrible his state, closing his eyes in sin, and opening them again in everlasting misery.

Behold, Reader! in the history here presented to thy view of David's family affliction, how sure the words of the LORD are in their accomplishment. The LORD had told him, that he

would raise evil out of his own house, and here we see it. It hath been but a short time since David rioted in adultery and murder; and already we find he had gathered the bitter fruits of the sinful tree he planted. Incest and murder already stain his walls, and these, as the sequel of his history shows, were but the beginning of sorrows.

Precious JESUS! what a relief doth the remembrance of thee, and of thy sweet compassion to our nature, afford in the recollection of the sorrows of it! What but the tidings of great joy, which thy rich, and free, and full deliverance from all the sorrows of our nature brought from heaven, could tend to bind up the broken heart under its manifold afflictions! But when my soul turns to the contemplation of my JESUS, and the everlasting remedy he is in himself, and his complete salvation, here in him alone I find a relief for every sorrow, a balm for every care. Yes, thou sweet Redeemer! my eyes dry up their tears when I consider that every sin, sorrow, and affliction, hath lost its force, and almost its very name in thy gracious sanctification of it by thy blessed, glorious, gracious, and complete redemption. Oh! heavenly LORD! kindly go on to overrule the powers of Satan, and defeat his triumphs over our poor fallen nature, in leading us to sin, by counteracting his malice, and bringing our hearts nearer to thee. Correct, LORD, the angry passions of our nature; let our lusts of uncleanness be subdued; and when at any time the enemy cometh in like a flood, do thou, blessed GOD, lift up a standard against him. Let me behold with the eye of faith JESUS hastening to my relief, and in the innumerable sorrows that I have in my heart, let the precious promises of thy glorious gospel be the comforts to refresh my soul. Make

them as good news from a far country; as rivers of water in a dry place; or as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

CHAPTER 14

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The afflictions of David are not over, and therefore in this chapter we are presented with the preliminary step leading to a new scourge. By the ministry of Joab methods are adopted for a reconciliation between David and his son Absalom. The king permits him to come back, and after some little difficulty a good understanding is established between them.

2 SAMUEL 14:1

(1) ¶ Now Joab the son of Zeruah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

Observe, that it was David's natural tenderness to his son which Joab took advantage of. If the Reader will take the pains to examine David's history more closely, he will find that, for the most part, his sins and consequent chastisements, were induced by consulting the feelings of nature more than the glory of GOD. His winking at Absalom's murder was contrary to GOD'S law. Alas! how little do we keep a steady eye to what the LORD hath said, instead of what we feel.

2 SAMUEL 14:2-11

(2) And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead: (3) And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So

Joab put the words in her mouth. (4) And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king. (5) And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead. (6) And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. (7) And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth. (8) And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee. (9) And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless. (10) And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. (11) Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

The Reader, to enter into the full beauties of this speech, will recollect how much it was the custom in the eastern world to discourse by story and parable. Nathan had adapted this plan to David in his own instance. See chap. 12. And here the woman of Tekoah so represents the outlines of Absalom's assassination of his brother Amnon, that the king for the moment overlooked his own family distresses on the same occasion, in the supposed history of this woman. But the Reader to enter into the principal beauty of this story, must be careful not to overlook the grand point in that law, which made provision that an Israelite should not have, upon any consideration, the right of his inheritance cut off, nor his name destroyed from among the people. This inheritance, no doubt, had an eye to the covenant of redemption; cause the

same law that made provision for this inheritance; made provision also for its recovery by redemption in the next of kin, in case of loss. See Numbers 27:1-11. compared with Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Then turn to Ruth 4:1-7. Hence you see how sweetly the whole of this gracious provision, respecting the inheritance of Israel, pointed to the LORD JESUS, our *Goel*, our kinsman-Redeemer, who both stops the avenger of blood in becoming our city of refuge, and redeems our justly forfeited inheritance, as our relation, by his redemption. David therefore, no doubt, perfectly well understanding the grand point referred to, concerning the inheritance of which the woman of *Tekoah* complained she should be deprived, and the coal be quenched, whereby a name, or remainder, would not be left to her husband; entered with more earnestness into the burden of her petition, and with an eye to CHRIST sware to the woman by an oath, that her case should be as she wished. Reader! think then, how eternally secure must be our inheritance, when JESUS himself, our kinsman-Redeemer, hath purchased it, and how sure the name he hath preserved to his people. This is to be called *by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name*. Isaiah 42:2.

2 SAMUEL 14:12-17

(12) Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on. (13) And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. (14) For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him. (15) Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* because the people

have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid. (16) For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God. (17) Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.

The wise woman of Tekoah having obtained her end, as suited to her own case as it appeared to the king's view, now goes on to make application of it, as it suited the king's in the case of Absalom. And she touches upon that string which might vibrate most on the affectionate feelings of David; namely, that Absalom was not only banished, but, says she, it is *thy* son, *thy* banished one, Absalom. I think it hardly necessary to remark, what I should conceive, unobserved by me, the pious Reader would himself instantly suggest; that if David's heart felt for his banished son, what must be the heart of our GOD towards his poor banished ones, who by sin have committed murder on their own souls, and, but for his clemency in calling them home, must continue banished forever. *O Israel* (saith GOD) *thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help.* Hebrews 13:9.

2 SAMUEL 14:18-20

(18) Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak. (19) And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: (20) To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing:

and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

If David could discern under all coverings, and all disguise, think how open must be all the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts to his view, with whom we have to do! Hosea 4:12, 13.

2 SAMUEL 14:21-23

(21) ¶ And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again. (22) And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant. (23) So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

Recollect, Reader, that before Joab sent the woman of Tekoah in favour of Absalom, it is said that the king's heart was toward him. The everlasting love of GOD to poor sinners is *in* himself and *from* himself; the springs of grace have no other source, but GOD'S own infinite love and mercy. The LORD JESUS hath indeed purchased our redemption with his blood: but not the love of GOD, which gave rise to, and manifested itself in that redemption. I would beg the Reader to read a blessed scripture of our dear LORD'S upon this point, that never can be read too often, nor too warmly cherished in remembrance, in the heart. The passage I mean is, that wherein JESUS prays for all the fruits of his FATHER'S love for his people; but not for the FATHER'S love itself. *I say not unto you* (said JESUS) *that I will pray the FATHER for you; for the FATHER himself loveth you.* And indeed it was this love of GOD which gave birth to the coming of the Saviour. See John 16:26, 27. 3:16. And was it not this love originally; nay, is it

not the same love now, which leads our gracious GOD and FATHER to call us to him in and by the LORD JESUS, our Almighty Intercessor for us at the right hand of power? Oh! glorious united source of all our joys! The sovereign, free grace of the FATHER; and the everlasting righteousness and advocacy of the Son; whereby the council of peace between the Persons of the GODHEAD is fulfilled, and *grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD*. Romans 5:21.

2 SAMUEL 14:24-27

(24) And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face. (25) But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. (26) And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight. (27) And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

Amidst all the beauty of Absalom's person, we hear nothing of the graces of his mind! Alas! what are all outward attractions but vanity. *The LORD seeth not as man seeth*. Concerning Absalom's family, the record of his children is but of short note, for they were soon cut off, as appears, chap. 18:18.

2 SAMUEL 14:28-33

(28) ¶ So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. (29) Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. (30) Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the

field on fire. (31) Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? (32) And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been* good for me *to have been* there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me. (33) So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

I did not notice, in its proper place, what was said of the king's refusing to see Absalom when Joab first brought him from *Geshur*; knowing that the same train of thoughts would meet us here. I pass over the mere history of the subject to remark what is much more interesting for us to regard, and which, as an improvement, seems to be suggested in the earnestness Absalom had to see the king's face; namely, how earnest ought we to be, to be brought to court, to see our father's face in the person of our adorable Redeemer! What are all the ordinances of worship in the house of prayer, except JESUS be seen in them. Oh! blessed JESUS! I would say to thee in the language of thy church of old, *Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* Song Of Solomon 2:14.

REFLECTIONS

Blessed JESUS! Let me find grace from thee, dearest LORD, in the perusal of this chapter, to consider how very like to Absalom my heart is, when by sin and shame I have been running away from thee. But how superior, dearest LORD, art thou to the tenderness of the tenderest parents, in calling home thy banished ones to thy presence; for thou seekest

them out, and instead of allowing them to return, thou bringest them home, and bringest them in, and takest them to the bosom of thy love and mercy. Oh! dearest LORD! how often hath sin and Satan made me their captive; and how often hast thou recovered me from their snares. Keep me, blessed JESUS, near thyself, and suffer me to wander no more. Let JESUS *kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.*

In the mistaken tenderness of David to his unworthy son, LORD, lead me to see, and as strongly to feel, the evil tendency of nature's affection, when those affections are striving against GOD. Oh! bring down every proud thought and disobedient lust, which would tend to dishonor my GOD. Let me have strength from thee to pluck out an eye, to cut off a right hand, and do all holy violence to the improper demands of nature, when my GOD and Saviour makes it the mark of my duty towards him. I would be found, dearest LORD, wholly thine; and like *Levi*, not acknowledge my brethren, nor know my own children, which have not observed thy word, nor kept thy covenant. I would bend the knee, and bow myself with my face to the ground, in token that thou art my rightful Sovereign, and that I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds. *Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing, O my GOD, I will give thanks unto thee forever.*

CHAPTER 15

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This chapter opens with the subject of what may be considered as the foundation forming for Absalom's unnatural rebellion against his father. We are here informed of his courting popularity,—his open avowal of his seeking the crown—the party he formed—and his several operations in prosecution of his design. We read also, in this chapter, David's distress upon the occasion, and the sad state to which this rebellion of his son reduced him.

2 SAMUEL 15:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

The whole life of Absalom seems to have been sinful. He multiplies his train of horses and his chariots, with running footmen to grace his equipage; whereas the LORD had strictly forbidden this to his people Israel. Deuteronomy 17:15. Moreover, the LORD had told Israel by his servant Samuel, that the king they would choose, but not of the LORD's approbation, would be of this very character, to take pride in what the LORD had forbidden; and that he would oppress his subjects in the number of his chariots, horsemen, and servants. So that these things ought to have been enough to have made the people look shy upon Absalom; whereas it appears that so far from it, these tended to win their affections. See 1 Samuel 8:11, &c.

2 SAMUEL 15:2-6

(2) And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was *so*, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel. (3) And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the

king to hear thee. (4) Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! (5) And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. (6) And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

It is awful to consider the depth of guilt and sin in the heart of man. Here is a man wishing himself a Judge, that merited judgment, and punishment, for the murder even of his own brother! Here is such a character aspiring to a crown, and yet apparently so very humble as to embrace the poorest creature in the kingdom. Dearest JESUS! hadst thou not come down from heaven to redeem our nature, and hadst thou not sent thy blessed SPIRIT to renew our nature; what man alive would have believed that the same seeds of sin as are here seen bringing forth their deadly fruit in the instance of Absalom, are in every man's heart by nature. LORD keep me from that evil man myself!

2 SAMUEL 15:7-9

(7) ¶ And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. (8) For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. (9) And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

It is not very easy to ascertain the time from whence we are to calculate these forty years. It cannot mean after forty years of David's reign; for his whole reign was no more than forty; and it should seem that this rebellion broke out at least ten years before the death of David. Some have thought that it

means after forty years that Israel had been governed by a king. And if so, this makes the calculation to be just, as it happened in about the thirtieth year of David's reign. Here is another proof of the fallacy of the human heart, to make religion a covering for the basest designs. Was it not enough, Absalom, that you leveled a dagger at your too kind and indulgent father; but must God himself be impiously mocked in the attempt?

2 SAMUEL 15:10-12

(10) But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron. (11) And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing. (12) And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

We feel pity for those two hundred men drawn by surprise into such a conspiracy: but as to Ahithophel, David's counsellor and friend, we feel indignation at his conduct. But here, blessed JESUS! do I not feel my soul drawn to thee and thine unequalled trials, from the perfidy of Judas? Alas! what situation hath any of thy faithful ones been ever placed in from the baseness of unfaithful men, but thou hast experienced it before them. Probably, David wrote the forty-first Psalm on the occasion of this conspiracy, in which he particularly takes notice of the falseness of the familiar friend which eat bread with him. But if so, it is still more interesting and striking, typically considered, in reference to the perfidy of Judas towards our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And indeed, as such, the LORD himself applies it. See John 13:18.

2 SAMUEL 15:13-14

(13) ¶ And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. (14) And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

David was a man of great personal bravery, wherefore then did he wish to flee? No doubt he saw the hand of the LORD in the affliction. GOD had said, I will raise up evil out of thine own house. Chap. 12:11. Reader! that affliction which comes immediately from the LORD, and as the correction of sin, throws down self-confidence, and makes men cowards. It is sweet to see the hand of him that corrects however, because as his name is, so is his mercy.

2 SAMUEL 15:15-18

(15) And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants *are ready to do* whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint. (16) And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the house. (17) And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. (18) And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

No doubt, in this flight, David's mind was much occupied in a variety of thoughts. It is much, however, that we hear nothing of his presenting himself in this distress before the LORD; in seeking counsel and protection.

2 SAMUEL 15:19-22

(19) Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a stranger, and also an exile. (20) Whereas thou camest *but*

yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee. (21) And Ittai answered the king, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be. (22) And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

This is an interesting conversation David held with Ittai. But I admire the generosity and attachment of this poor Gittite. At the time when David's own son, whom he had cherished and loved so greatly, was seeking his life, this stranger's heart was warm towards him. Reader! can you and I say as much for our rightful LORD and King, CHRIST JESUS? Oh! dearest Redeemer! be it my portion to take up the same gracious resolution; and where thou art, there as thy servant may I be.

2 SAMUEL 15:23

(23) And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

Much as I am pleased with what is here said of the affection of the people to David, I gladly leave the subject of David's passing over Kidron, to view thee, thou dear Redeemer, accompanied with thy chosen few, going over the very same memorable brook, in the night of thy sufferings, when thou enteredst into the garden. Had my soul seen thee, dearest JESUS, in that awful hour; and had I then known what through thy gracious teachings I now know, that that Kidron's brook, into which all the black, polluted waters, emptied themselves from the sacrifices of the temple, was typical of the guilt and defilement of my soul, which is poured upon thee; Oh! how

should I, like the people following David, have lifted up my voice and wept. John 18:1.

2 SAMUEL 15:24-26

(24) ¶ And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. (25) And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me *both* it, and his habitation: (26) But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am I*, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

I have often admired the blessed frame of mind David was in, when he thus expressed himself. Surely nothing but the grace and presence of the LORD with him could have induced it at such a season. It is delightful to see that though the LORD (according to his solemn declaration by Nathan) had raised evil out of his own house, and though the LORD was correcting, he at the same time sustained him under the pressure. His direction to Zadok is as high an evidence of David's devotion and resignation, as we meet with in his whole history. Go Zadok, carry back the Ark! what though I have not the symbol and representation of JESUS, yet I shall have JESUS himself with me; and that will abundantly answer for all. What the designs of my GOD are in this humbling, sorrowful providence, I know not. Whether I shall ever see Jerusalem again, or whether I shall not; let my JESUS choose for me, I have no choice myself. If I shall find favour in his eyes to return, the Ark will be doubly sweet to my view; the habitation of GOD's house, and all things pertaining to ordinances. But, if my GOD say nay to this, he will not say nay to my soul in loving me. He hath spoken peace, and therefore will not unsay it. Oh, Reader! what a frame of mind is here.

Better to be thus in GOD'S hottest furnace, living upon JESUS, than at ease under any pleasing frames, or supposed attainments of our own.

2 SAMUEL 15:27-29

(27) The king said also unto Zadok the priest, *Art not thou a seer?* return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. (28) See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. (29) Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

Observe, how strong confidence he put in the counsel of GOD'S Seer, that is, GOD'S prophet; through whom the LORD might graciously be pleased to convey instruction. And, Reader! have not we that which is better than a thousand Seers now? even his holy word, which is a constant *light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths.*

2 SAMUEL 15:30

(30) And David went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

How very suitable a frame was David now in! He saw the hand of GOD in this affliction. This gave the additional bitterness to it. Moreover, he knew not what the event might be. Either way, in success, or the contrary, it was full of evil. If he conquered, it was a son, *a* beloved son, he subdued. If he fell himself, death would be the consequence. In such a state, as a mourner, he might well go barefoot and weeping. But Reader! can you accompany David in idea up the ascent of Mount Olivet, and not recollect that holy mourner there, David's LORD? Surely! no true believer in CHRIST can ever hear,

or read, the name of Olivet, without connecting with it JESUS, and his agonies there. That was the memorable spot where thy Redeemer, my soul, sweat drops of blood, when the agony and convulsion of his soul was so great in sustaining all the weight and pressure of the divine justice due to thy sins, that David's grief for Absalom compared to it was but as nothing. Here the powers of hell besieged him also, until it became necessary that an angel from heaven should be dispatched to strengthen him. And Reader! you will not forget, I hope, how the Son of GOD in that tremendous hour in Olivet, was agitated backward and forward; when his whole soul *was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*; and when his few faithful disciples were drenched in sleep, as if on purpose that no help, no comfort, should be afforded him: and that, in redemption-work, of the people there should be none with him. Isaiah 63:8.

2 SAMUEL 15:31

(31) ¶ And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

Reader! do observe how near the LORD is to his people in all that they call upon him for. The issue of this prayer, and the success of it, the subsequent history proves. Ahithophel's counsel was considered foolishness. And through this, as an instrument in the LORD's hand, Absalom lost his cause, Oh! the privilege of the faithful, in their nearness of access to GOD!

2 SAMUEL 15:32-37

(32) And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite

came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: (33) Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: (34) But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. (35) And *hast thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, *that* what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. (36) Behold, *they have* there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *son*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *son*; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. (37) So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Here we find David at his devotions. Not all the hurry of business, nor all the precipitancy of flight, could stop the fervor of David in his communion with GOD. The title of the *third* Psalm gives us an acquaintance with the sum and substance of David's prayer, what he said to the LORD upon this occasion: and very sweet the petitions are, to which I refer the Reader. He complains of the number, and of the malice of his enemies: but takes refuge in GOD, both as a sun and shield, to whom salvation alone belonged. Probably David poured out his soul to the LORD as he ascended the mount, weeping and praying as he went, and even praising God through all. Beautiful pattern for afflicted souls! Whether suffering under the effects of sin, the ungraciousness of children, or of the world. See Psalm 3. The coming of *Hushai* seems to have been providential. And the event fully justified the advice of David in the moment.

REFLECTIONS

Pause, Reader! over the perusal of this Chapter, and in the contemplation both of the father and of the son, David and Absalom, learn to observe what nature is, and how much grace is needed to correct and reform poor fallen man. Behold in Absalom the awful consequence of indulging the corrupt and pampered passions of children. Had David, as a king in Israel, followed up the divine law, in punishing him for murder, painful as it might have been to nature, yet perhaps the LORD would then have sent his servant the Prophet to interpose; and Absalom being convicted and convinced of the atrocious sin of murdering his brother, would have called forth mercy in his exemplary sorrow and repentance. At least this effect would have been produced by it, that he could not so shortly after have been found in open rebellion against his father. But, when David in the feeling of the father lost sight of his duty as a king, and took again to his bosom the murderer of a son, can it be wondered at, that the serpent so fostered should sting him, or that the wretch forgiven the blood-shedding of a brother, should so ripen in iniquity, as to aim the dagger at the father! Oh! what hath sin wrought in our fallen nature! What is not the heart of man capable of devising in evil, void of divine grace!

Reader! let us remark in David also, how sure GOD'S judgments are, and how certain it is that our sin will find us out. How much more amiable David appears in ascending the hill of Olivet, weeping as he went, than when triumphing in his conquests over Bath-sheba and Uriah! How very gracious the LORD is in condescending to correct his people, in order to bring their hearts home to him, when without those corrections they would wander from him forever.

Precious JESUS! how dear are thy recoveries! Oh! how very sweet, to thy people, are thy many, many redemptions. Yes! dearest LORD, thou hast not only redeemed us to GOD by thy blood; but the everlasting efficacy of thy precious blood-shedding and righteousness, again and again pleads for us, when by our frequent departures, thy corrections for our recovery are rendered necessary, Oh! LORD! grant that such may be the views, both of him that writes and him that reads, (if it be thy blessed will), of all thy tender corrections for our trespasses, that though thou mayest bring us down by affliction, our faith may yet be assured thou wilt not cast us off: though we are, chastened, yet not destroyed. Though in us there is nothing of worth, yet with JESUS there is perpetual merit. He ever liveth to make intercession; and his blood cleansed from all sin. Now, LORD, would I sing that song, even before I quit this mortal life; and ere long I shall chaunt it loud amidst the heavenly host: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*

CHAPTER 16

CONTENTS

The history of Absalom's rebellion, and David's distress, is continued through this chapter. Ziba, by a false report against Mephibosheth to David, obtains his master's inheritance. Shimei cometh forth and curseth David. Ahithophel counselleth Absalom.

2 SAMUEL 16:1

(1) ¶ And when David was a little past the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

There is much of GOD's providence in this visit of Ziba. This base servant meant no good to David, it is probable, more than he did to Mephibosheth. But the LORD overruled it for good, David's few friends would need the common necessaries of life; and in this manner the LORD was pleased to have him and them supplied. Reader! if you wish to have a real enjoyment of even the most common blessings of life, the secret of so doing, is to trace the hand of the LORD in them. Every mercy is doubly sweet, when we can discern the LORD's appointment in it. Paul's thought on this point is delightful; Philippians 4:19.

2 SAMUEL 16:2-4

(2) And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as *be* faint in the wilderness may drink. (3) And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. (4) Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

It appears from every part of the history, that Mephibosheth was a man of no ambition. What a cruel, unfaithful wretch was this man, to slander poor Mephibosheth, on this occasion, to David.

2 SAMUEL 16:5-8

(5) ¶ And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. (6) And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left. (7) And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: (8) The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man.

It is a very common thing in the trials of God's people, that when the LORD scourgeth, the agents of the enemy assault and harass the mind also. And, no doubt, these things are permitted of the LORD; for whatever be our trial, let the instrument be what it may, it can go no further than the LORD permit. Reader! it is always profitable to discover the LORD in all.

2 SAMUEL 16:9-12

(9) Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. (10) And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? (11) And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him. (12) It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

I have often admired the conduct of David upon this occasion, and have been secretly led to observe how graciously the LORD enabled him so to act. But I have been led yet more,

both to admire and adore the LORD's mercy in the midst of his afflictions, in the plentiful supply of grace imparted to him. Well might David say that his song should be of mercy and judgment, and that he would direct this song unto GOD; for here, as well as in many other periods of his wonderful life, he found occasion to sing of both, as strikingly blended. GOD was evidently visiting him in judgment. But in the midst of judgment he gave him large proofs of mercy. I beg the Reader to take with him, in the perusal of David's conduct respecting Shimei, those several sweet instructions it brings. Let Shimei curse, saith David, for the LORD hath bidden him. Not that David meant that Shimei did right in what he did, as it respected himself; for Shimei's sin was the same, though the LORD overruled it for good; but he meant, that GOD was now afflicting David, and therefore made use of this rod, bad as it was, to accomplish his holy purpose. Reader! it is precious to justify GOD in all our afflictions. The LORD cannot do iniquity, that is certain. David saw the LORD's hand in it, and that was enough; he had not one word to say by way of complaint. Let him curse, the LORD hath bidden him. But this is not all: As the LORD's hand is in this affliction, David was led to hope therefrom an happy issue. It may be, said David, that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day. No doubt David felt all that nature ought to feel in the reproaches of Shimei; but, beholding at the same time that the LORD had commissioned him, trust in GOD'S covenant promises made him conclude that the end would be peace. Reader! see whether your afflictions have this sanctified issue. Do you see the LORD'S hand in them? Do they lead you to GOD? Do they prompt you to approve of GOD? Job's prayer to this effect is a

sweet prayer; *That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Job 34:32.

2 SAMUEL 16:13-14

(13) And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust. (14) And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

No doubt the spirits of both the king and people were much bowed down, and needed refreshment. How sweet is it, under the persecutions of Satan and the world, when at any time JESUS refreshes the soul with the whispers of his grace!

2 SAMUEL 16:15

(15) ¶ And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

The rebellion was become very formidable by this time, when Absalom had taken the capital. No doubt, David's hopes began to give way, and fear took possession of his heart. Reader! it is profitable, very profitable in spiritual things, to be brought down to the lowest state, that the recovery may carry with it the clearer evidence, that the delivery is wholly of the LORD. We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that our eyes may be altogether to JESUS. 2 Corinthians 1:9, 10.

2 SAMUEL 16:16-19

(16) And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king. (17) And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?* (18) And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide. (19) And again,

whom should I serve? *should I not serve* in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

When the LORD is about to accomplish the sacred purposes of his will, how wonderful are the means by which he works? Instruments the most unconscious, the most improbable, the most unlikely, shall do it. The dissimulation of Hushai, the lying prophet in Israel, shall succeed. Read those scriptures, 1 Kings 22:20-23. Psalm 76:10.

2 SAMUEL 16:20-23

(20) Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do. (21) And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong. (22) So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. (23) And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, *was* as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

How strikingly fulfilled were the denunciations of GOD by the prophet upon David in this instance! How improbable when they were delivered, and yet how fully brought to pass. See chap. 12:11, 12. But what an awful state must all Israel have been in at this time! when the counsel of such a wicked man as Ahithophel, as by this advice he proved himself to be, was considered as the oracle of GOD! LORD! keep thy church, keep thy people from the counsel of the ungodly, and give both according to that sweet promise, *Pastors after thine own heart, which shall feed them with understanding and knowledge:* Jeremiah 3:15. Remark, Reader, what a

connection between David's sin and David's punishment. From the housetop David first conceived lust for Bathsheba: on the housetop David's concubines shall be dishonored.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! learn from this view of David's sweet frame of mind under very heavy afflictions, the preciousness of faith, and the blessed effects of it. No doubt, in David's estimate of life, those seasons were most highly valued by him, when upon a review of them, after the trying hours were over, he could look back and see how graciously the LORD had led him *through* them, supported him *under* them, and brought him *out* of them. And, Reader, do you mark it down in your experience, for I desire never to lose sight of it in mine, that, painful as afflictions are, a true believer in JESUS is ultimately a gainer by every conflict and trial he is called upon to go through. That promise must be sure, *All things, how discouraging soever they may now seem, work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* And, if our faith be enabled to give due credit to GOD, depend upon it, GOD will give due reward to faith. And to live upon GOD's perfections, his promises, his covenant engagements in JESUS, when all the avenues, as they appear to us, are shut up, by which those engagements can be fulfilled; this is precious faith indeed! Dearest JESUS! grant me grace so to live! May my confidence in thee, my interest in thee, my resourses from thee, and my life upon thee, be always such, that whether, like David, the streams of outward comforts run low, as in this flight of his from his city; or whether the communications of thy grace remit their

accustomed flowing; yet, knowing that thou art the same, and the sovereign efficacy of thy salvation admitting no abatement, my assurance in thee may be the same also. And let my song be like the prophet's, that *though the fig-tree shall not blossom: neither fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation.*

CHAPTER 17

CONTENTS

The history of Absalom's rebellion, and David's difficulties in consequence thereof, is prosecuted through this chapter. Ahithophel's counsel being rejected by Absalom, and Hushai's accepted, Ahithophel hangeth himself. David receiveth secret intelligence how to act.

2 SAMUEL 17:1-4

(1) ¶ Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night: (2) And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only: (3) And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: *so* all the people shall be in peace. (4) And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

No doubt the advice of Ahithophel was founded in strong human policy. Poor David, considered in himself and his little army, could have made but feeble resistance. But what a wretch was Absalom, and how lost to all grace the elders of Israel, to be pleased with such an infamous counsel. Reader!

do pause here, to remark how different the conduct of the father and the son in the pursuit of a kingdom. David, though anointed by the LORD's command to the kingdom many years before Saul's death, yet waited patiently his death, and even after that, was content to reign only in Hebron, until the LORD should bring him over the whole kingdom. But Absalom, an usurper, and an usurper against the throne and life of his own father, hastens to universal monarchy in defiance of the LORD. But, Reader, let us drop David and his history, to attend to David's LORD. As David was an eminent type of JESUS, we may safely look for the outlines of JESUS'S history, upon all occasions of importance which we meet with in David's life. Was not then this persecution of David by his own son, a lively resemblance of the persecution of the LORD JESUS, by his own people the Jews? And as to the personal attack on David, according to Ahithophel's advice, *I will smite the king only*; can there be a more striking circumstance of the personal hatred the Jews had to our dear LORD, whose dislike the LORD figured out, under the similitude of the parable; *Come, let us kill the heir, and the inheritance shall be ours*. Matthew 21:38. And who is there that can read the counsel of Ahithophel, that all the people should have peace, if the man whom Absalom sought alone to destroy was taken off; who is there that can read this, and overlook the striking affinity between this advice of Ahithophel, and Caiaphas's prophetic declaration, though unconscious what he said, *that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not*. Precious JESUS! of what infinite importance must have been thy death, that the HOLY GHOST in glorifying of thee, was graciously pleased to sketch the outlines of it in so gracious a manner! Oh! LORD! fulfil the precious part of this

prophecy yet to be fulfilled; and as thou art the *Shiloh*, to whom Jacob, when dying, prophesied that the gathering of the people should be; do thou hasten, LORD, the hour, *and gather*

together in one the people of God which are yet scattered abroad. John 11:49-52, compared with Genesis 49:10.

2 SAMUEL 17:5-14

(5) Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith. (6) And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou. (7) And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time. (8) For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. (9) Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some *other* place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom. (10) And he also *that is* valiant, whose heart *is* as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men. (11) Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that *is* by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. (12) So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one. (13) Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. (14) And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

The close of those verses throws a light upon the whole matter contained in them. Nothing but the overruling power of GOD could have made Absalom and his party attend to such advice as Hushai's. It was impolitic: it was foolish: it was cowardly. But, the LORD *taketh the wise in their own craftiness*. Job 5:13. But, Reader, here again, as in the former instance, behold a nobler subject suggested to our meditation in the view of JESUS: Though the Ahithophels of our LORD's day, and the whole council of the Jews all joined together to kill the LORD of life and glory; yet in all they designed, and in all they wrought, they only (as the apostles, in the prayer, beautifully expressed it) *did that which the hand and counsel of the LORD determined before to be done*. Acts 4:27, 28. Oh! it is a precious thing in our holy faith, ever to eye the LORD in all events concerning JESUS and his people.

2 SAMUEL 17:15-16

(15) ¶ Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled. (16) Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.

Hushai, the faithful friend of David, here followed up his services. He was not certain that Absalom, though at present well pleased with his counsel, might not alter his opinion; and if so, David could not be safe. Our dear LORD had frequent occasion, before his final sufferings and death, to secure himself from the immediate malice of his foes. See Luke 4:28-30. 13:31, 32.

2 SAMUEL 17:17-21

(17) Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David. (18) Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down. (19) And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known. (20) And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem. (21) And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

Here we behold a renewed instance of the LORD's overruling power. It would be incredible, but for this, to account how it was that Absalom's suspicion had not been more excited by the departure of the two sons of Zadok and Abiathar. And the least suspicion would have ruined the whole plan, and involved Hushai, Zadok, and all the priests at Jerusalem in it. But the scripture before us explains all: *The LORD had appointed to bring evil upon Absalom*. Awful, when men are given up to a deluded blindness! See that instance of Eli's sons; 1 Samuel 2:25.

2 SAMUEL 17:22

(22) ¶ Then David arose, and all the people that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

It is supposed that David wrote the 42nd and 43d Psalm upon this occasion; because he speaks there of his remembrance of GOD, as his GOD in covenant, from the land of Jordan and the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar; and I think it more than

probable. The HOLY GHOST doth evidently pour out, in a more copious manner, his precious effusions to endear JESUS, when all other comforts run low. Jordan's sacred river, and the land of Hermon, refreshed the recollection of David concerning former trials. And, Reader, have you not found that past afflictions have brought to the recollection present joy. I believe that GOD'S people would have been strangers to many an holy joy and sweet fellowship with their JESUS, had they been without some of their deepest crosses. We may say, therefore, in this sense, the hill of *Mizar*, in the sweets of recollecting grace, and mercy after, abundantly overpays the painful ascent of it, in the day of David's trouble. But let us drop David: let us view JESUS passing over the brook Kidron with his disciples. And, as David and all his troop by the morning light were safely landed on the other side, and there lacked not one of them; so, depend upon it, in the everlasting morning, on the eternal hills, when all the followers of JESUS have waded through the Jordan of death, JESUS will again say, *Of all that thou hast given me I have lost none.* John 17:9.

2 SAMUEL 17:23

(23) And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

Here we see the dreadful end of bad men. Like another Judas, he falls unpitied, unregarded. His name Ahithophel, which signifies *the brother of a fool*, best marked his end; for he died as a fool died. If, as some suppose, David wrote *the fifty-fifth* Psalm on this man's account, when he prayed God to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness, we see how

fully the LORD answered his prayer. There are several verses in this Psalm striking to this point. See Psalm 55:9, 12-15.

2 SAMUEL 17:24-29

(24) Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. (25) And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son, whose name *was* Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. (26) So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead. (27) And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, (28) Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*, (29) And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

We have here a view of the different armies. But behold, Reader, him the LORD provided for his servant, and raised up friends to support him in the wilderness. But oh! how infinitely short are these things, to what the LORD JESUS is doing for his little army, in all their wilderness dispensations. Yes! dear LORD! thou knowest that thy people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty; but thou givest them that bread of life and that water of life in secret, which is thyself; and thou art to them, that rest *wherewith thou causeth the weary to rest, and their refreshment*; of which the honey, and butter, and sheep, and beds, and basons, and parched corn, given to David, were but faint resemblances! John 6:51, &c.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let not this chapter pass away from our review, until that we have first gathered from it those gracious instructions, the HOLY GHOST so kindly gives us in it. Do you not behold, in the restraints of Ahithophel's advice, a resemblance of that restraining power of our gracious GOD, over the enemies of our salvation? Would not the Absaloms of the present day, like mad horses, come upon us while we are weary and weak-handed, and tread down and trample us under their feet? And how is it that our enemies are prevented from destroying us? LORD, it is the bridle of thy providence, which thou hast put into their jaws; and thy fear, by which thou overrulest the designs of their hearts. Yes! dearest JESUS! it is thou which, by keeping the reins of government in thine hands, controullest their power; and thou speakest to them as to the proud waves; *Hitherto shall ye come, and no further!* Methinks I hear thee saying now to my soul, as to the church of *Smyrna* of old; *Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer:* though the devil will cast some of you into prison, it is only that you may be tried; and though you have tribulation for ten days, yet fear not. No! blessed LORD! be thou my Counsellor, my strength, my confidence, and I shall never fear. I know that the devil would, but for thee, cast us (not into prison, but) into hell. And I know that in his prison he would keep thy people until they rotted, and died there. But he dare not: *ten days* only, is his limitation! Oh! keep me faithful unto death, and I shall have from thee, *the crown of life which fadeth not away.*

Reader! let David's troubles, sweetened and sanctified as they were at the river Jordan, and the hill Mizar, bring with them to our view, this gracious conviction; sanctified sorrows are

precious things. A real sanctified sorrow, in the present wilderness, can never come too often. JESUS parcels them out to his people from his own unerring wisdom and love; and the cover of every one of them is marked in his own blessed hand: *as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*. Depend upon it, in David's view, when he came to sum up his mercies, those he counted most precious, which had brought with them most of GOD. And in our estimate of real blessings, whether trouble or joy, our calculation will be the same, if so be we know the LORD, as he did. Lead me then, dearest LORD JESUS! lead me as it seemeth best to thy infinite wisdom and love, through all the various paths of the present wilderness state, whether marked from the land of Jordan, or the Hermonites, the hill Mizar. Let the way be ever so intricate, ever so rough or thorny; yet if thou art with me, I know it will be *a right way to a city of thy habitation*. And oh! LORD GOD, fill my soul, my heart, all my faculties, all my powers, with the same love to thee as thou didst David's; for then my very tears, like his, which were his meat day and night, will be; to me, sweeter than the spiced wine of the pomegranate. Then shall the goings forth of my soul, bear a sweet correspondence to his devout aspirations, and my heart will be the echo to his, when he said: *As the hart panteth after the water brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O GOD. My soul thirsteth for GOD; yea, for the living GOD: when shall I come and appear before GOD!*

CHAPTER 18

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This Chapter concludes the history of Absalom's rebellion, and an awful conclusion, to the rebel it proved. David sendeth forth his armies; gives a charge to his officers to deal favourably with Absalom. Absalom is slain. Victory determines in favour of David; but the king mourneth for his son.

2 SAMUEL 18:1

(1) ¶ And David numbered the people that *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

It is not said what numbers the whole army consisted of. In all probability, it could not be very many. But *Jonathan* had before learnt that there is no restraint on the LORD, to save by many or by few, 1 Samuel 14:6. Sweet thought to the believer amidst all his warfare!

2 SAMUEL 18:2-4

(2) And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. (3) But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thousand of us: therefore now *it is* better that thou succour us out of the city. (4) And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

Every one perfectly well knew the personal courage of David; but beside the reasons here given on both sides for David staying at home, there was in David's breast, a secret cause to keep him back. How unnatural soever Absalom's conduct was towards his father, yet David's heart, as the sequel

proved, loved this unnatural child too well to fight against him.

2 SAMUEL 18:5

(5) And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal* gently for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

Reader! pause over the perusal of this verse, and remark with me, the astonishing love of David to this most worthless child. Of all the base, ungrateful sons we read of in history, perhaps none, take it altogether, exceeds the character of Absalom. We find, very frequently, in the feelings of nature, parents unaccountably passing by the worth, and tenderness, and affection of many dear children, to bestow their partiality and favors on one the most undeserving. Certain it is, that Abraham preferred Ishmael to Isaac, in that he begged of the LORD that he might have the blessing. See Genesis 17:18. And Isaac evidently preferred Esau to Jacob, in that, contrary to the divine command, he would have conferred the blessing of the covenant upon him. See Genesis 27:4. There is no explaining this upon any other principle than that, in these matters as well as others, nature and grace are everlastingly opposite to each other. Thus in the case of David: his commanding his servants to deal gently with Absalom meant, no doubt, not to hurt his person. It should seem as if David had strong confidence of victory. No doubt his communion with the LORD was at this time most lively and fervent. But what an infatuation was David under, concerning this unnatural son. The sole cause of the war was on his account; and yet, in David's wish, he must be saved. Supposing he had been spared; did David hope that his clemency would reclaim

him? And could David feel so little regard to the lives of his faithful subjects, as to sacrifice numbers to the saving such a son? But, Reader! while we look at David with wonder and astonishment, let us turn our thoughts to that stupendous contemplation, the love of our GOD and FATHER towards us, whose affection, after all our rebellion and baseness, as far exceeds the love of David to Absalom, as the heavens are higher than the earth. GOD our King and FATHER, in the dreadful war induced by our rebellion, usurpation, and hatred against him and his government, not only commands all his servants sent to subdue us to his government again, to deal gently for his everlasting love's sake; but that mercy shall be shown, and grace abundantly displayed, gives up his Son, his only begotten Son, to the accursed death of the cross! *Hear O heavens, and be astonished O earth, for the LORD hath done it!* And while we thus contemplate thine unequalled love, O thou most gracious and Almighty FATHER, in this unparalleled instance of it, let us no less admire and adore the matchless grace of our JESUS, who in the accomplishment of all this wonderful design, hath dealt, and still continues to deal most gently with us, in all the manifestations of his love. Yes! dearest LORD! on the very cross, thou pleadest for thine unnatural murderers, whose salvation thy death was then accomplishing!

2 SAMUEL 18:6-8

(6) So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim; (7) Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand *men*. (8) For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

Is not this a lively representation, (without straining the figure) in what is said of *the wood devouring more than the sword*, of the awful decision of that final war, when it is said, *the wicked will call to the mountains, and to the rocks, to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb*. Revelation 6:16.

2 SAMUEL 18:9

(9) ¶ And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

Every prelude to the death of Absalom is awful. His death is not after the common visitation of all men. He is first suspended, as it were, a spectacle between heaven and earth, unworthy of being in either. The simple boughs of a tree, shall begin the preparation of his awful death. A mule shall assist at his execution. Had the animal thrown him: had he broken his neck in the fall; or had a certain man at a venture, shot him through; these would have been among the common things of war. But no! His sin, his rebellion, his whole life, indeed, had been so flagitious, that his death must be marked with more than common infamy. The very beast on which he rides, shall leave him, as if delighted to be no longer burthened with such a sinner!

2 SAMUEL 18:10-15

(10) And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak. (11) And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle. (12) And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine

hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom. (13) Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against *me*. (14) Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak. (15) And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

Who this certain man was, is not said; but it serves to heighten the subject very much. Absalom shall not escape. The eye of the LORD is upon him. His time is come. Justice demands his blood. Oh! awful, awful day, when the measure of the sinner's iniquity is full!

2 SAMUEL 18:16-18

(16) And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people. (17) And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent. (18) Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

As Absalom's death was awful, so his burying was ignominious. The prophet Ezekiel gives a dreadful representation of the funeral of such men, such as this of Absalom; chap. 32:18, to the end. Observe, Reader! in what is here said of Absalom's pillar, the folly of monumental pillars to the ungodly. Alas! what an awful thing it is, for a lying stone to speak well of a man where he is not; and the man himself to be in torments where he is.

2 SAMUEL 18:19-23

(19) ¶ Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies. (20) And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead. (21) Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran. (22) Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready? (23) But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi.

The Prophet hath remarked how beautiful the feet of those are upon the mountains, who bring tidings of peace. Whether it be the swift footed Ahimaaz, or the slower-paced Cushi, yet the tidings themselves were good. But oh! Reader! how beautiful to you and to me, ought to be the tidings of salvation! And these, (do not forget) JESUS himself first really, and truly brought. How beautiful are his feet, to the eye of faith, seen on the cross! How beautiful when he comes in the word of his grace! How lovely, when leaping over the mountains, and skipping over the hills!

2 SAMUEL 18:24-33

(24) And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone. (25) And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near. (26) And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings. (27) And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings. (28) And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell

down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. (29) And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*. (30) And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, *and* stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still. (31) And, behold, Cushai came; and Cushai said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. (32) And the king said unto Cushai, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushai answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*. (33) And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

The subject ends just as might have been supposed, from the natural affections of David. No doubt it was in respect to the everlasting state of Absalom, that David felt so exceedingly. And yet, had it been put to the issue, though in the moment David wished he had died for him, yet when death came, David would have shrunk back. It was the unguarded, ill-advised expression of disappointed nature. It was base, as it related to GOD, in his own deliverance. It was base, as it referred to man, in the lives of his faithful subjects, whose sacrifice seemed to be nothing in David's eyes, so that Absalom had been spared. Reader! let us learn from it, how everlastingly opposite to grace, in all our views and desires nature is. And let us, therefrom, seek strength from the LORD, to be forever on our guard against its false teachings. The promise is, that *the elder*, which is nature, *shall serve the younger*, which is grace. Had David consulted this, we should not have witnessed those improper acclamations: *would to GOD I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!* Had

GOD taken him at his word, what would have been the consequence? Would he have gone to hell for him too! Alas! the sin and folly of so daring a wish! Reader! let you and I reverse the expression, and bless GOD that his dear Son hath died for us, and by his death secured our salvation!

REFLECTIONS

Reader! are you a parent, a father or a mother! And are you yourself a partaker of grace, while those of your household are graceless! If so, you will best be able to enter into a proper apprehension of David's feelings for his son. Oh! the unknown, the inexpressible agonies of the mind, in seeing those whom the LORD hath made near, and dear to us in the bonds of nature, totally void of union in the bonds of grace! Oh! did those pious parents, whom the LORD calls to the painful exercises of nature, in the breaches made by death, in their infant years, did they but recollect the accumulated aggravations of sorrow, which attend the deaths of graceless children, ripened in years, and ripened in iniquity; how would they learn to bless GOD, in those instances of preventing wisdom and mercy! Surely, Sirs! it is far, far better, and a far higher privilege also, to follow infants to their tomb, than have them remain longer with us, to be trained for everlasting misery! What a wound the very thought gives, as it enters the imagination!

But, Reader! what an aggravation to misery is it, when, as in the case of David, the LORD's hand is to be traced in the evils which grow up out of our house, from the children of our own bowels. When David looked round the walls of his dwelling, and beheld the vacancies there made by death, and marked

them as divine chastisements, well might he exclaim, O Absalom! my son! my son!

And is there no relief for such a state? *Is there no balm in Gilead: no physician there?* Yes, blessed be GOD, there is both. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! where, but for thee, should balm be found: or what physician, but thyself, could heal such complicated diseases. Teach me then, dearest JESUS; teach him that reads; teach every poor distressed, exercised soul that believes, to do as David did, after all this series of troubles. Teach our souls to look to thee. And when our *Absaloms*, our *Amnons*, and all our sorrows are multiplied, to look to JESUS, and say as David did; *Although my house be not so with GOD; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. And this is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow.*

CHAPTER 19

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The mourning of David for Absalom, is checked by Joab. David it invited back to his capital. This event is accomplished. A circumstance concerning Shimei, is related. These are the principal matters of this chapter.

2 SAMUEL 19:1-4

(1) ¶ And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. (2) And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son. (3) And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. (4) But the king covered his

face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

The unbecoming sorrow of David, concerning the death of Absalom, could not but have its effect upon the whole army. Some, no doubt, felt displeased; and others commiserated the king: but, as the HOLY GHOST is silent, as to what passed between David and the LORD, on this occasion, we can only hope that the affliction was rendered profitable.

2 SAMUEL 19:5-7

(5) And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; (6) In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. (7) Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

Those ministers in divine things, are ever to be valued, which deal faithfully. What a beautiful lesson, may all such learn here, in the conduct of Joab. Surely David needed to be roused, and Joab took a method to do it effectually. When sinners grow cold, and unconcerned, the word of GOD must be delivered in its naked force, that, like the sword of the SPIRIT, it may wound the conscience, and its edge be felt.

2 SAMUEL 19:8

(8) Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

Reader! how sweet the thought, that our JESUS, our King sits in the gate to let his people behold his beauty, and to bring all their concerns before him!

2 SAMUEL 19:9-12

(9) ¶ And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. (10) And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? (11) And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house. (12) Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

I think it is very evident from this strife among the tribes of Israel, that the rebellion by Absalom was deeply laid, and very strong and formidable; for we see, even after such a victory as David's army had obtained, his way to Jerusalem needed opening by favour. But, Reader! is there not spiritual instruction for you and me in this place? Did David send to the elders of Judah through the priests, that an invitation might be made him to return: and doth it not bring to our recollection how GOD the FATHER everlastingly speaking to us, through him who is an everlasting Priest upon his throne, and Intercessor, that we may ask our GOD to come and make his abode with us? Doth not our JESUS, the Son of David, graciously condescend to call us his brethren, his flesh, and his bones; and doth he not say, *Have I been a wilderness to my people, that they say, We will come no more to thee?* Jeremiah 2:31.

2 SAMUEL 19:13

(13) And say ye to Amasa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

This advance of *Amasa*, a rebel in Absalom's army, over *Joab*, whose faithfulness in David's service, we meet with nothing to question, seems somewhat extraordinary. Perhaps David, by this time, had learnt that Joab with his own hands, had slain Absalom. Certain it is, faithfulness requires great address to procure favour. But in ministers it is particularly demanded by JESUS. To the angel, or minister of the church of Smyrna, the command is striking. See Revelation 2:8-10.

2 SAMUEL 19:14-15

(14) And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants. (15) So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

LORD JESUS, do thou bow the hearts of thy people, as the heart of one man; then shall we welcome thee, and thy servants, thy ministers to our churches, to our hearts, to our houses, when thou hast made us willing in the day of thy power! Psalm 110:3.

2 SAMUEL 19:16-20

(16) ¶ And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David. (17) And *there were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king. (18) And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan; (19) And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy

servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart. (20) For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

The appearance of those men, *Shimei* and Ziba, no doubt, was highly gratifying to David. And, I do not know whether the Reader hath perceived it in David's history; but it hath more than once struck me, while attending to those records of it, that David possessed a great generosity of mind, as well as grace.

2 SAMUEL 19:21-23

(21) But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed? (22) And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel? (23) Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

Abishai's heat and resentment would have led David into an error; therefore he calls him an adversary in his advice. But what a delightful thought ariseth out of this interview between David and his former violent opposer, Shimei, considered as it leads our minds to the contemplation of the supposed interview between JESUS, the Son of David, and the self-convinced and self-condemned sinners, who once opposed his government. Yes! dearest JESUS, may every one of this description say, when thus brought down before thee by the HOLY GHOST, thy servant doth know that I have sinned, therefore am I come to seek thy mercy. And oh! how inconceivably sweet and precious, to hear the King's voice;

saying, Shall there any poor sinner perish, that comes this day to seek the peace of Israel? Reader! remember also, our JESUS hath not only said his people shall not perish, but GOD our FATHER hath confirmed it with an oath. *The King sware unto him.*

2 SAMUEL 19:24

(24) ¶ And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace.

The sacred sacred historian hath certainly interested every Reader in favour Mephibosheth. It should seem that the love his father Jonathan had for David, was inherited by his son. The neglect of his person, in dress and cleanliness, were in those days tokens of mourning. Reader! it is no small proof of love to Zion, when the true sons of Zion mourn in her seasons of afflictions. The church speaks of this sweetly in one of the Psalms. See Psalm 139:5, 6.

2 SAMUEL 19:25-30

(25) And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? (26) And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame. (27) And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes. (28) For all *of* my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? (29) And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. (30) And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

It should seem that David, by this time, had discovered the treachery of Ziba; for he here confirms his original grant to Mephibosheth. Whereas, in the moment when Ziba came out to meet David, with information against Mephibosheth, he took all away from the son of Jonathan, and gave to Ziba. See chap. 16:1-4. But there appears to have been so much sweetness of temper, and gentleness of mind in David at this time, that he aimed to make everyone happy; Reader! affliction is a profitable school, when JESUS himself is the Teacher. Depend upon it, that it was not without reason the wise man said; *it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting.* Ecclesiastes 7:2.

2 SAMUEL 19:31-33

(31) ¶ And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. (32) Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man. (33) And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

We had an account of the generosity of this man before. Chap. 17:27, 28. The LORD graciously spreads a table for his people in the wilderness, and will not suffer them to want. No doubt David eyed the LORD's hand in the mercy, and therefore, beside common gratitude, longed to show affection to Barzillai, as the LORD's instrument to his good. Reader! all blessings bring with them double sweetness, when man's kindness is beheld, and received, as the LORD's predisposing grace and goodness.

2 SAMUEL 19:34-38

(34) And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? (35) I *am* this day fourscore years old: *and* can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? (36) Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? (37) Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee. (38) And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

May we not hope that this generous man, who was thus looking forward to the grave, was looking also, with the same eye of faith, as the patriarch did, to Him, who by his promised salvation had sweetened the grave, and taken out all its venom! But how modestly this great man declines the king's favors; as not only unsuited to his advanced years, but also, as himself being unworthy of them. Doth not this suggest to us, what we are told, the faithful servants of JESUS will say at the last day, when the LORD is summing up to the review their various acts, and labours of love: LORD, (they will say) *when saw we thee hungry and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink?* Barzillai had truly done so to David, and yet now, when David talks of taking him with him to Jerusalem, he cries out, *Why should the king recompense it with such a reward?* So JESUS will not only recompense every tittle of the poor testimonies of his people's love, but will as much surprise them by the sense he expresses of those testimonies, as by the astonishing greatness of the reward. *Inasmuch*, (saith the

LORD) *as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me!* Matthew 25:40.

2 SAMUEL 19:39-43

(39) And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place. (40) ¶ Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel. (41) And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan? (42) And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift? (43) And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

The restoration of David was not without jealousy, and displeasure. Some there ever will be, to *put darkness for light, and bitter for sweet*. The son of David hath his kingdom continually opposed. David's troubles are not over. That sentence is still hanging over his head: *The sword shall never depart from thine house*. So that we may close this chapter of David's happiness in his return after the rebellion, with reminding the Reader that new troubles may be soon looked for, and that his prayer is always seasonable; LORD, *remember David, and all his afflictions*. Psalm 132:1.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! Was it not a gracious act in the LORD, to cause Joab's faithfulness to be successful in rousing David from the unbecoming grief he had fallen into, by the death of Absalom? And shall not you and I consider that graciousness of our dear LORD to us, when by his faithful ministering servants in the gospel of his dear Son, we are roused to a sense of those things which make for our everlasting peace, before they are for ever hid from our eyes? Methinks I would have all ministers faithful, like Joab in this instance. A warmth and zeal for JESUS, ought to mark all GOD'S servants. Soft, easy, cold, and lifeless discourses, do not suit those who stand forth to show men their sins, and to inform them of their danger. That was a solemn charge of Paul to Timothy, and needful to be given to all that, like Timothy, labour in the word and doctrine: *I charge thee therefore, (says Paul) before GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering, and doctrine.*

The behaviour of aged Barzillai suggests a very profitable instruction to aged believers. Though he declined going over Jordan to the court of David, yet he had his views directed to go over the Jordan of death, to the court of David's LORD. And so, my aged friend, should be your views. Oh! Sirs! if JESUS be indeed lovely, truly lovely, and desirable in your esteem, will you not desire to be with him? Can the voice of singing men, or singing women, now any longer delight? Can the mere taste of earthly things be important in your regard? What! have you lived thirty, forty, nay, perhaps, threescore years in a sinful, miserable world, and yet not weaned from it. And will

you say your affairs, your children, your families tie you to life. *Barzillai* had his *Chimham*. But this son, and perhaps it might be his only one, he gave up to the king. And if *you* have truly given up your own soul to JESUS, surely you can trust your children's with him also. See then, my aged Brother! that JESUS is truly precious; for if so, death will have no terrors. Your dying day, will be your Jubilee day; and like Paul, you will *long to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST, which is far better*; knowing that, when *absent from the body*, you will *be present with the LORD*; and you will labour, as he did, that whether *present, or absent, you may be accepted of him*.

CHAPTER 20

CONTENTS

A new scene of distress to David this Chapter opens with, in the rebellion of Sheba. Amasa is slain. Joab pursueth Sheba. A woman, by her wisdom, saveth the city. An account of David's officers. These are the heads of this chapter.

2 SAMUEL 20:1

(1) ¶ And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

We shall lose sight of all the beauty of David's history, unless we keep in our remembrance the circumstances which the LORD spake concerning him. David hath many foes. But they are but GOD'S instruments. The LORD had said, that he would raise up evil to him. And when the LORD saith this of David, or

of any his children, it is not difficult for the LORD to find suitable instruments for his purpose to chasten. Reader! do not overlook this in your own life. Never consider *second* causes, without taking into the view *the first*, and predisposing cause of all. David's conclusion upon another occasion, would have suited all: *I was dumb, (says he) I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* Psalm 39:9.

2 SAMUEL 20:2

(2) So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

The character of this man is marked by the HOLY GHOST; *a man of Belial*. And consequently his life and conversation corresponded to the title. He was a suited person to oppose the man who is stiled, *the man after GOD's own heart*. See 1 Kings 15:3. Reader! do not fall to recollect, that the opposition between such different characters, commenced not with David and Sheba. It began at the fall. Abel and Cain were the two first combatants, and the reason was, they were of different seed, though by nature children of the same parents. John explains this; 1 John 3:12. And still from higher authority; John 8:44.

2 SAMUEL 20:3

(3) And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

This act was highly proper, on account of Absalom's incestuous conduct. Alas! what evils have sprung out of the corrupt lusts of our poor, fallen nature!

2 SAMUEL 20:4-5

(4) ¶ Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present. (5) So Amasa went to assemble *the men of Judah*: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

The tardiness of the men of Judah, confirms the idea that David was not well received by them.

2 SAMUEL 20:6-7

(6) And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us. (7) And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

It is somewhat extraordinary, that as Joab was degraded from being Captain of the host, he should still be in the army; yet so it was.

2 SAMUEL 20:8-10

(8) When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle *with* a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. (9) And Joab said to Amasa, *Art* thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. (10) But Amasa took no heed to the sword that *was* in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

Joab, evidently was a man of blood, a man of uncontrolled passion, and full of vindictive resentment; yet certainly he was a very successful instrument for good to David.

2 SAMUEL 20:11-13

(11) And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

(12) And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

(13) When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

We hear nothing of David's resentment on this occasion. Probably, the commission he had himself sent to Joab some years before, concerning Uriah, prevented him. Chap. 11:14-17.

2 SAMUEL 20:14-15

(14) ¶ And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Bethmaachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him. (15) And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

As this city belonged to the tribe of Napthali, it is to be wondered at, that Joab did not according to the law, first propose terms of peace, before that he and his army began to batter the wall. See Deuteronomy 20:10-14.

2 SAMUEL 20:16-19

(16) Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. (17) And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art* thou Joab? And he answered, I *am* *he*. Then she said unto

him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. (18) Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter*. (19) I *am one of them that are peaceable and faithful* in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

Solomon speaks of a poor man's saving a city by his wisdom. No doubt, JESUS may be there intended. But here is a wise woman. See Ecclesiastes 9:14, 15. The expression of asking counsel of Abel, seems to have been somewhat proverbial; meaning, probably, that counsel of advice, in proposing terms of peace, were first made before an army proceeded to battle. Paul dwells upon this feature, of brethren going to war, as unsuitable to the very name of Christianity. 1 Corinthians 6:5-7.

2 SAMUEL 20:20-22

(20) And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. (21) The matter *is* not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. (22) Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

Joab, though a man of blood, desired to prove himself a man of justice, in war. What a blessed compromise this was! how honourable to the woman, whom the LORD had made the instrument of it. Reader! What a glorious event was that, when JESUS voluntarily offered himself a ransom for his people! What a gracious display of love: in GOD our FATHER,

when accepting such a substitute! *Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom.* Job 33:24.

2 SAMUEL 20:23-26

(23) ¶ Now Joab *was* over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites: (24) And Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder: (25) And Sheva *was* scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests: (26) And Ira also the Jairite *was* a chief ruler about David.

Observe, Joab retains his post. David did not, or perhaps could not dismiss him. Some alteration had taken place in David's officers since the establishment. Chap. 8:16-18.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! though the perusal of this chapter before us opens a renewed occasion for reflecting on the troubles of David; yet, I pass by the consideration of these things, for the present, in order to direct your attention, and my own, to the contemplation of our adorable JESUS, in that sweet and most invaluable part of his character of Mediator, which the view of the wise woman in Abel of *Beth maachan* naturally suggests. If it be pleasant to see this mother in Israel, saving a city by her interposition; think, Reader, how very delightful ought it to be, to behold JESUS saving a world, by the exercise of this glorious office. He came in the name of JEHOVAH, proposing terms of peace. And such terms as astonished angels. Not that one of our rebellious Chieftans, like Sheba, should be given up: Not that a thousand, or ten thousand should die to ransom the rest; though that had been an unspeakable mercy. But that He, the gracious, the merciful, the mighty Ambassador would mediate peace, and reconciliation, by the

gift and sacrifice of himself. Well might the prophet exclaim, *Wonder O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!*

But, oh! thou precious JESUS! while I fall before thy footstool, overpowered with wonder and astonishment in the prospect of this mercy, I behold, with increasing love and surprise, the manner of thy gracious performance of the work.

Yes! dearest LORD! as my soul gazes on thy sacred Person as the Mediator, fully qualified, and fully prepared, as GOD and Man in one Person, to the office; I look also, until my whole-soul is lost, and overwhelmed in the view, with what infinite wisdom, tenderness, love, and pity, thou earnest to propose the terms, lay the foundation, and complete the whole work, for delivering thy people from *the wrath to come*. Be thou eternally praised; eternally loved; eternally adored, for this thy gracious interposition! My soul, on knees of holy transport, thankfulness, and joy, accepts thee, LORD, with all thy works of grace, desiring in time, and to all eternity, to bless and praise GOD for his unspeakable gift!

Reader! think, if it be possible, how it must grieve his HOLY SPIRIT, when sinners neglect, and despise this great salvation! Think! how unalterable must be their state, whom, in consequence thereof, he leaves to wander and perish!

CHAPTER 21

CONTENTS

More troubles of David are related in this Chapter. Here are mentioned three years famine in Israel. To implore GOD'S

mercy, a sacrifice is made, at the request of the Gibeonites, of seven of Saul's sons. A daughter of the house of Saul, named Rizpah, showeth kindness to the dead. After this, David burieth the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan.

2 SAMUEL 21:1

(1) ¶ Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, *It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*

David here appears once more in his proper character; enquiring of the LORD. And, no doubt, interceding for a remission of the punishment. And as such, a type of Him, the glorious David, to come, in after ages. GOD'S gracious answer is soon made to earliest, fervent prayer. That promise is never out of season: Isaiah 65:24.

2 SAMUEL 21:2

(2) And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them: and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

The Reader, in order to have a clear apprehension of this subject, must look back as far as to the days of Joshua, and read the league of friendship entered into between Israel and Gibeon, See Joshua 9:15. The HOLY GHOST hath not recorded what the conduct was which Saul manifested towards the Gibeonites. It is sufficient to know, that it must have been particularly odious, because the LORD visited it upon Israel, in those three years famine, so long after Saul's death. Reader! do not fail to remark, how sure, though slow, sometimes the

LORD's judgments are. The apostle, speaking of the awful certainty of such things, describes the tremendous visitation with which the LORD will in the end of the day, account with sinners, in those awful terms; *whose judgment, (says he) now of a long time, lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.* 2 Peter 2:3.

2 SAMUEL 21:3

(3) Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD?

It is probable, that as David had brought this affair before the LORD, and had sought direction from the LORD what to do, the LORD had given direction to him to consult the Gibeonites.

2 SAMUEL 21:4-6

(4) And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you. (5) And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, (6) Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give *them*.

Their rejection of gold and silver, was meant to show that nothing so contemptible could be equivalent for the wrongs they had sustained. And by telling David, that they did not expect that he, or his people, should be the executioners of justice, evidently showed that they were looking to the divine precept, blood for blood. Genesis 9:6. And that they would, if the king approved, execute the sentence themselves.

2 SAMUEL 21:7-9

(7) But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. (8) But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite: (9) And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days*, in the beginning of barley harvest.

In the choice David made of the persons to be sacrificed, the divine justice may he also traced: Saul had given *Merab*, his daughter, to *Adriel*, though promised to David. And here the issue of that marriage suffers the punishment. If parents would but consider how much their conduct operates upon the future circumstances of their children, what a check might this sometimes prove, to keep back from presumptuous sins. The friendship and the loves of David and Jonathan, are sweetly kept up. Reader! the sacrifice here made is a solemn history. And, no doubt, it being recorded, was with a view to say as much. But, do not fail to keep a steady eye upon the hand of GOD in it. This reconciles all we meet with in otherwise questionable cases. And surely, far better that the house of Saul, in every department of which it is said to be bloody, should perish, than that all Israel should be famished: Even Caiaphas could say it was better that one man should die for the people, than that the nation should perish. John 11:50. Blessed JESUS! thou wast pleased to confirm this by thy precious death. Thou hast died; *the Just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD*. Bring us then to GOD, oh thou bleeding

Lamb, since thou hast taken away sin by the sacrifice of thyself!

2 SAMUEL 21:10-11

(10) ¶ And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. (11) And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

It should seem that in the instance of those seven Persons of Saul's house, hung up to perish by the Gibeonites, there was an evident departure from the law, which enjoined, that the body of him that was hanged on a tree, should not in any wise remain all night, for he that is hanged is cursed of GOD. See Deuteronomy 21:23. Therefore there must be some very special design intended from this present occasion. That those bodies actually continued hanging, is, I think, very clear, not only from the watching of *Rizpah*, (for, wherefore should she have watched, but to preserve them from birds and beasts of prey?) but also from what is said, that David when he brought back the bones of Saul and Jonathan, *gathered also the bones of them that were hanged*. Besides, as the watching of Rizpah continued until the water dropped *upon them* out of heaven; it seems that the famine had been occasioned for want of rain, and that when the rain descended, it was considered as an answer from the LORD, of his approbation; and then, and not before, the bodies were taken down and buried. But, if this be the real state of the case, are we not led to the discovery of a most important thing, shadowed out by this? Reader! look at it again. Here are seven persons, contrary to GOD'S own law, kept suspended between heaven

and earth, after being hanged. And the law expressly forbade it on this account, *for he that is hanged is accursed* of God. But after this was done, GOD was intreated for the land. And could anything more strikingly set forth, in those remote ages, from the crucifixion of JESUS, a circumstance more in point? Was not JESUS made sin, and a curse for us, and for this express purpose, that he might redeem us from everlasting famine? And after the accomplishment of this great end, was not our GOD entreated for the land? Yes! thou precious Surety of the poor sinner; thou wert made, not merely the curse of the *judicial* law, but thou wert, made the curse of the *moral* law; as if designed on purpose to show that the blessed JESUS was hung up between heaven and earth, as if unworthy of either, and in all this, being the sinners' Surety, though in himself holy, harmless, and undefiled, yet he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of GOD, in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21. See Galatians 3:13. And as it was by the bones of those sons of Saul, so is it spoken of our LORD JESUS; *after they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.* Acts 13:29.

2 SAMUEL 21:12-22

(12) And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabeshgilead, which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa: (13) And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. (14) And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land. (15) ¶ Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David

went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint. (16) And Ishbibenob, which *was* of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear *weighed* three hundred *shekels* of brass in weight, he being girded with a new *sword*, thought to have slain David. (17) But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel. (18) And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which *was* of the sons of the giant. (19) And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of Goliath* the Gittite, the staff of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam. (20) And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant. (21) And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him. (22) These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

It is worthy the Reader's remark, that as David's first exercise in the field of battle, was with the giant, so his last should be. In the spiritual warfare, it is the same. The great champion we contend with, the devil, begins the war, and sometimes gives striking testimonies that he fights with us, as we end the war. But what a precious thought is it, that *more is He that is with us, than all that are against us!* You

may, my brother! like David, *wax faint*; and the enemy may think to slay you. But no *new* sword, nor old one, while David's LORD fights your battles, can subdue you; for the promise is absolute: *No weapon formed against thee shall prosper. The heritage, and the righteousness of the servants of the LORD, is of the LORD.* Isaiah 54:17. Reader! are you faint by reason of sin; or, from the opposition of the giants,

your enemies; the world, the flesh, and the devil? Live upon the fulness of JESUS; upon JESUS himself; who brings with him all his promises, which are yea, and amen; and depend upon it, every tittle of his sacred word will be fulfilled: and *the God of peace will bruise Satan, under your feet shortly*. Romans 16:20.

REFLECTIONS

See, Reader! in the solemn events of this chapter, in the giving up the sons of Saul to death, how awfully true that denunciation of the LORD is, of *visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him*. Oh! ye that are parents! let this sad example before your eyes, prompt you to seek grace from GOD, to be kept back from sin; lest the LORD smite the fathers with the children, and both are involved in the evil of their ways.

Precious JESUS! it is impossible to turn to any part in the Bible, or to any subject, or person, or thing contained in it, without finding somewhat that, either by immediate allusion, or in direct reference, points to thee. Everywhere, methinks, I discover thee. And in everything indeed, would I desire to have my soul exercised in the contemplation of thee. For, dearest LORD! that subject loseth all its beauty, all its loveliness, however pleasing in itself, that terminates not in thee. And though the bloody house of Saul is as remote, (and infinitely more remote), as hell from heaven, compared to thee; yet, when I see the ordinary law of our GOD broken, that in their hanging up, they might be suspended betwixt earth and heaven, until that GOD was entreated for the land:

how is it possible, not to have my mind instantly led to thee, thou sinners' Surety, and sinners' Friend, who literally, and truly, wast made both sin and a curse for thy people, when thou knewest no sin, on purpose that they might be made the righteousness of GOD, in thee. There on thy cross, blessed JESUS, would I forever fix my eye, unless, indeed, now and then to follow thee, in the contemplation of thy conquests over it, in thy triumphal entrance into heaven. On JESUS would I forever gaze. In every ordinance, in every providence, in every prayer, in every song of praise; there, there would my ravished soul look, and say; there hangs my hope, my joy, my everlasting security! And on thee, and thy dear Person, do I hang all the glory of my Father's house, and all the glory of my own salvation. Oh! the precious, precious, Person of my adored Redeemer! So sweet, so suitable, so gracious, art thou to my soul, as a poor convinced sinner, that, like Paul, my determination is fixed; henceforth, *I will know nothing among men, but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* And, blessed be my GOD, I hope and trust I can, with the same assurance of faith, say as he did, for *I know him to be the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD for salvation to me, and to everyone that believeth.*

CHAPTER 22

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The prosecution of David's history is interrupted through the whole of this Chapter, in order to introduce his Song, or Psalm of praise. It is not said when David wrote it; but it is said when he spake it, for the title of it expresses that it was when

the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and particularly out of the hand of Saul. It contains therefore, from beginning to end, manifold praises for manifold deliverances.

2 SAMUEL 22:1

(1) ¶ And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

We have this same Psalm, only with suitable variations, among the collection of David's Psalms, the 18th in number. In that collection, this first verse forms the title page to what follows. There is a great beauty, as well as a great expression of devotion, in what is here said—*in the day meaning*, that David suffered not the impression of the LORD's goodness to cool upon his mind, but while the fire of grace, which the LORD had kindled, burned within him, his soul went forth in the sacrifice of praise and love, to the great Author of his mercies, upon the Altar which sanctifieth the gift, even JESUS.

2 SAMUEL 22:2-3

(2) ¶ And he said, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; (3) The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

Do observe how David is labouring for expressions to show forth the wonderful perfections of GOD, and that *that* GOD, with all his perfections, is *his* GOD in covenant. Oh! it is sweet when faith makes an appropriating right of all that GOD hath, and is, as our own, when, like the bee, the flowers are not only visited by her, and sipped in the present moment, but she brings home to her little hive constant store for every

occasion. Reader! see to it, in your own experience, that this is your case. When you not only contemplate a GOD in CHRIST, as the rock, and fortress, and deliverer of his people; but faith can add to it, he is the GOD of *my* rock, and *in* him do I trust.

2 SAMUEL 22:4

(4) I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

There are two sweet employments David resolves on in this verse, namely, to call upon the LORD: and secondly, because that LORD is so worthy of praise, that he will praise him. Reader! do not forget, that these are the natural, (I had almost said, but I would rather say), the *gracious* consequences of having relationship in, and interest with our GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

2 SAMUEL 22:5-6

(5) When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; (6) The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

There seems to be from this verse, David's entrance upon the whole subject of his life, in the many deliverances which the LORD had wrought out for him! He compares the many attacks of his enemies, to the image of floods pouring in upon the soul, to overwhelm it. Reader! it is precious to remark in our own experience, that, from the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS, *many waters cannot quench love, neither all the floods drown it*. No, blessed JESUS! thy love in the hearts of thy people, planted in their souls by thine own Almighty hand, is an incorruptible seed, that liveth and abideth for ever. David uses two other similitudes to describe his trials by; *the sorrows of*

hell, and the *snares of death*: meaning, that both hell and death joined in confederacy against him. And from the dangers of both, he had no more power to deliver himself, than sinners from the terrors of the chained in hell; nor, than dead men fast-bound in the grave. Reader! consider this in a spiritual sense, and how will it tend to heighten the deliverance from everlasting misery, and everlasting death, by the Person and salvation of the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

2 SAMUEL 22:7-19

(7) In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears. (8) Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth. (9) There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. (10) He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness *was* under his feet. (11) And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. (12) And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the skies. (13) Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled. (14) The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. (15) And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them. (16) And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. (17) He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters; (18) He delivered me from my strong enemy, *and* from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. (19) They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

The preparatory verses, are all intended as introductory to what is here said. For, if such was David's misery; such his enemies; such his helplessness, and inability to cope with them; what grace must have been manifested in his deliverance by the LORD GOD of his salvation. The expressions of which David makes use, of the shaking of the earth, and

the foundation of the heavens, are not to be understood literally; but, the mercies in which the LORD spake to him on those occasions, were as evident tokens of the LORD's kindness and regard to him, as if GOD had spoken by thunder, and manifested the part he took in it, by a voice from heaven. Reader! spiritually considered, when sinners are awakened, and converted, by the gracious operations of GOD the HOLY GHOST, do not their souls sometimes answer to those mercies, by the first apprehensions of the mind, as if their whole frames were convulsed, like the trembling of the earth, or the shaking of the heavens. Probably, in this high and beautiful style of expression, David had in view, Moses' account of the LORD's leading his chosen out of Egypt. The sacred writers, in more than one instance, seem to have had this in view. See Exodus 15:2-13. Habakkuk 3:2; to the end. Psalm 114:1, to the end.

2 SAMUEL 22:20

(20) He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

There is a great beauty in this verse, in that it clearly traces the cause, of divine favour; not to the circumstance of common providence, but to covenant love, to distinguishing grace, and mercy. Sweet thought! *Who hath saved us, and called us, (saith Paul) with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began.* 2 Timothy 1:9.

2 SAMUEL 22:21-25

(21) The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

(22) For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly

departed from my God. (23) For all his judgments *were* before me: and *as for* his statutes, I did not depart from them. (24) I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. (25) Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.

I desire the Reader particularly to observe how he reads those verses, in order that he may have a clear apprehension of David's meaning, in what he saith in them. He is here stating the ground of his innocency, as it related to his conduct towards his neighbor, and particularly as it referred to Saul. The title of the Psalm saith as much, that *David spoke these words in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul*. And, as far as his history informs us with respect to his conduct towards Saul, his whole behaviour was such that he might plead his innocency. So that when accused by *men* he could plead to GOD. But Reader! do not from hence imagine that David meant here, or in any other part of his life, that the LORD rewarded him according to his righteousness or, the cleanness of his hands, in the sight of GOD. Alas! David was so conscious of his sins, that he cries out, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O LORD, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*. We may with humbleness of soul, ascribing at the same time the whole glory to GOD for the grace bestowed upon us in enabling us to perform it; we may bless GOD when we can appeal to him concerning our integrity between man and man; but with respect to our whole lives before GOD, every saint on earth must lay his hand upon his mouth, and say with Job, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my*

soul. Job 9:20, 21. Reader! do mark this down in the memorandums of thy heart. Depend upon it, it is a solemn thing for a poor sinner, though looking up for acceptance and justification in the person and righteousness of JESUS, to stand before GOD.

2 SAMUEL 22:26-27

(26) With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, *and* with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright. (27) With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.

To a true believer in CHRIST, GOD'S righteousness is as dear and precious as his mercy, or his love; because he sees in JESUS, as the GOD-man, that righteousness fully glorified, and *grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life*. So that to *the pure all things are pure*, Titus 1:15.

2 SAMUEL 22:28

(28) And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring *them* down.

This is a sweet verse. The eyes of the LORD are to humble the proud, to raise up the afflicted. Reader! think of this in your thoughts of JESUS.

2 SAMUEL 22:29-30

(29) For thou *art* my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness. (30) For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

It is delightful to make improvement of JESUS upon all occasions, as the soul wants him. Am I in distress, he will be my Comforter. Am I in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me. Am I shut up and cannot get out; by JESUS'S arm I shall

leap over the wall. Reader! depend upon it, that it is the great secret of religion to know how to use the LORD JESUS for all things, and to consider our wants, be they what they may, as only affording the better opportunity for the communication of his fulness.

2 SAMUEL 22:31-46

(31) *As for* God, his way *is* perfect; the word of the LORD *is* tried: he *is* a buckler to all them that trust in him. (32) For who *is* God, save the LORD? and who *is* a rock, save our God? (33) God *is* my strength *and* power: and he maketh my way perfect. (34) He maketh my feet like hinds' *feet*: and setteth me upon my high places. (35) He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. (36) Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great. (37) Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip. (38) I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them. (39) And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet. (40) For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me. (41) Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. (42) They looked, but *there was* none to save; *even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not. (43) Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, *and* did spread them abroad. (44) Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me *to be* head of the heathen: a people *which* I knew not shall serve me. (45) Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me. (46) Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places.

I beg the Reader in the perusal of these verses to keep his eye close to the mercies described, and his heart closer still to the view of David's referring all unto the will, and sovereignty, and goodness of GOD. He dwells largely on what the LORD had enabled him to do, and what the LORD had done for him. But

he dwells much more largely on the LORD himself. Great things he speaks of the LORD's deliverances for him: but greater things of GOD himself, the GOD of his salvation. Reader! do not forget this. The LORD GOD in covenant engagements is forever doing great things for his people. But all this is designed to show us how infinitely more precious the LORD is himself. Carnal men will sometimes speak of GOD's works, for his providences are so plain and striking as to compel them to it. But gracious men sing of GOD himself. We may have other blessings from our GOD, and more gifts of his hand; but we never can have another JESUS. CHRIST is all and in all.

2 SAMUEL 22:47-51

(47) The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation. (48) It *is* God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me, (49) And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. (50) Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name. (51) *He is* the tower of salvation for his king: and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.

The concluding verse of this charming song becomes a key to all the rest. Here David runs the whole of divine mercies up to their source, as centered in the person of GOD's anointed. And as David was a type of CHRIST, we may here see how the whole, as a song of deliverance, is directly pointing to redemption-work from spiritual enemies, in the person, and by the conquest and victories to our LORD JESUS CHRIST. He is indeed the promised seed, the anointed, the only anointed of the FATHER, full of grace and truth. He hath already, and will

finally and fully, at the great day of judgment, beat down all his foes before his face, and by the conquests of his grace in the hearts of his people he hath brought them down under him, and made them willing in the day of his power. Precious JESUS! give me, and give every Reader of thy people, to trace thy steps in the perusal of this divine chapter. GOD our FATHER hath given salvation unto thee his king, and hath given unto thee a name, which is above every name. And to thee, and thy spiritual seed in thee, the LORD will give blessings for evermore.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us not dismiss this chapter with all its precious contents from our minds, until that we have duly pondered the blessed things it contains; and as duly examined our own personal interest in them. Can you and I say with the same lively sentiments of praise and love, and gratitude, as David did, The LORD is my rock, my shield, my tower, my refuge, my Saviour. Oh! precious thought, when the soul hath a well grounded assurance of a covenant interest in JESUS.

But Reader! while we seek earnestly for these things, let us learn also from it, how all such as are called to an interest in JESUS, are called also to a fellowship and conformity in the trials of JESUS, and the persecution of enemies. Communion with our Great Head must necessarily subject every member of his mystical body to a participation in suffering. Waves of death, and floods of ungodly men, will compass us about. We wrestle with flesh, and blood, with evil angels, with ungodly men, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the Sauls, and, the Absaloms, and the Shimei's every where

around. Oh! for grace to see, and faith to believe, that in GOD'S strength alone our victory must be wrought. JESUS will light our candle; JESUS himself will be our shield, our sun, our hiding place, our refuge.

But principally, in the review of this chapter, LORD give both Writer and Reader to contemplate JESUS, the Almighty David of his people, as conquering sin, death, hell, and the grave; and beating down all the foes of our salvation, which opposed the deliverance of his people. Yes! Almighty Conqueror! thou art all that is here; rehearsed, and infinitely more, to thy people! In thy complete and finished work, when thou camest forth for the salvation of thy chosen, thou didst triumph over all opposition; thou hast spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, nailing them to thy cross. Blessed GOD! enable me to follow thee to victory, and continually to go forth in thy strength, and in thy name, making mention of thy righteousness, even thine only, saying I shall be more than conqueror through thee who has loved me.

CHAPTER 23

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This chapter contains some of the last words of David, and as such cannot but be very interesting. To these words of David is added a list of David's worthies, his mighty men.

2 SAMUEL 23:1

(1) ¶ Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

In remarking those last words of David I would beg the Reader to observe the titles by which David is spoken of in this verse. *First*, looking back to his humble and obscure birth, he takes the name of the son of Jesse. JESUS is uniformly spoken of as a root out of a dry ground, and though LORD of all, yet becoming the servant of all. *Secondly*; David is called the man who was raised up on high. The manhood of the LORD JESUS is exalted to the most sovereign and supreme honors. *All power is given to him in heaven and in earth.* *Thirdly*, David is said to be the anointed of the GOD of Jacob. CHRIST also was anointed to his commission, and did not take the office unappointed or uncalled. *Lastly*, David is called the sweet Psalmist of Israel. But why are the Psalms of David sweet, but because they sing of the redemption of JESUS. Oh! dearest JESUS, how delightful is it to trace thy shadows in all things, and thy salvation as the sum and substance of everything. By *the last words* of David, I understand not the very last words he ever spake, because frequently after this he spake to the people, and those about him. But by the last words I apprehend is meant the last important words which he spake by the Spirit of prophecy. David was a prophet, and an eminent one. So Peter described him, Acts 2:29, 30. And as the patriarchs, when dying, were blessed with a more than ordinary out-pouring of the SPIRIT, to deliver things concerning the church; so David seems to have been eminently under divine teaching when he spake these words. See Genesis 49:1. Deuteronomy 33:1

2 SAMUEL 23:2-3

(2) The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue. (3) The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God.

If the Reader carefully attends to those three distinct titles, and yet all one and the same, by which David describes the LORD JEHOVAH, perhaps he will be inclined to think, as some learned men have done before him, that they imply the threefold, well known character, by which the LORD JEHOVAH is revealed in a Trinity of persons in the GOD-head. The GOD of Israel in the well known title of the FATHER. The Rock of Israel evidently refers, and in a peculiar manner, to GOD the SON. And the SPIRIT of the LORD is the common appellation by which GOD the HOLY GHOST is, for the most part, known in all the sacred writings. Reader! how delightful to behold this glorious foundation article of our holy faith cherished and lived upon by the early fathers in the church. And, before we enter upon the review of these last words of David, cannot but hope that the Reader will remark that, what David is about in the opening of this chapter to leave upon record to the church, is both what the SPIRIT of the LORD spoke *by* him; and also what the Rock of Israel spake *to* him. Do not overlook this distinction I beseech you, What the spirit spake *by* David, is what was designed for the instruction of others. What the Rock of Israel spake to David, no doubt is what the LORD JESUS spake for his own personal advantage. The *former* was in the teaching of the HOLY GHOST. The *latter* among the blessed manifestations of JESUS. What David delivered to others in his Psalms, or history, as intended for the benefit of the church, brings with it, therefore, all possible authority, for *holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the HOLY*

GHOST. 2 Peter 1:21. Blessed privilege! Highly distinguished honour! to have the communications of JESUS for our own felicity, and the teachings of the HOLY GHOST for the comfort of others.

2 SAMUEL 23:4

(4) And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

Who can this be but JESUS? Of whom, among the sons of men, could it ever be said that he was as a morning without clouds? Neither angels, nor men; nor ordinances, nor graces, nor all the moons of the night, nor the suns of the day, ever shone as a morning without clouds. What a sweet similitude to represent him, and his all-perfect salvation, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning!

2 SAMUEL 23:5

(5) Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow.

How natural and proper was it for David, when speaking of JESUS, and his salvation, to make an immediate transition to his own personal interest in both; and to take comfort from this delightful assurance, amidst all the outward circumstances which had arisen through life to distress him. Reader! as this verse of David's hath afforded comfort to thousands, and will continue to do so until time shall be no more, I would wish you not to pass it over hastily, but look into its several properties, praying over it, that the LORD may grant you to adopt (if it be his blessed will) the same precious

assurance on the same precious grounds. Do observe the confession David makes of his personal calamities. *Although*, (says he) *my house be not so with God*. Poor man! what a scene of sin and evil did the walls of his house furnish in his graceless children. To say nothing of the great miscarriages he had wrought himself; his day was a day of clouds, from morning even to the evening. How many of his children died in their sins! But what saith David under these trying circumstances? *Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant. As if he had said, JESUS is mine, though he be not my childrens'. God hath given me JESUS, and that is enough; for in him I have all things. He is better to me than a thousand sons. Sweet consolation, and a glorious relief, under all afflictions. But this is not all included in it. The covenant in JESUS's blood and righteousness is an everlasting covenant. It reaches into eternity. It is also ordered in all things, brings all blessings with it. And it is sure: nothing can break it down. It may well be called the sure mercies of David. And lastly; David sums up all in declaring, that it is not only all his salvation, but all his desire, although he make it not to grow. As if he had said, In JESUS my felicity is so complete, my redemption so perfect, and my desires so fully answered, that I find no room for anything more. It is all my salvation, for it leaves no room for anything to be added: It is all my desire, for I can want nothing beside. Here then I rest my soul with all its capacious cravings for happiness. In JESUS I have all. Reader! what say you to this blessed conclusion of David!*

2 SAMUEL 23:6-7

(6) But *the sons* of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: (7) But the man

that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the *same* place.

What a contrast is here drawn! And in what an awful state he describes the sons of Belial! are these not similar expressions to denote children of the evil one. It is an awful subject, but seems, to be accurately drawn by the pencil of GOD, that the children of the kingdom of grace are not more plainly defined throughout the Bible, than the children of the wicked one. See some of these scriptures in point. John 8:44. 1 John 3:8,10.

2 SAMUEL 23:8-39

(8) ¶ These *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same *was* Adino the Eznite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time. (9) And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away: (10) He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil. (11) And after him *was* Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. (12) But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory. (13) And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. (14) And David *was* then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Bethlehem. (15) And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate! (16) And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. (17) And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in

jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men. (18) And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, *and slew them*, and had the name among three. (19) Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *first* three. (20) And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow: (21) And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear. (22) These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men. (23) He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *first* three. And David set him over his guard. (24) Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, (25) Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite, (26) Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, (27) Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, (28) Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, (29) Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, (30) Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash, (31) Abialbon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, (32) Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, (33) Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, (34) Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, (35) Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, (36) Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, (37) Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruah, (38) Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite, (39) Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

I do not think it needful to swell the Commentary unnecessarily; and therefore include all these verses in one reading, and shall not detain the Reader with long observations upon them. As the HOLY GHOST hath thought proper to record the names of David's worthies in this

manner, I beg the Reader will remember, that if I pass them by without particular observation, it is not because they merit it not, but because I aim to compress, as much as possible, all my notes and observations within the narrowest compass. They may serve to remind us, that if the worthies of David were meriting of so much honour as to have their names recorded in the book of GOD; how much more shall the worthies of JESUS, David's LORD, have their names written in the book of life. The water of Bethlehem, which David longed for, seems to have had a gospel signification. By the spirit of prophecy David knew that CHRIST, the well of life to his people, should be born in Bethlehem. In this sense the passage is very sweet and instructive: and serves to teach us how the souls of thirsty sinners are made to long for this blessed water, and how very sure it is that the LORD JESUS will be to them *a well of water springing up unto everlasting life*. John 4:14. Revelation 7:17. 21:1.

REFLECTIONS

How sweet are the last words of dying saints. And how doubly so when they are sanctified to lead to JESUS. Reader! amidst all the trying dispensations in the life of the patriarch David; yet observe what confidence in covenant engagements can do, to give a soul comfort and holy joy. David's troubles were so many, so grievous, and so complicated, that it is quite proverbial when we speak of the man, to speak also of his sorrows; LORD *remember David and all his troubles*. But oh! how enviable the trouble that is sanctified! How coveted the situation which JESUS blesses. He saw the day of CHRIST, like another Abraham, afar off; as a morning without a cloud. He

comforted himself in the assurance of the covenant, which was ordered in all things and sure. And he could, and did, take all the consolation of it as the whole of his salvation, and the whole of his desire, whatever outer circumstances in his life arose to exercise his mind.

Blessed JESUS! give my soul, like David, to see thee to be the whole of the covenant; and in thee, and thy finished redemption-work, fix the whole of my desire. Let a throne of grace witness for me, that I would seek life with all its dependencies; life temporal, and life eternal; wholly as David did upon the ground of the Covenant, the everlasting Covenant, through thy blood and righteousness. In all the actions of my life, and with my dying breath, I would say as David; *It is all my Salvation and all my desire.* And oh! thou dear Redeemer! As all my hopes, my expectations, are from thee in thy covenant righteousness, without an atom of any thing of mine to add to it; LORD give me grace to live as I hope to die, in making these my constant study and delight, my songs of rejoicing in the house of my pilgrimage. To JESUS would I daily, hourly come; in him be found. To him would I cleave. With him would I walk; venturing upon CHRIST, resting in him, and hanging upon him. And as it is said, they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, so would I the whole of my salvation. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; *to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

CHAPTER 24

CONTENTS

We have, in this chapter, a part of David's history, the date of which is not certain. He is here in a state of trespassing against the LORD, by numbering the people. The prophet Gad is sent to reprove him, and to propose to his choice one of three plagues with which the LORD would chastise him. We have also the relation of the chastisement, and David's repentance.

2 SAMUEL 24:1-2

(1) ¶ And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. (2) For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

It is more than probable that David's sin, on this occasion, was, that he was looking for strength from numbers more than from the LORD. And Satan found occasion to blow up this pride of David into a flame of rebellion against the LORD. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments, if but for a moment left to himself and his own government? Well might David, from his own experience, put up the prayer which he did upon another occasion; *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.* Psalm 19:13.

2 SAMUEL 24:3-9

(3) And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it*: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? (4) Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel. (5) And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer: (6) Then they

came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; and they came to Danjaan, and about to Zidon, (7) And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beersheba. (8) So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. (9) And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

It is worthy remark how ineffectual all advice is when grace leads us not. This childish gratification of David, to speak the best of it, seems to have had so little temptation to lead to the commission of this sin, that we only wonder, at times, how it is that believers, who had been victorious upon great temptations, have fallen by the less. But it is grace makes all the difference. If JESUS keep us, we are safe. If the holding up his arm be but for a moment withdrawn, all our strength gives way to the most pitiful temptation. One should have thought the number both of Israel and of Judah would have been greater. It was now about *four hundred and thirty years* from the time that Joshua brought the people into Canaan; and yet the increase had not been much above double in all that time.

2 SAMUEL 24:10-13

(10) ¶ And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. (11) For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, (12) Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; choose thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee. (13) So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be

three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

Though David's sin seems plainly to have been the sin of presumption, in trusting more to an arm of flesh than in the LORD GOD of his salvation; yet, it must be confessed, that both in the sin, and in the proposed punishment, we have not so clear marks to form our conclusions as to speak with certainty.

That God should propose what kind of punishment the sinner would choose, appears difficult to explain. I confess that I am much inclined to look at the whole subject in a gospel sense, and consider the representation here made, *the shadow of good things to come*. And I am the more inclined to this idea from what is said concerning it in the very opening of the chapter; that the anger of the LORD was kindled against *Israel*. It was a *national* sin, not a *personal* sin only, in the case of David's numbering the people. And as such, did it not intimate the universal state of man by sin and transgression, all subject to death and destruction! Reader! if we regard it in this point of view, how directly it leads the soul to the redemption by JESUS. When sinners are brought under a deep sense of sin, and accept (as it is called) the punishment of their iniquity; they are then brought into a state of grace for the cordial reception of the gospel of JESUS. See Leviticus 26:41.

2 SAMUEL 24:14-15

(14) And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man. (15) So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time

appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

It is worthy our observation, that this memorable transaction was on the very spot where in ages before the LORD showed mercy to Abraham, even on *mount Moriah*. And this I cannot but think becomes a further confirmation of what I before suggested. Surely so grand an object as the redemption of our sinful nature by the sacrifice of JESUS, was deservedly shadowed forth, at various times, to the several ages of the faithful which were so highly interested in it. Hence Abraham is commanded to sacrifice, his son; and the pestilence to Israel lays the foundation for the introduction of this sacrifice again, in the same spot, on mount Moriah. See Genesis 22:2. See also 2 Chronicles 3:1.

2 SAMUEL 24:16-25

(16) And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite. (17) And David spake unto the LORD when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. (18) ¶ And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite. (19) And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. (20) And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. (21) And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people. (22) And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt

sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood. (23) All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee. (24) And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. (25) And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

I do not think it necessary to interrupt the reading of those verses with any observation on the conduct and generosity either of David or Araunah; because what I chiefly wish to have impressed on the Reader's mind, is the shadowy representation it seemeth to possess, of the gospel dispensation by the LORD JESUS. I beg the Reader to observe, however, that I do not presume to say that my views of this passage are right. I leave him to a wiser and better direction concerning them. I confess that I love to search for JESUS, as for hidden treasure, in all the parts of his most holy word. And convinced, as I fully am, that to him the whole of revelation points, I would pass over all lesser objects, so that I may but find him. And when I consider how particularly the prophet Gad commanded David to rear an altar in this spot, mount Moriah, which Abraham had before found so memorable, when I observe further, that this was the same spot on which Solomon built his famous temple, which also was an evident type of CHRIST; and when I consider that CHRIST himself is both the altar, the sacrifice, and the sacrificer, for us; and that GOD our FATHER, for his sake, and for his sake alone, is entreated for the land, and the plague and everlasting destruction for sin is now stayed from Israel; I rejoice to behold JESUS through those distant mediums so graciously

held forth to the church, and cannot but find my heart going forth in songs of holy joy, that the same is he of whom Moses, and the prophets, and patriarchs, did write, JESUS of Nazareth; *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Acts 4:12.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! with this chapter we close this sacred book of GOD, which brings us in point of historical relation, very nearly, though not completely so, to the end of David's life. Let us not close it, however, until that we have first blessed the LORD for so truly valuable a part of the Old Testament records: and more especially, for that part of David's history contained in it, which bears evident allusion to the Great Redeemer of mankind, of whom, in many instances, David was a lively type. It is a precious thing, and most highly to be valued by the true believer in JESUS, when we are led to see the tenderness and love of GOD our FATHER to the church, in thus holding forth, under such a variety of similitudes, and representations, to the early ages, the prominent features of a redemption, which was, in the fulness of time to be wrought out, and completed by his dear Son. And it is as thankfully to be remembered by the believer, in honour and glory to the HOLY GHOST, that in his blessed office of glorifying the LORD JESUS, he hath so sweetly caused to be recorded, for the exercise of the faith of Old Testament saints, as well as the establishment of New Testament believers, the very many outlines of His person and offices, whose one glorious work of salvation, hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified!

Hail! Holy! Holy! Holy! Undivided THREE IN ONE; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! Blessed be the LORD GOD, JEHOVAH, for all his covenant love, and mercy, in JESUS! and for all the precious records this book contains, of the glorious events of redemption by him. And, oh! thou dearest JESUS, thou blessed Reconciler of a gracious GOD with poor fallen man! Thou art the Author, the means, the end, the sum, the substance of all true peace in the church, above and below. Give me to see thee, blessed JESUS, as David did, as the gracious Interposer, to stay the destroying angel's hand over Jerusalem. And may my soul go up to the threshingfloor of the poor Jebusite, to offer the sacrifice of thine own blood and righteousness; and these, on thine own sacred Person, the Altar which sanctifieth the gift; that I may find peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. And blessed, forever blessed be the GOD of peace, which brought again from the dead, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, that he hath been entreated for our guilty land, and the plague of sin, death, hell, and the grave, is forever stayed from his Israel. All our peace is made in the blood of the cross; and henceforth, there is now *no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. Amen, and Amen.