

The Works of Robert Hawker

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The

FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS

COMMONLY CALLED

THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot with greater certainty than mere opinion, determine to whose instrumentality we are indebted for this and the following book of the Kings. It hath been generally supposed that some of the Scribes in the respective ages of the Church, compiled those histories. But there is no certainty on the point. But though we are left to mere conjecture concerning the writer, there can be none concerning the authenticity, or divine authority, of those sacred Books of God. For beside the historical part, many sweet passages are here and there treasured in them, which stamp their truth, and display the seal of the SPIRIT upon them.

This book of the Kings, and the second also, which is but a continuation of the same, contain the history of the Jewish Church and nation from the end of David's reign to the destruction of Solomon's temple, comprising a period of somewhat more than four hundred and thirty years, beginning at about 1016 years before the coming of CHRIST, and ending with the commencement of the Babylonish captivity. Solomon's reign comprised a period of about forty years. After the division of the kingdom in the succeeding reign of Rehoboam, the kingdom of Israel, which forms one branch, was continued under the successive government of

nineteen kings; and the kingdom of Judah, the other branch, under the government of the same number of kings. But what becomes more immediately interesting in the annals of those different monarchs, is the marked attention which is all along paid by the sacred historian, in the preservation of the genealogy of CHRIST. The prophets Elijah and Elisha, in their respective ministry, form a very interesting part in both these books of the kings.

I only beg the Reader here, in the opening of this book of the Kings, to be continually on the look out for what the HOLY GHOST is teaching the church in it concerning JESUS, and his gospel. The more hidden and obscure these precious subjects are, the more earnestly should our diligence be called forth in the investigation. It will be an ample reward to labour, if, through divine teaching, we are enabled to discover what the church in those distant periods, was taught concerning the person, and mission of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Depend upon it, Reader, in no age of the church hath the LORD left himself without witness, that the Scriptures testify of him. Vouchsafe, blessed SPIRIT, in this thy gracious office-work of glorifying to take of the things which are here of JESUS, and show both to Writer and Reader. The blessing we implore from thee, O LORD, on the present occasion, is, that *a spirit of wisdom and revelation may be given us in the knowledge of him*; that our souls, by faith, may have a clear apprehension of *the things which are freely given to us of GOD*.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

David, in his old age, unable to keep warmth, hath an handmaid provided to cherish him. Adonijah, his son, taking

advantage of David's imbecility, usurpeth the kingdom. Solomon, by David's direction, is anointed king. Adonijah fleeth for refuge to the altar. These are the principal things contained in this Chapter.

1 KINGS 1:1

(1) ¶ Now king David was old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

How humiliating to our nature are the infirmities of our old age; not because they are our nature, but because they are the fruits of sin. Disease, and languor of every kind, are the consequences of the fall. Hence the prophet describing the recovery of our nature by redemption, represents it under the similitude of a favoured climate, where the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Isaiah 33:24. David's age was not so very great. It was indeed the age of man; for I conjecture that he was now about 70. But Reader! David had been much worn. Troubles from others, and passions in himself; these wear fast the constitution.

1 KINGS 1:2-4

(2) Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. (3) So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. (4) And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

While the pious Reader feels suitable indignation at the corrupt counsel of the servants of David, let him bless God that he is living under a more gracious dispensation. Though from what is said in the last of those verses, we have authority to conclude that nothing criminal passed between

them, yet David had smarted so exceedingly in the former periods of his life, for the indulgence of his lustful passions, one could have wished that he had spurned such advisers from his presence. Reader! see what a degraded state man is reduced to from the fall. Wherein, on this pursuit of carnal desires, doth he differ from the brute that perisheth. Psalm 49:20. Who can read the account of the prostitution of this young woman, and call to mind how very often similar events have taken place in all ages, in gratifying the detestable lust of the great, at the expense of the innocence of the poor, but must feel indignant at it. Oh! precious JESUS, how sweet is it in the recollection of the horrid pollutions of our nature, to behold thee who art holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens. Hebrews 7:26.

1 KINGS 1:5-6

(5) ¶ Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. (6) And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom.*

New afflictions arise to David. But Reader! observe how the divine sentence is fulfilled in them; *Evil shall arise against thee out of thine own house.* The afflictions of David, from the commission of his sin with Bath-sheba, always carried with them this mark. See 2 Samuel 12:10, 11. It is somewhat very singular that David should call a son of his by such a name as Adonijah, which is a compound of two sacred names of JEHOVAH, *ADONAI*, LORD, and *JAH*, which is the incommunicable name, implying the divine essence of God. We find indeed, in the Old Testament scriptures, the saints of God giving names to their children of somewhat significant, to denote their views of divine grace and favor. It is very profitable and becoming to call our children by such names as

every time we look upon them may refresh the memory with the recollection of GOD'S mercies. Hannah's Samuel, and Leah's, Judah; furnished out continued occasions of this sort. See 1 Samuel 1:20. Genesis 29:35. But there seems somewhat unbecoming in taking the divine names for our children. The messengers and servants of the LORD are perhaps exceptions to this; for we find *Elijah* distinguished by a name similar to Adonijah. *Elijah*, or as it is in the original, *Elijahu*; being a compound word also, and signifying "My GOD, JEHOVAH, is he;" which may be considered as if it expressed the authority of his commission; My GOD JEHOVAH is he that hath sent me. With respect to Adonijah, most undeserving was he of such a distinction; and justly proved himself a second Absalom, whose brother he was, both in nature and in folly.

1 KINGS 1:7-8

(7) And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped *him*. (8) But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah.

In this conspiracy he made a party, as bad men will, for the most part, find bad men to countenance them.

1 KINGS 1:9-10

(9) And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which *is* by Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants: (10) But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

It should seem that like Absalom his brother, he begun his iniquities with sacrifice. It is sad when men's ambitious views stimulate them to evil. But it is awful indeed when such men begin their evil designs with professions of religion, as if they

wished you to believe the LORD gave countenance to them. See 2 Samuel 15:7, &c. The evil conduct of Adonijah in this usurpation was the more pointed, because the succession of the kingdom had been already fixed by GOD himself on Solomon, as Adonijah could not but know. The Reader will discover this also if he compares 2 Samuel 7:12, 13, with 1 Chronicles 22:6-11. But Reader! after having paid all due respect to the historical part of this subject, turn your thoughts to an infinitely more interesting part in the spiritual; and behold in Adonijah's attempt to subvert the kingdom, the representation of those who will not have the LORD JESUS CHRIST to reign over them. Here an ample subject opens to our meditation, which the Reader will do well to enlarge upon and improve.

1 KINGS 1:11-14

(11) ¶ Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth *it* not? (12) Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. (13) Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? (14) Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

We find upon most of the remarkable events in David's life, that the LORD his GOD raised up for him suitable instruments. Nathan is here evidently such in the hand of GOD, to accomplish the purposes of GOD'S will, but after reading this passage as an history, we should look at it in an higher and more important point of view. Solomon, as we shall soon discover when we come to remark the circumstances of his life, was in many instances a lively type of JESUS. As such, we

may consider Nathan the prophet in this place as representing faithful ministers of CHRIST. It is their office to forward and promote among men the Redeemer's kingdom. And what he saith to Bath-sheba concerning Solomon's being king, may with infinitely greater propriety be said concerning the LORD JESUS being king. Didst not thou say, O LORD, that JESUS should be king in Zion, and reign and rule over his people and in them, by his grace? Why then is it, that the Adonijah's of my poor corrupt **nature**, and the powers of darkness so often rise up in rebellion?

1 KINGS 1:15-21

(15) And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. (16) And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? (17) And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. (18) And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not: (19) And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. (20) And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. (21) Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders.

It should seem that David must have assured Bath-sheba by oath concerning Solomon's succession; though it is not noticed when. But what is most particularly to be remarked in this address of Bath-sheba is, that she declares the eyes of all Israel are upon David, that he should name his successor; no doubt, because what David should deliver on this subject would be considered as coming from GOD; David himself

being anointed of GOD. See 2 Samuel 23:1-3. It is sweet when the people of GOD wait for the revelation of the mind of GOD. It hath been a maxim of the church in all ages, that the law of GOD should be sought for from the LORD'S messengers. What an awful consideration to make men faithful! Malachi 2:7.

1 KINGS 1:22-27

(22) And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. (23) And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. (24) And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? (25) For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. (26) But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. (27) Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not showed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. It is delightful when the servants of JESUS are found to correspond in promoting JESUS'S glory, and advancing his kingdom among men. A thing which the LORD would certainly bless, if all were to preach, not themselves, but CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

1 KINGS 1:28-31

(28) Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. (29) And the king sware, and said, *As* the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, (30) Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my

stead; even so will I certainly do this day. (31) Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

The most interesting part of those verses is that which represents David as eyeing the LORD'S hand in all his deliverances. We have a similar example in the patriarch Jacob, when dying. The GOD, said he, which fed me all my life long unto this day; the angel which redeemed my soul from evil. What angel did he mean but the angel of the covenant, even JESUS? Genesis 48:16.

1 KINGS 1:32-35

(32) ¶ And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. (33) The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: (34) And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. (35) Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

Beside the historical relation of this event, the principal beauty of the passage is to look through it to the spiritual reference it hath to the throne of JESUS. Who, indeed, can read David's appointment of Solomon to the throne of Israel, without calling to recollection how GOD, even the FATHER, hath set his king upon his holy hill of Zion? Sweetly did the angel, in his salutation to Mary, make this one principal feature of JESUS; "He shall be great (said he) and shall be called, The son of the highest; and the LORD GOD shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32.

1 KINGS 1:36-40

(36) And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. (37) As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. (38) So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. (39) And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. (40) And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

The anointing Of Solomon is no more typical of JESUS, as the CHRIST of GOD, than the anointing of David, or any other of the kings or priests of Israel. But it doth not seem to become a question, but that all the anointings in the church, from the first to the last, were wholly with an eye to CHRIST. The only difference between them and him being only in the quantity. They all had the anointing of the oil of gladness, as it is called. But JESUS had the SPIRIT poured out upon him without measure. See Psalm 45:7. John 3:34. I do not, for my part, hesitate to believe, but that as the Son of GOD, as Mediator, is uniformly held forth in the old church as the Messiah, that is the anointed, which was to come; all the anointings and services with the holy oil, pointed expressly to him, and to him only. Sweet thought to the believer! Hence the church speaking of JESUS, saith, *Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth*. Song Of Solomon 1:3.

1 KINGS 1:41

(41) ¶ And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it* as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this* noise of the city being in an uproar?

Reader! do observe the very different state of Adonijah and his party from that of Solomon and his followers. There was no anointing, no divine call, no proper authority, to make Adonijah king. Instead of looking to heaven for a blessing, they were serving their lusts and pleasures. And of such Paul speaks; *whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly; whose glory is in their shame.* And will not, nay, doth not, sudden death and sudden destruction overtake all the workers of iniquity in like manner. Philippians 3:19.

1 KINGS 1:42

(42) And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou *art* a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

Good tidings indeed, to poor sinners, even rebellious sinners, that JESUS reigneth. Oh! that the proclamation would cause every poor sinner to cast down the weapons of sin out of his hands, and bend the knee to JESUS. Reader! depend upon it, the knee that will not bow in love and duty, shall break in terror and dismay! Isaiah 45:23.

1 KINGS 1:43-49

(43) And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. (44) And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: (45) And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This *is* the noise that ye have heard. (46) And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. (47) And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed. (48) And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which hath given *one* to sit on my throne this day,

mine eyes even seeing *it*. (49) And all the guests that *were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

If the relation of this event of Solomon's accession to the throne became so alarming to Adonijah and his guests; think, Reader, what terror will appall the souls of sinners at the last day, when JESUS whom they have despised, shall burst forth in the clouds to judgment, and the whole world be summoned by the archangel's trump to stand before his awful throne! The HOLY GHOST hath recorded somewhat of those alarms among the guilty, who despised JESUS in this life, but who will then call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from his presence. Revelation 6:15-17.

1 KINGS 1:50

(50) And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

God's altar was considered, in the wilderness state of the church, the refuge for sinners. No doubt, with an eye to JESUS, who in the gospel church is our altar himself. The *presumptuous* man-slayer, was, however, to find no shelter there. See Exodus 21:13, 14.

1 KINGS 1:51-53

(51) And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. (52) And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. (53) So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

Solomon begins his administration in mercy. Go to thine house, said he to Adonijah. But our JESUS'S whole

administration is mercy. I have said, mercy shall be set up for ever. *Go and sin no more*, is the language of JESUS to the poor, self condemned adulteress. John 8:11.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not overlook, in the melancholy view which is given us in this chapter of poor David's cold and perishing body, what dying worms the greatest of men are; and how sure and certain it is, that death passeth upon all men, because all have sinned! Precious JESUS! what a relief is it to the souls of thy people, that amidst all the dying circumstances of themselves and the world around, thou livest for ever. Oh! the unknown, inexpressible glory, contained in these words, JESUS CHRIST; *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*. And, *because I live ye shall live also*.

How sweet is it to behold dying saints, like David, anxious to provide gracious successors. Particularly dying ministers and servants of our JESUS. Of all the thoughts which lie near the heart of a faithful pastor in JESUS, this must be one of the most anxious, Whom will my God appoint over this household? Whom will the Lord send to go in and out before his people! David's anxiety for thrusting out Adonijah, and establishing Solomon in the kingdom, could not be half so interesting as to a dying, faithful minister, is the concern that the Lord would cast out all the Adonijah's who serve not him, but their own bellies, and send the people pastors after his own heart, which should feed his people in understanding and knowledge. But Reader! amidst the anxious concern of faithful stewards in the household of JESUS, let us comfort ourselves with this pleasing assurance, JESUS hath still the keys, and is still in the midst of the throne to govern. As the church of JESUS, let all his people hope and trust in him. When David

dies Solomon shall reign. If he puts out one light he can easily cause another to shine. He hath the stars in his right hand.

But Reader! let us not close the chapter before that we have taken another view of the coronation of Solomon. Surely, as we behold our eyes may well be directed to the contemplation of a more glorious person: for a *greater than Solomon is here*. Yes, dearest JESUS! if Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anointed Solomon king; and if the shouts of the multitude, on this occasion, were so great that the very earth rent with the noise; surely heaven and all its powers must take a part in that unequalled joy, when every poor sinner, such as I am, is by thy almighty grace enabled to crown thee LORD of all. Thou hast on thy head many crowns. The crown of the GODHEAD, being one with the FATHER. The crown of thy GOD-man, thy mediatorial glory. The crown of redemption which thou hast won, and now wearest. The crown of victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. And yet, oh! thou dearest JESUS, is not the crown which the sinner puts upon thy sacred head, when thou hast not only wrought out salvation *for* him by conquering all his foes; but wrought out salvation *in* him by conquering his own wayward will, which opposed thy government over him; is not this crown precious in thy sight! Oh! LORD JESUS, be thou my sovereign GOD and king! Gladly do I bow the knee before thee; gladly doth my heart, my soul, and all within me confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

David's whole history we are brought to the conclusion of in this chapter. Here is his farewell charge to Solomon, and his

death. Solomon's succession is soon followed with the deaths of Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei.

1 KINGS 2:1

(1) ¶ Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

There is somewhat very affecting in the dying moments of all men; but particularly so when eminent servants of the LORD come to die. We feel highly interested to know what they say, what were their views, and what their feelings, as they went down into the Jordan of death. The HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to gratify the church on this point in numberless instances; and, in a part of scripture where many of the Old Testament saints are brought together into one point of view, we are told in general terms, that they all died as they had lived, believing; *These all died in faith.* See Hebrews 11.

1 KINGS 2:2-4

(2) I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; (3) And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: (4) That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

The opening of this charge to Solomon is just as might be expected from the man after GOD'S own heart. What could he say; what ought he to have uttered, but such a charge concerning his regard to the faithful GOD as he here delivered to his son, as his successor in the kingdom? The HOLY GHOST, in the parallel passage of David's dying scene, which he hath been pleased to have recorded in the first book of the

Chronicles, gives a much more particular account of his last words, both to Solomon, and to the princes, and the captains of his court, than is here mentioned. And as there are several leading circumstances in that account which David, as a dying prophet, delivered in reference to the gospel church, I could wish that the Reader would consult that scripture while he has read this. See 1 Chronicles 28:1-10.

1 KINGS 2:5-9

(5) Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet. (6) Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. (7) But show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. (8) And, behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. (9) Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

It should seem, from the particular charges David gave to Solomon concerning those men, Joab and Shimei, that his conscience told him he had not done justice in suffering a murderer like Joab to go unpunished. And with respect to Shimei, the grievous curse perhaps of which he complains was of a spiritual nature, leveled against the covenant. I am, I confess, inclined to think so; as being in David's view what belonged not to him to pardon. If Shimei's conduct came at all under this description, it came not within the power of David to pardon. See Deuteronomy 13:12-17.

1 KINGS 2:10

(10) So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

Here we come at last to David's death and burial. Alas! what is the sum total of every man's history in the world, but that he was born, and lived, and died, and was buried? But, Reader, let you and I solemnly remember that, as it is appointed unto men once to die, so after death there is a judgment. Ah! here is the thing which makes both life and death important. *Where* we die, or *when* we die, is not so interesting; but it is of eternal consequence *how* we die. Blessed (said the voice of heaven) blessed are the dead that die *in* the LORD. Hebrews 9:27. Revelation 14:13.

1 KINGS 2:11

(11) And the days that David reigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

If the Reader be curious to calculate, he will find that David's reign was six months more than forty years. But the HOLY GHOST, in causing this memorial of David's reign to be marked down, was pleased to have it conveyed to the church in even numbers. And I am the more glad of it, because it acts as an authority and precedent for me, in my Commentary, in which I have purposely chosen to set down, upon different occasions, the periods of time in the same round numbers.

1 KINGS 2:12

(12) ¶ Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

From hence we may properly date the commencement of Solomon's reign. And let the Reader observe what is said, that it was established greatly. Reader! how precious is it when

our Jedidiah, our Solomon, hath his kingdom established greatly in our hearts!

1 KINGS 2:13-25

(13) And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. (14) He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. (15) And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and *that* all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD. (16) And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. (17) And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife. (18) And Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. (19) Bathsheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. (20) Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. (21) And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. (22) And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruah. (23) Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. (24) Now therefore, *as* the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. (25) And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

Unless we take into our account certain circumstances which very probably operated on the mind of Adonijah, as well as the probability that this Shunammite had been really married to David, by which the intention of Adonijah was incestuous,

the great displeasure of Solomon cannot be well explained. Solomon was appointed by the LORD to the kingdom, as the successor of his father, and therefore we find that during the rebellion of Adonijah he appeared as one not anxious for the event. But now he is king, and his throne fully established, wherefore doth he take alarm at Adonijah's request? But it will throw a light upon the subject if we suppose, as hath been conjectured by some, that the Shunammite was betrothed to David, though, from his age and imbecility, it is said he knew her not. Yet the proposed alliance with his son Adonijah, if granted, would have led to incest. But, beside this, the object put on another appearance, as it respected the kingdom. When Absalom usurped the crown, it was the advice of Ahithophel that he should go in unto his father's concubines, by way of intimating publicly that he and his father were in hatred. See 2 Samuel 16:20, 21. Hence this attempt of Adonijah to do the same respecting Abishag, Solomon considered as implying the same. And as Solomon was so eminent for wisdom, he discovered this design, and crushed it in the bud. But, Reader, let you and I gather improvement from it, and consider how much it behoves us to bring every enemy, both secret and open, under the feet of JESUS.

1 KINGS 2:26-27

(26) ¶ And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou *art* worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. (27) So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

I do not presume to say as much, but yet I think it is likely, that Abiathar was at the bottom of Adonijah's proposal

concerning Abishag; for Solomon, in his answer to his mother Bath-sheba, seems to hint at it in the 22d verse. But the degradation of Abiathar from the priest's office became a confirmation of what GOD had threatened concerning the house of Eli. Abiathar was the last high priest of that family; which, though predicted fourscore years before, was not confirmed until now. However slow, yet GOD'S judgments are sure. The apostle makes a striking observation upon it, 2 Peter 3:8-10. How gracious Solomon appears in his dismissal of Abiathar. He reminds him of his attachment to his father, and therefore deals gently by him. Think, Reader, in what a multitude of instances the LORD JESUS deals thus with sinners, and how gracious he is in the midst of judgment.

1 KINGS 2:28-34

(28) Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. (29) And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. (30) And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. (31) And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. (32) And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing *thereof, to wit*, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. (33) Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. (34) So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon

him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

The death of Joab is not for his joining in Adonijah's rebellion, but, it is for the murders he had committed. And Solomon evidently, in this instance, meant to take away the blood of iniquity from the kingdom. It was in conformity to the divine law; and Solomon is not the law-maker, but the law-fulfiller. See Genesis 9:5, 6. Oh! how sweet is it to the relief of every poor, distressed, burthened conscience, that JESUS hath both fulfilled the law, and paid the penalty to the law, by the sacrifice of himself.

1 KINGS 2:35

(35) ¶ And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

It is delightful to see a throne surrounded with upright servants. It is yet, if possible, more delightful to see the church of JESUS filled with faithful ministers.

1 KINGS 2:36-38

(36) And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. (37) For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. (38) And Shimei said unto the king, The saying *is* good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

By this process a foundation was laid for securing Shimei's fidelity, or opening the door for his punishment. And it should seem that those articles of agreement were entered into before the LORD, and sanctioned with his authority. I know not whether the Reader enters with me in his feelings, into a

similar view of Kidron. But since JESUS passed this brook in the night of his agony in the garden, preparatory to his death, the very mention of the place raises many interesting images to the mind. To trace thy footsteps, dearest JESUS, though, like Shimei, it brought an death, oh! for faith to think nothing of the sacrifice!

1 KINGS 2:39-46

(39) And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* in Gath. (40) And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. (41) And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. (42) And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard *is* good. (43) Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? (44) The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; (45) And king Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. (46) So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

The event was just as might be expected. Sinners lay the foundation of their own ruin; and even, as the Psalmist saith, are entrapped in the works of their own hands. And verily do I believe, in the end of the day, every despiser of JESUS and his blessed gospel, will be condemned out of their own mouth, when it will be proved that salvation hath been brought home to their very doors, and proclaimed in their

streets, and they have rejected the counsel of GOD against their own souls. Well might the apostle exclaim, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Hebrews 2:3.

REFLECTIONS

READER! after gathering all the instructions from this chapter which the HOLY GHOST graciously intended from it, for the comfort and edification of his church and people, let us direct our views to the contemplation of David; and, having here seen his end in his death and burial, first consider the character of this man as he is in himself; and, secondly, in the light in which he eminently stands in the church, a type and figure of the ever blessed JESUS.

When we consider David in his original obscurity of situation, as the son of Jesse! When we behold him brought forth and placed in a state so high and exalted! When we view him in all his private life, and public usefulness! When we see him in his most exalted seasons of piety! and when we behold him no less in his falling into sin—What a wonderful character, taken together, doth he appear! The most extraordinary perhaps that ever the LORD brought forward from among the sons of Adam. No doubt, eminently intended to be held forth as a monument in the church; that his most astonishing heights of devotion might comfort, encourage, and animate the people of GOD. And no less that the sad falling into sin, from which almighty grace recovered him, might encourage poor penitent transgressors to hope in his mercy, in and through JESUS.

But, when we have duly pondered over the character of David, as he was in himself, I would beg the Reader to look at him yet more leisurely and attentively, as he stands in the church, a type and figure of our ever adored Redeemer. Here

he comes forward in a more eminent manner, and challenges our more serious consideration.

Chosen of GOD from among the sheepecotes, and from the lowest obscurity, how doth he prefigure Him who was taken from among the humblest of men, and set up in the councils of peace from everlasting. And if David was the man after GOD'S own heart, who can overlook in him the type of JESUS, JEHOVAH'S elect, in whom his soul delighteth; the man whose name is the BRANCH, and concerning whom a voice from heaven proclaimed him GOD'S well-beloved Son, in whom his soul was well pleased? Did David fight the battles of the LORD; did he conquer Goliath, and the armies of the uncircumcised Philistines? and did not JESUS obtain the victory over all the enemies of our salvation? Was David anointed king over GOD'S people contrary to the wishes of Saul, and all the expectation of Israel? and was not JESUS crowned king in Zion in direct defiance of Herod, and all the expectation of the people of the Jews, who declared that they would not have this man to reign over them? Did David make his way to the throne through a series of persecution, affliction, and distress? and who can forget the sorrows, persecutions, and oppositions, dearest JESUS, by which thou didst purchase the crown of redemption, before it was put upon thy sacred head? Was David surrounded with his worthies, the captains, and elders of Israel; and what a noble army of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, followed the LORD JESUS? Was David the sweet psalmist of Israel, and did he compose songs for the sanctuary? And what songs of salvation hath our JESUS taught his people, both in the temple service below, and in the realms of bliss above, when the redeemed of the LORD shall come to Zion with everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever! Hail! blessed JESUS! thou hast the key of David; thou art both the root and

the offspring of David! David's son after the flesh, and David's LORD and GOD in the divinity of thy nature. Truly, LORD, many kings have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Oh! may the history of all thy servants lead my soul to thee. They shall lay on thee all the glory of thy Father's house; and on thee would I lay all the glory of my salvation!

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

This chapter opens with the relation of some of the first events which took place in the beginning of Solomon's reign. His marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. GOD'S appearance to him in a dream. His choice. And the chapter concludes with an account of his sound judgment, in deciding a matter of controversy between two harlots.

1 KINGS 3:1

(1) ¶ And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

This marriage with a stranger to the house of Israel, appears to have been a very strange event: and yet we do not find it reprobated. Some have thought that before the marriage took place, she was proselyted to the true religion. Be this as it may, from the wonderful book which he wrote upon this occasion, (as is said) the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's, we cannot but hope that the hand of the LORD was in it. And it is remarkable, and well worthy the Reader's attention, that the strange gods, which it is said in the after period of his life his idolatrous wives and concubines led him to, are not said to have come from Egypt. See chap. 11:1-5. And it is yet worthy

of further remark by the Reader, that the prophet Isaiah speaketh of Egypt as the third with Israel, and the LORD of hosts shall bless them together, saying, *Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of mine hands, and Israel mine inheritance.* See Isaiah 19:24, 25. But may we not go yet one step further on this subject, and observe, that as Solomon was an eminent type of JESUS, may not this marriage with Pharaoh's daughter be considered as a figure of CHRIST'S union with the Gentile church?

1 KINGS 3:2

(2) Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

This sacrificing on high places is uniformly spoken of in the Old Testament scripture as improper, and contrary to the divine appointment. Deuteronomy 12:2-6.

1 KINGS 3:3

(3) And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

This is a beautiful, but short account of Solomon. *He loved the LORD.* A volume could not say more. Reader! do not forget that the love of any man towards the LORD is an evidence of the LORD'S love to him; for the apostle saith, *we love God because he first loved us.* And as the LORD sent by Nathan on the birth of Solomon, and called his name *Jedediah*, which signifies *beloved of the LORD*; this therefore is abundantly plain. 2 Samuel 12:25.

1 KINGS 3:4

(4) And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

The Reader will do well to compare the parallel history of Solomon, as we have it related in the opening of the second book of the Chronicles. There we learn that this high place at Gibeon was the proper consecrated place of worship, the tabernacle of the congregation being there. So that this high place differed most essentially from the general acceptation of what is called high places in the Old Testament. See 2 Chronicles 1:3.

1 KINGS 3:5

(5) ¶ In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

The Old Testament scriptures hold forth to us many examples of this kind, of the LORD'S appearing to his servants in dreams and visions of the night. But, Reader, do you suppose that the chosen people of the LORD were more favoured on this account than they are now? Since the Son of GOD came down and tabernacled among us, was it to make our privileges less? If so, might we not say, " LORD! thou appearedst to Solomon and others in days of old, and didst bid them ask of thee blessings. Bring us back to these darker dispensations again!"—Reader, what say you to this? Could you use such language? And yet doth not, in fact, everyone in reality say this, and even worse, who doth not by faith keep up a constant communion, through JESUS, with our covenant GOD in him, with full assurance, according to JESUS'S own promise, that whatsoever we ask the FATHER in his name, he will give it. John 16:23. Did we but believe, heartily and cordially believe, the record that GOD hath given of his dear Son, we should, as heartily and cordially believe also, that all that JESUS hath promised is yea and amen in, him. So far, therefore, is it from our privileges being lessened since redemption-work was finished by JESUS, that they are increased beyond all conception of increase. And, instead of the Lord now

appearing to his people in visions and dreams of the night, he manifests himself to them by faith in the clearest tokens of noonday. *If a man love me, (saith JESUS) he will keep my words; and my FATHER will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him.* And so of the SPIRIT of truth, the promise is the same, though *the world cannot receive him, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* Oh! precious, precious consideration, in proof of the indwelling residence of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, in the hearts of the LORD'S people! See John 14:23 and 17.

1 KINGS 3:6-9

(6) And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. (7) And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in. (8) And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. (9) Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

How delightful a petition this was of Solomon's! how different from men of the world! and how evident that his mind was under divine teaching. Reader! do not forget that we cannot pray as we ought, as the apostle saith, unless the SPIRIT teach us; whatever we say in prayer to our GOD in JESUS, GOD, by his blessed SPIRIT, must first say to us. Romans 8:26. Under this heavenly teacher, what an high mercy it is, in the silence of the night, or amidst the tumults of the day, to have our souls going forth in prayer or praise to the LORD! David hath a beautiful thought on the subject when he saith, *I will bless*

the LORD, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. Psalm 16:7. Behold, Reader, the modesty, the humbleness, and teachable mind of Solomon. He calls himself a little child; one that knoweth not how to go out or come in, in the midst of such an enlightened nation as Israel. How sweet is it to behold ministers, both in church and state, thus diffident, and seeking grace from the LORD!

1 KINGS 3:10-14

(10) And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. (11) And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; (12) Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. (13) And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. (14) And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

Do observe, Reader, how the LORD expresseth his approbation of what is in fact at the same time the precious workings of his own grace in their hearts. We have another beautiful example of the same kind in the gospel, where our LORD JESUS is said to have marveled at the faith of the centurion, meaning, that he called upon those around to take notice of it; when it was JESUS himself, as the author and finisher of faith, literally and truly wrought it in the poor man's heart. Matthew 8:10. Do observe further, the bounty of our GOD in his gifts to Solomon. The LORD not only gave him wisdom and understanding, and all other blessings suited to his need for his exalted station; but, because he had passed by what men of the world would most covet, the LORD superadded all those unasked. But when you and I, Reader, have paid all due

respect to the subject, as it concerned Solomon king of Israel, let us look at the subject a little more closely, and see whether a greater than Solomon is not typified here. Do I not see in what is said JESUS, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Solomon, as his type, had wisdom beyond all the kings of the earth. But that, spiritually considered, JESUS was implied in the whole, is evident from what the LORD promised by vision, when David, speaking by the Spirit of prophecy, declared in another scripture, *Thou spakest in vision to the Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people. His seed will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.* Compare this with Psalm 89:19-37, and Psalm 72. throughout.

1 KINGS 3:15

(15) And Solomon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Reader! it is impossible to enter into the full apprehension of what the feelings of Solomon were, unless, like him, our own souls have known somewhat of the refreshments of grace. But oh! the mind of man is certainly furnished by its great Author, when in a state of regeneration, for such manifestations of divine love. The patriarch Jacob's history affordeth a most delightful instance of the kind. Genesis 28:11-18.

1 KINGS 3:16-27

(16) ¶ Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. (17) And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. (18) And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered

also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. (19) And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. (20) And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. (21) And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. (22) And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king. (23) Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living. (24) And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. (25) And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. (26) Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but divide it.* (27) Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she *is* the mother thereof.

Here was an opportunity very speedily afforded, after the LORD'S pouring out an understanding heart upon Solomon, for the exercise of it. No doubt, it became a very nice point, as there were no eye witnesses to determine whose representation was true. Solomon showed his penetration by the proposed division of the living child. Not that the king would really have put it to the experiment; but it was to decide by calling forth the tender feeling of the real mother. The pretended mother, in a moment, plainly proved that she could never be the mother of a child, to consent to the slaughter of it for division. I would only desire the Reader to remark, the melancholy circumstance which those wretched women called harlots have, in a multitude of instances, shown by the willful murder of their base children. In order to hide their disgrace from men, they bid defiance to GOD: and in

what nature shudders at, the murdering of their own poor, unconscious babes, have sought relief from their shame of uncleanness. Alas! what a state our nature is sunk to! There is another instruction we ought to gather from this view of the subject, namely, that while we behold this harlot with bowels yearning over her child for the salvation of the body; how ought it to teach every true parent to feel for the salvation of the soul? Oh! how lost to all bowels of compassion must those wretched parents be, who can look on and see the sword of GOD'S offended justice uplifted, and ready to fall on their children, by reason of sin; and yet send forth no cry, offer up no prayer; nay, remain themselves and their children unconscious also, that without an interest in JESUS, who, like another Solomon, may stop the sword from its office, they must perish forever! Oh! precious JESUS! how is it possible for me to read this instance of the sword ready to devour, and not call to mind how the LORD JEHOVAH commanded the sword to awake and smite thee, who art fellow to the LORD of Hosts, that the LORD might lay his hand upon the little ones? Surely when thou wast smitten we escaped, and by thy stripes we were healed. Zechariah 13:7. Isaiah 53.

1 KINGS 3:28

(28) And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgment.

Well might all Israel admire Solomon's wisdom on this occasion. And well may you and I, Reader, admire and adore JESUS, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is indeed both the wisdom of GOD and the power of his salvation, to every poor sinner that believeth; and the grand object and design of redemption is, to display the grace and goodness of JEHOVAH in this stupendous work, *to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in*

heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of GOD. So that every heart interested in this great salvation may well exclaim, Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! Ephesians 3:10. Romans 11:33.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! how precious the testimony the HOLY GHOST hath given in this chapter to Solomon, that he loved the LORD! wilt thou, merciful GOD, shed forth a portion, and let it be as large a portion as my Soul can find capaciousness to admit, of the same heavenly principle in my poor heart also. Oh! dearest JESUS! give me grace to say, though, like Peter, a thousand actions seem to have denied it, LORD, *thou knowest all things! those knowest that I love thee.*

And wilt thou, HOLY SPIRIT, visit me in the visions of the night! shall mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may be occupied in thy word! will the FATHER of mercies come! will the LORD JESUS come; agreeably to that promise, and make his abode in my soul? Doth GOD indeed speak to me? Doth he graciously say, *Ask what I shall give thee?* Precious JESUS! give me thyself; for, having thee, I shall possess all things. LORD, it is not thy salvation only I desire; but thee. Not thy gifts only, but thyself also: not thy grace only, but thy person too: not that I may have life only, but that thou mayest be my life, and my portion forever. Yes! dearest JESUS! my soul through thy blessed teaching me these sweet lessons, my soul cannot rest short of anything but thyself. Since thou wert first pleased to look upon me, and speak to me, and show me thyself, my heart is not my own; thou hath drawn it up to heaven; and now, LORD, keep it forever, and give me thine. And since GOD my FATHER, and all his fulness is in thee; all joy in thee; all happiness in thee; I desire no happiness but thee.

Witness for me, ye ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who are the heirs of salvation; JESUS is my all, and in all. Whom have *I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever!*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

This chapter relates to us Solomon's splendour and greatness, An account of his princes; his twelve officers; the peace and extensiveness of his kingdom; and of his great wisdom.

1 KINGS 4:1

(1) ¶ So king Solomon was king over all Israel.

This is spoken of in contradistinction to his father, who in the beginning of his reign had but part of Israel. And perhaps in contradistinction from all his successors, Solomon reigned over all Israel. And so doth JESUS over all his people, notwithstanding the malice of the enemy. All power is his in heaven and in earth. He is king of nations as well as king of saints.

1 KINGS 4:2-6

(2) And these *were* the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, (3) Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. (4) And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests: (5) And Azariah the son of Nathan *was* over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan *was* principal officer, *and* the king's friend: (6) And Ahishar *was* over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda *was* over the tribute.

Honourable testimony is given to his princes. But what were Solomon's princes to the princes of JESUS? Reader! think what an unspeakable privilege that is, which maketh poor sinners kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER! Sweetly Hannah sung over this when she said, he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifted up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: 1 Samuel 2:8. And yet, if possible, sweeter still the apostle sounds an higher note, when speaking to believers in JESUS he saith, But ye are a chosen generation; a royal priesthood; an holy nation; a peculiar people; that he should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light! 1 Peter 2:9.

1 KINGS 4:7-19

(7) And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision. (8) And these *are* their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: (9) The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan: (10) The son of Hesed, in Aruboth; to him *pertained* Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher: (11) The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: (12) Baana the son of Ahilud; *to him pertained* Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which *is* by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, *even unto the place that is* beyond Jokneam: (13) The son of Geber, in Ramothgilead; to him *pertained* the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which *are* in Gilead; to him *also pertained* the region of Argob, which *is* in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars: (14) Ahinadab the son of Iddo *had* Mahanaim: (15) Ahimaaz *was* in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: (16) Baanah the son of Hushai *was* in Asher and in Aloth: (17) Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: (18) Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: (19) Geber the son of Uri *was* in the country of Gilead, *in* the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only officer which *was* in the land.

Honourable account is also given of the purveyors of Solomon's household, whose office it was to provide sustenance for the king's table. Blessed JESUS! what an honour hast thou conferred on the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries, that they, as Scribes well instructed in thy kingdom, should bring out of thy treasury things new and old. Oh grant them grace, dearest LORD, all whom thou hast called and appointed to the work, that they may be found as is required of stewards, faithful! 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2.

1 KINGS 4:20-21

(20) ¶ Judah and Israel *were* many, as the sand which *is* by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. (21) And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

Perhaps the splendour and greatness of Solomon's person, court, and subjects, were never equaled by any prince. He not only governed his own people, but other nations were tributary to him. Now was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the sea for multitude. Genesis 22:17. But delightful as this relation is, as an history, the glory of it is nothing compared to the spiritual sense, considered with an eye to JESUS and his kingdom. If the Reader will read the 72d Psalm with this chapter, and mark the features of both in reference to the LORD JESUS, he will discover that though in that psalm many things said in it *may be* applied to Solomon; *many* more in it *cannot* be applicable at all to him; and *must be* applied to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. David's prayer for Solomon, as the title of that Psalm expresses it, was therefore prophetically delivered in reference to JESUS. Solomon's reign indeed was a peaceable reign, a wise administration, and he a blessing to his subjects. But of Solomon it never could be said

that *he should redeem the souls of his people; that prayer should be made to him; and that his name should be continued as long as the sun.* Reader! behold, I beseech you, in this delightful account of Solomon's splendour, glory, government, and the happiness of his people, the typical representation of our JESUS; who is not only king of Zion, but the desire of all nations; unto whom, either in love or fear, every knee shall sooner or later bow, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER. The mirth of Judah and Israel may serve to teach us also what joy and gladness of heart constitutes the Redeemer's kingdom: his consisteth not indeed in meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST. Romans 14:17.

1 KINGS 4:22-24

(22) And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, (23) Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl. (24) For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

The provision for Solomon means for his court and servants. But what an astonishing allowance, and this not for an occasional feast, but for every day's table. One of the old writers hath computed that the bread and flesh here set down would afford ample food, even as a feast, for nearly fifty thousand men. But Reader! after having our astonishment carried to the utmost stretch, in considering such a daily supply for such a multitude; how infinitely short doth this fall of the daily supply of our JESUS'S table. He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living, both in providence and grace, with plenteousness! What a thought! David, after enumerating the several works of inanimate creation, speaks in one of his

psalms of the animated part, and breaks out into those devout expressions; *these wait all upon thee that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.* Psalm 104:27. Reader! let us cherish this thought, for it is a very sweet and refreshing one. JESUS feeds his people. JESUS keeps a daily, nay an hourly court: a constant table. He still receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. He will not remit the bounties of his house, neither will he send the poor and the hungry empty away. If, dearest LORD! in the days of thy flesh thou didst supply the wants of thousands in the wilderness, by multiplying a few loaves and fishes into ample food for all; surely thou wilt not relax in thy mercy now, when all power is thine in heaven and in earth! Thou wilt feed thine hidden ones with the bread that is handed in secret, and give them to eat of that bread which perisheth not in the using, but endureth unto everlasting life. Lord! (I would say for myself and for all thy people), *evermore give us this bread*, which is thyself. John 6:33-35.

1 KINGS 4:25

(25) And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

It is charming to see the safety and security of Solomon's subjects. But what is this compared to the everlasting safety and security of JESUS'S servants! how beautifully the prophet sings of this, looking into gospel days, and in reference to our JESUS. See Hosea 14:7.

1 KINGS 4:26-28

(26) And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. (27) And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. (28) Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries

brought they unto the place where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.

We may (still carrying on the idea of Solomon's splendour) have a conception of the greatness of his equipage by the number of his horses. But how much more interesting is the view of JESUS' glory, of whom the sacred writer tells us, *the chariots of GOD are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, and the LORD is among them as in the holy place of Sinai*. Psalm 68:18. If it were not for swelling this commentary to too great a bulk, I should beg the Reader to indulge me with the throwing in a few thoughts on what JESUS saith to his church, in that sweet song Solomon wrote under inspiration, in allusion to this very subject of the horses of those days. *I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots*. Song Of Solomon 1:9. Believers, in the eye of JESUS, are chosen, select, beautifully singled out as a chosen generation and a royal priesthood, by redeeming grace, as the choicest horses are marked for the royal chariots. Moreover, they are purchased at an high price; for believers are bought with no less a price than the blood of CHRIST. Horses also are costly. We read of a single one of Solomon's valued at 150 shekels of silver: See chap. 10:29. But how precious in the sight of GOD are the souls of his people! and as the horses of Pharaoh's chariots we may well suppose were properly fed, trained, and not used in ordinary service; so the people of GOD are fed with the bread of life, trained by divine grace, and employed only in the ways and commandments of the LORD, whose service is perfect freedom. But I must not enlarge on those points.

1 KINGS 4:29-31

(29) ¶ And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that *is* on the sea shore. (30) And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom

of Egypt. (31) For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

Here we arrive at the pinnacle of Solomon's glory; the wisdom and largeness of heart which the LORD gave him, not simply in human sciences, though here we find he surpassed the most eminent for learning among the Egyptians and Chaldeans; but Solomon excelled in that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation. And Reader! do observe the expression; it is said that GOD gave it to him. Yes! it is not to be acquired. It is not by might, nor by power, but by my SPIRIT, saith the LORD. Zechariah 4:6. But Reader! when you have paid all due respect to what is here said concerning Solomon's wisdom; think only what a shadow the whole of it formed of that, of which the substance is in the person of JESUS, who is emphatically called, by way of summing up his character, Wisdom itself; and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Proverbs 8 throughout. Colossians 2:3. Oh! thou who art the wisdom of GOD and the power of GOD for salvation to thy people! how fully doth all wisdom centre in thy person, and manifest itself in all the saving offices, relations, and characters, by which thou art made known to thy people! and Reader! while you and I are looking up to our only wise GOD and Saviour, as the apostle Jude his servant justly calls him, let us ask for a portion of that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation, and that our souls may know the precious assurance, and rejoice in it, that he is made of GOD to us both wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; that all our glorying may be in the LORD. 1 Corinthians 1:30, 31,

1 KINGS 4:32-33

(32) And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. (33) And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that *is* in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of

the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

Whether the book of Proverbs which bears his name, or any part of it, is in the number of those 3000; or whether the song of songs, which also he wrote, is among the 1005 of his songs; is not easy to say. It should seem that, as we have reason to hope all Solomon's writings were to the divine glory, the sacred historian had these in view which are divinely inspired. And especially, as Solomon is said to have been wiser than *Ethan* and *Heman*, some of whose writings also were inspired, and are handed down to us in the collection of the book of psalms, as *maschil* or matter of instruction. See Psalms 88. and 89. whose names in the title those psalms bear. But certainly both in human and divine learning, the general tendency of this account is to point out Solomon's pre-eminency.

1 KINGS 4:34

(34) And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

What honour the LORD put upon Solomon! but what glory hath the FATHER given to our Solomon, his dear and ever blessed Son! in whom it hath pleased him that all fulness should dwell, and to whom all the kings of the earth, and all nations, must come to receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace. Oh! may my soul come and turn aside from all created wisdom, all the powers of human knowledge and learning, to behold in thee, thou blessed JESUS, that wisdom which eclipses all earthly science, and puts out, by thy meridian brightness, the glow-worm shining of nature's glory. Let me behold thy rays, let me be brought under thy wings, thou Sun of Righteousness, for in thy light shall I see light! Psalm 36:9.

REFLECTIONS

IN beholding the greatness and majesty of Solomon, as this chapter represents him; his riches, his courts, his retinue, his servants, and more especially his great wisdom; I desire to ascribe all due praise and glory to the LORD GOD of Solomon, in distinguishing his chosen with such marks of his love and favor; and to bless so bountiful a GOD in having given such power unto men. But from the court of Solomon, and all his grandeur, my soul desires rapidly to take wing, and flee by faith to the court of heaven, and behold JESUS in the midst of the throne, as possessing all power in heaven and in earth. What was Solomon in all his glory compared to him who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind? Nay, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed in point of beauty like even the lilies of the field. But thy throne, blessed JESUS, as one with the FATHER, in the nature of the GODHEAD, was and is thine, from everlasting, and so must be to all eternity. And as the mediator, thou art in full right of the throne forever and ever. Methinks the thought of Solomon's court, prompts my soul to contemplate with the eye of faith the unfailing splendors of thine. Yes! heavenly King! my soul beholds thee as king over all; GOD blessed for ever. I see thy princes like Solomon's. I view thine officers whom thou hast appointed over thine household, to give thy people meat in due season. I behold thee encircled with all the innumerable host of angels; the spirits of just men made perfect; the noble army of martyrs; the glorious company of apostles; the venerable host of patriarchs; the sacred band of prophets; the multitude which no man can number, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB; the church above triumphant; the church below still militant; all Judah and Israel, and the nations that are saved by thy blood: all! all!

are of thy court, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it. To thee then, King of kings, and LORD of lords, do, come to hear thy wisdom, to see thy glory, to adore thy name, and to bow my knee before thee, as my Saviour, my king, and my GOD.

Oh! then blessed JESUS, do thou maintain thy kingdom in my heart. There reign, there rule, there govern; there give out of thy fulness and of thy wisdom. And while the services of every creature, the praises of every angel, and the love and affection of every redeemed soul, become thy just revenue; oh! LORD GOD, let the poor worm that is now looking up to thee partake of thy bounty, and be enabled to give to thee of thy praise; till from living under the grace of thy courts here upon earth, thou shalt call me home to live eternally under the more immediate view of thy glory, and the everlasting enjoyment of thy presence in thy courts above; where the city hath neither the need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of the FATHER doth lighten it, and thou dearest LAMB of GOD, art the light thereof. Amen! Amen!

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

We have in this chapter the congratulations of Hiram, king of Tyre, which he sent to Solomon on his accession to the throne, Solomon's answer. Hiram furnisheth timber at Solomon's request to build the temple. An account of Solomon's workmen and laborers for the service.

1 KINGS 5:1

(1) ¶ And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

It should seem from what is here said, that Hiram, king of Tyre, was always a lover of David, and that this must have been on account of his religion; or if not on this account, it was the LORD which inclined this man's heart to a regard for David, and so it was David's religion which gave rise to it. *When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* Proverbs 16:7.

1 KINGS 5:2-5

(2) And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, (3) Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. (4) But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, *so that there is* neither adversary nor evil occurrent. (5) And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. (6) Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that *there is* not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

Solomon's embassy to Hiram being on so important a subject as the building of the temple, every part of it becomes interesting for the pious Reader to regard. Herein Solomon was eminently a type of JESUS, of whom the prophet predicted that *he should build the temple of the LORD, and he should bear the glory.* Zechariah 6:13. It is worthy of remark that Lebanon was in Solomon's territories, but Hiram's servants were more expert in hewing timber than the Israelites. Now the prophet Isaiah explains this in reference to gospel times. The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls; and their kings shall minister unto thee; that is, unto JESUS. See Isaiah 60:10. And Solomon, as a type of CHRIST, had the ministry of those servants of Hiram, the men of Tyre and Sidon; and Hiram

himself is brought in upon this occasion to minister as an instrument in the LORD'S hand to the service of Solomon, in building his temple. But Reader! there is still a greater beauty in the subject considered as typical of the gospel church of JESUS. Oh! Reader! think what sons of strangers in our Gentile church the ministers of CHRIST are, whom the LORD hath employed to build the walls of his Zion!, may not every one of this description exclaim, *My birth and my nativity is of the land of Canaan; my father was an Ammonite, and my mother an Hittite*, See Ezekiel 16:3. Oh! how marvellous and distinguishing is the grace of GOD! if the Reader be desirous to see more of the beautiful figures made use of concerning Lebanon, &c. I refer him to Isaiah 60. throughout.

1 KINGS 5:7-9

(7) And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. (8) And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: *and* I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. (9) My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

The LORD disposed the heart, no doubt, of this prince to put an helping hand to so good a work. And as the workman is worthy of his hire, he bargains with Solomon for the food of his household. JESUS our Solomon keeps a good house; and they that wait at the altar are made partakers with the altar. 1 Corinthians 9:13. The place of delivery which Hiram agreed to deposit the timber at, the mouth of Tyre, was the very spot which in after ages became so memorable by our LORD'S

personal visit, and the exercise of his ministry there. See Matthew 15:21, &c.

1 KINGS 5:10-16

(10) ¶ So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees *according to* all his desire. (11) And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat *for* food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. (12) And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together. (13) And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. (14) And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, *and* two months at home: and Adoniram *was* over the levy. (15) And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; (16) Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which *were* over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

There is somewhat so truly amiable in the character of Hiram, and particularly as his zeal in this service seems to have been with an eye to the temple, that one cannot help expressing an hope that the league between him and Solomon was founded in JESUS.

1 KINGS 5:17-18

(17) And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, *and* hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. (18) And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

It is impossible to behold Solomon laying the foundation stone for the temple without carrying our thoughts to the contemplation of that foundation stone which GOD hath laid in Zion: a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. Oh! precious JESUS! thou art indeed a foundation

stone, for other foundation can no man lay. Thou art most firm, most durable, most strong, and lasting, even eternal. And as thou art so precious in GOD my FATHER's view; so, dearest LORD, be thou everlastingly in mine. On thee hath JEHOVAH built his church. On thee do I, through his blessed SPIRIT, build my whole salvation. And as Solomon's builders, and Hiram's builders, did hew and square the stones for the temple, so, blessed JESUS, thou almighty master-builder, (for thou hath chosen and hewn me out of the quarry of nature), do thou polish my soul by regeneration, and rear up a structure of grace in my heart, that I may be an holy temple to the LORD. Ephesians 2:21.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over what we have read in this chapter, and in the view here afforded us of such workmen as Hiram's servants, behold how striking a representation it bears to numbers in the present day, to whom abilities of nature and of art are given, but to whom perhaps is given no grace! how many possess the ordinary gifts of the SPIRIT, who know nothing of his gracious work upon the heart! how many minister in holy things, who are yet no partakers in the spirit of holy things! of all the awful scriptures to this amount we meet with in the word of GOD; none can exceed in terror that declaration of JESUS: Many will say unto me in that day, LORD! LORD! have we not prophesied (that is preached) in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils; (that is perhaps have been made instrumental to others in the delivery of the word of salvation, by which the strong man armed is cast out of the soul) and in thy name done many wonderful works. And what can be more wonderful than to behold sinners awakened and converted through the instrumentality of a preached gospel? And then, saith JESUS, will I profess unto them, "I never knew

you:" that is, perhaps never knew them in a way of vital union, their own souls never having been savingly brought into fellowship and communion with the LORD JESUS. Oh! Reader, what an awful consideration, to have been made helpful to the salvation of others, while uninterested for our own. To be daily ministering in the temple without a real connection with the LORD of the temple!

Let us turn our thoughts from the contemplation of a state so dreadfully alarming, to the consideration of the reverse side of the subject, and in the happy, the inexpressibly happy state of the souls built upon the same foundation as the apostles and prophets are, which is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the chief corner-stone; look up to our GOD and FATHER in CHRIST JESUS, with an humble hope that he is our portion. Yes! dearest JESUS! I would say for myself, and all thy people, thou art the foundation of all my hopes, all my desires, all my wishes, and all my joys. GOD, my FATHER, of his infinite love laid this foundation. On thy glorious person, as the GOD-man, the whole structure rests; thy blood and righteousness is the grand cement which unites and keeps it eternally together; and in thee the whole building, thy church, which is thy body, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the LORD. Come, then, blessed JESUS! carry on, complete, adorn and finish, the work in my soul; let thy mercy be built up forever, and let the top stone of the spiritual building be brought forth with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

This chapter furnisheth a number of interesting particulars concerning the building of Solomon's temple. The time it took

in building until it was finished. In the earlier part of this service the words of the LORD came unto Solomon with promises concerning it.

1 KINGS 6:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

The HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have it recorded as to the exact time when this wonderful work of Solomon's temple was begun; even 480 years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. And Solomon's reign was suffered to run on to the fourth year before he found time to set about it. Reader! it is really astonishing how rapid the wheels of time, and with them the wheels of human life, run on. How sweetly doth JESUS enforce the necessity of diligence in our spiritual concerns. *I must work (saith JESUS) the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh, when no man can work.* John 9:4.

1 KINGS 6:2

(2) And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty *cubits*, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

It appears that the pattern was given to David before his death, how this temple should be built, See 1 Chronicles 28:11, 12, 19.

1 KINGS 6:3-10

(3) And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; *and* ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof before the house. (4) And for the house he made windows of narrow lights. (5) And against

the wall of the house he built chambers round about, *against* the walls of the house round about, *both* of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about: (6) The nethermost chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad: for without *in the wall* of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that *the beams* should not be fastened in the walls of the house. (7) And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. (8) The door for the middle chamber *was* in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle *chamber*, and out of the middle into the third. (9) So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar. (10) And *then* he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house *with* timber of cedar.

The particularity of description given, no doubt in allusion to the gospel church, hath much spiritual significance. And many learned and pious men have conceived much of divine things are intended by it. We cannot err indeed in our general idea concerning Solomon's temple. That it was a type of CHRIST who is the true temple, and in whom dwelt all the fulness of the GOD-head bodily; this is most certain. But whether the several departments in this temple; the porch before it, the narrowness of the lights to the windows, the chambers round about, the different proportions of those chambers, the winding stairs, and the several compartments of middle, lower, and upper rooms, had peculiar references expressive of a spiritual meaning; I rather conceive this is difficult to say. Taken altogether, in one point of view, as typical of JESUS, no doubt can possibly remain. And this is enough to call up our attention to the contemplation of it.

1 KINGS 6:11-13

(11) ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, (12) *Concerning* this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk

in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: (13) And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

This message from the LORD forms a most interesting parenthesis in the midst of the work. The LORD was pleased to let Solomon know that his eye was upon him in what he was engaged; and his arm should support and direct him through it. Busy as the king was from day to day, and in the LORD's work; still he must find time to attend to the LORD himself. Personal communion with JESUS must never be lessened or interrupted by the most busy life. In ministers especially, the more the public duties of the sanctuary call them forth, the more need have they to be frequent in private waiting upon JESUS. That man can have but little real regard, whatever outward zeal he may seem to show, for the souls of others, who hath no sense of the worth of his own. JESUS took from the silence of the night to make up the want of leisure in the day. Dear LORD! how precious is thy example. Matthew 14:23.

1 KINGS 6:14

(14) So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

Reader! it is a sweet thought this verse suggests, how happy as well as wise the soul who not only begins in JESUS, but ends in JESUS. Who makes him the Omega, as well as the Alpha, of his salvation. This is a wise master builder. Some shift the foundation of their faith, and as Paul says, begin in the spirit, but seek to be made perfect in the flesh. They begin, as it were, upon a free grace bottom, but soon stop short, and turn in to their own works. Reader! I would charge it upon you, and upon my own heart also; let CHRIST be all and in all; both the author and the finisher of faith. It is a precious thing to hold on and hold out to the end, and make

JESUS what the FATHER hath made him, the whole of the covenant. Galatians 3:1-3.

1 KINGS 6:15-36

(15) ¶ And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the cieling: *and* he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir. (16) And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* for the most holy *place*. (17) And the house, that *is*, the temple before it, was forty cubits *long*. (18) And the cedar of the house within *was* carved with knops and open flowers: all *was* cedar; there was no stone seen. (19) And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. (20) And the oracle in the forepart *was* twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and *so* covered the altar *which was of* cedar. (21) So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. (22) And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that *was* by the oracle he overlaid with gold. (23) And within the oracle he made two cherubims *of* olive tree, *each* ten cubits high. (24) And five cubits *was* the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits. (25) And the other cherub *was* ten cubits: both the cherubims *were* of one measure and one size. (26) The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was it* of the other cherub. (27) And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. (28) And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. (29) And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. (30) And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. (31) And for the entering of the oracle he made doors *of* olive tree: the lintel *and* side posts *were* a fifth part *of the wall*. (32) The two doors also

were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees. (33) So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. (34) And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. (35) And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work. (36) And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

I include all these verses in one and the same point of view, for shortness sake. No doubt, many things here mentioned are highly significant of gospel mercies. As Solomon is elsewhere said to have built himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon; the pillars whereof were silver, the bottom thereof gold, the covering of it purple, and the midst thereof paved with love; (See Song Of Solomon 3:9, 10.) so here we find in the temple the walls of the house were of the cedar of Lebanon, the floor and chains pure gold, and the oracle overlaid with gold. Perhaps these things were intended as the similitude of the glorious things concerning JESUS. His human nature is the true temple, which the LORD hath pitched, and not man; for the body was prepared him. And nothing could be more expressive of the incorruptible nature of the body of the LORD JESUS than the wood of the mountain of Lebanon, which was always understood as possessing a soundness not liable to rot. The gold on the floor and the house, and all the parts of it, as strikingly referred to the GOD-head of CHRIST. And this was the bottom of all, and gives efficacy and validity to all. For the grand object of the Redeemer's mission, his blood, his sacrifice, and the merits of his righteousness, would never have been sufficient to have satisfied divine justice, and expiated the sins of our nature, had not the GOD-head of JESUS conferred an infinite value upon the whole, in being the

blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of GOD. Hence Paul, in giving charge to the ministers of the church of Ephesus, dwells upon this feature as the distinguishing one to induce the utmost earnestness in their labours. Take heed (says he) unto yourselves, and to all the flock, to feed the church of GOD which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28.

1 KINGS 6:37-38

(37) In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif: (38) And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which *is* the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

It is astonishing to conceive that so great a work could have been accomplished in so short a time. We find that Solomon was employed thirteen years in building his own house, but the house of GOD only seven. Not that his own bore any kind of proportion, in point of magnificence, I apprehend, but that Solomon was less eager, less earnest, for its accomplishment. Reader! it is a blessed sign of grace when divine things occupy our thoughts, and call up our affections more than human. It is a blessed precept of JESUS, and connected with a blessed promise in the performance, which I venture to believe hath never failed in a single instance in the experience of the faithful; *Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness, and all these things* (lesser things which are needful) *shall be added unto you.* Matthew 6:33.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and while beholding the vast design of Solomon's temple and the greatness of the work in the accomplishment of the building, behold that a greater than Solomon is here. Was it not, dearest JESUS, upon the foundation of infinite love that thou with the everlasting

FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, didst lay the foundation of the temple, which is thy body, and reared and completed the whole work of our redemption? Not indeed in temples made with hands; not in the limitation of time in seven years, or seventy times seven; but from everlasting. Yes! LAMB of GOD, who wast intentionally slain from before the foundation of the world: thou hast built the temple of the LORD, and thou hast borne, and must for ever bear, all the glory. Everlasting praises to thy dear name for the unspeakable mercy.

While I behold the temple of Solomon, and figure to my view the piles of cedar and the wedges of pure gold! oh! lead my soul beyond these outward adornings, and these outward things, to the contemplation of all that inward glory which thou hast, by thy one glorious undertaking in redemption, wrought out and accomplished for all thy people. Thy person, thine offices, thy righteousness, thy gifts, thy graces; all precious JESUS which are thine, and of thee, and in thee; these are the true temple both of Jew and Gentile, both of bond and free; both of the church militant and the church triumphant. Here in thee may my soul find a temple eternally to dwell in, and do thou, dearest JESUS, from an union with thee by thy SPIRIT, make me a living temple in which JESUS may everlastingly dwell, until the building of this house shall be taken down, and my soul shall be called to *the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. And oh! thou blessed, holy, gracious JESUS, when thou shalt have brought me home with all the church to fill thy courts above, and to surround thy throne, there shall I behold the streets of the city of the new Jerusalem of pure gold, infinitely surpassing all the splendour of the golden floor in Solomon's temple. There cherubims will not be of ornament, but of reality. And there the workmen will forever have ceased from their labours, and have entered into their rest, as our GOD hath done from his.

But chiefly, and above all, JESUS himself will be there with GOD our FATHER, and the HOLY GHOST; and no temple will be needed there; for the LORD GOD Almighty, and the LAMB, are the temple of it. In the glorious expectation of this great day of GOD, do thou, blessed JESUS, give me daily to be beholding my sure foundation in thee, and my soul's complete resting upon thee, that as a lively stone in the spiritual building of thy church and people, *I may be growing up unto an holy temple in the LORD, for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT.*

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

To the building of the temple, succeeds in history, the building of Solomon's house, which this chapter records: likewise, the house of Lebanon, and of the house of Pharaoh's daughter. Here is the relation also of the works of Hiram, and of the vessels Solomon made for the house of the LORD.

1 KINGS 7:1

(1) ¶ But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

I conceive that this length of time mentioned, which Solomon took to build his own house, more than the LORD'S house, is not spoken of by way of reproof, but rather commendation. The King's business requires dispatch. The work of GOD of the day, must be done in the day. The night cometh when no man can work. Reader!, how stands GOD'S work with you? I mean your finished work in JESUS! Perhaps you have built your own house. But is the LORD'S temple finished? Know you not, that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST? 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

1 KINGS 7:2-5

(2) He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof *was* an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. (3) And *it was* covered with cedar above upon the beams, that *lay* on forty five pillars, fifteen *in* a row. (4) And *there were* windows *in* three rows, and light *was* against light *in* three ranks. (5) And all the doors and posts *were* square, with the windows: and light *was* against light *in* three ranks.

Whether this house of the forest of Lebanon, be what JESUS commends in the church's beauty, of the Tower of Lebanon, which looked towards Damascus I do not determine. See Song Of Solomon 7:4. But certainly it is a sweet idea which it furnisheth concerning the ministry of GOD's servants. Looking towards Damascus, may very fairly, and without violence to the sacred text; be supposed to imply the vigilance of ministers, always on the lookout, as watchmen upon the walls of Zion, upon the ways and roads by which the enemies of our GOD and his CHRIST, come with their attacks from Damascus. In this sense, the church herself is said to be terrible, *as an army with banners*. Song Of Solomon 6:4.

1 KINGS 7:6-12

(6) And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch *was* before them: and the *other* pillars and the thick beam *were* before them. (7) Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, *even* the porch of judgment: and *it was* covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other. (8) And his house where he dwelt *had* another court within the porch, *which* was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken *to wife*, like unto this porch. (9) All these *were of* costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and *so* on the outside toward the great court. (10) And the foundation *was of* costly stones, even great stones, stones of

ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. (11) And above *were* costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars. (12) And the great court round about *was* with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house.

I do not hesitate to say, that notwithstanding the particularity with which these things are marked, I cannot more than in generals, discover their resemblance to divine things. The porch of Solomon's temple was certainly held in high esteem, for in the second temple, built after the return of the church from Babylon, the fathers thought proper to preserve the same name, and this was rendered remarkable by the healing of the cripple. See Acts 3:2, 11. And here it was we find the apostles particularly assembled. Acts 5:12, 13. The apostle Paul, after describing some interesting things concerning the shadowy ordinances of the law, when speaking of the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat, adds a similar thought, and saith, *of which we cannot now speak particularly*. See Hebrews 9:5.

1 KINGS 7:13-14

(13) ¶ And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. (14) He *was* a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

This Hiram, we must remember, though called here by the same name, is not Hiram the king of Tyre, but an artist. In the Chronicles he is called Hiram. See 2 Chronicles 4:11. It appears that he was by the mother's side an Israelite, though his father a man of Tyre. How this mingling of the holy seed came to pass, is not noticed. High honour is conferred on him, in being employed in the service of building the temple.

1 KINGS 7:15-22

(15) For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. (16) And he made two chapiters *of* molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter *was* five cubits, and the height of the other chapter *was* five cubits: (17) *And* nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter. (18) And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that *were* upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter. (19) And the chapiters that *were* upon the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the porch, four cubits. (20) And the chapiters upon the two pillars *had pomegranates* also above, over against the belly which *was* by the network: and the pomegranates *were* two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter. (21) And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. (22) And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

We may readily conceive, from the names of *Jachin* and *Boaz*, given to those pillars, that their being set up, had a spiritual object in view. They were placed at the entrance of the temple, near the door. And as the name of *Jachin* signifies a *thing fixed*; and *Boaz* implies *strength*; do not both serve to convey this idea, that when believers in JESUS approach the door of the temple, their souls should be fixed on Him they come to meet and worship, and offer all their poor services in his strength. And there is this more in the view; it is the LORD which will fix and strengthen his people, like *Jachin* and *Boaz*, not to be moved.

1 KINGS 7:23-26

(23) And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. (24) And under the brim of it round about *there were* knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops *were*

cast in two rows, when it was cast. (25) It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward. (26) And it *was* an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

There can be no question, but that this brazen sea was figurative of the gospel fountain for sin and for uncleanness. But oh! how vastly short and inferior was all this, even in similitude, and indeed all the shadowy ordinances of the law, to our substance in the gospel. These things stood only (as Paul speaks) in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. *Hebrews 9:10. Oh! holy Saviour! how doth the riches of thy grace, and the efficacy of thy blood appear, when compared to these shadows! Sweetly hast thou said and sweetly hast thou proved it, that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance. Proverbs 8:21.*

1 KINGS 7:27-51

(27) And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it. (28) And the work of the bases *was* on this *manner*: they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges: (29) And on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work. (30) And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every addition. (31) And the mouth of it within the chapter and above *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round *after* the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it *were* gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round. (32) And under the borders *were* four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels *were joined* to the base: and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit. (33) And the work of the wheels *was* like

the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten. (34) And *there were* four undersettors to the four corners of one base: *and* the undersettors *were* of the very base itself. (35) And in the top of the base *was there* a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof *were* of the same. (36) For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about. (37) After this *manner* he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, *and* one size. (38) Then made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: *and* every laver was four cubits: *and* upon every one of the ten bases one laver. (39) And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south. (40) And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD: (41) The two pillars, and the *two* bowls of the chapiters that *were* on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars; (42) And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, *even* two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* upon the pillars; (43) And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases; (44) And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea; (45) And the pots, and the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, *were of* bright brass. (46) In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan. (47) And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out. (48) ¶ And Solomon made all the vessels that *pertained* unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread *was*, (49) And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right *side*, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs *of* gold, (50) And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers *of* pure gold; and the hinges *of* gold, *both* for the doors of the inner house, the most holy *place*, *and* for the doors of the house, *to wit*, of the temple.

(51) So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; *even* the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

I include the whole within one reading; for one general observation will answer our view of the subject. The whole, no doubt, was typical of the gospel church, of which, in a figurative language, the prophet speaks, that *for brass the LORD would bring, gold; and for iron silver; and for wood brass; and for stones iron*. Isaiah 60:17. And this is literally the case, when the ceremonial ordinances of the Old Testament dispensation give way to the spiritual service of the New. When the shadow is done away in the substance, and the LORD JESUS, preached only in type and figure, became realized in the souls of his people. Think, Reader, of our privileges in JESUS! What were the molten sea, the lavers, or the pots, compared to the fountain of JESUS' blood; the laver of regeneration, by the HOLY GHOST; or the Covenant of salvation, given us by GOD our FATHER? What services in the temple worship like those venerable institutions of our JESUS; Baptism, and the Supper of the LORD? Here, blessed Redeemer, may my soul constantly seek thy face, and wait on thee continually, calling for thy gracious presence in those sweet words of thy church: *Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits*. Song Of Solomon 4:16.

REFLECTIONS

MAY we not gather instruction from the view of Solomon's house, and the house of the forest of Lebanon, and from the riches with which he adorned the temple! Surely the house and the forest, may serve to teach us how JESUS and his people dwell together. Here JESUS certainly visits them. Here

he secures and defends them! And as the windows are both ornamental and useful; is it not through these that that holy, that fair one, looketh forth at the windows, and showeth himself through the lattice? And as JESUS looketh in upon our house through the windows of ordinances, and through the lattices of his kind means of grace; do we not look in also, through the same, to him? Reader! do you not know what that means, when the soul is going out after him in desires, when in reading his precious word, singing his praises, attending at the service of ordinances, we send forth the soft, but earnest breathing of the soul, that we love him, long to see him, be with him, and like children at the windows of a prince, look in to catch if it be but a glimpse of the king in his beauty! Oh! dearest LORD! what a gracious Sovereign art thou! Thy wonderful condescension, is not barely manifested in sending out thy servants at supper time to call us, from the mere looking in at the windows, to come in and to sit down with thee; but thou comest even to the door of our hearts, and there invitest thyself in, to sup with us, and we with thee. Come then, LORD JESUS, refresh my soul continually with thyself; thy love is better than wine.

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

This is a most beautiful chapter. It contains the dedication of the temple. Solomon's blessing of it: his prayer: his sacrifice of peace offering: his dismissal of the people with joyful hearts.

1 KINGS 8:1

(1) ¶ Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of

Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which *is* Zion.

The temple being finished, preparations are made for the solemn service of bringing up the ark of GOD into it, as its fixed place of residence. Sweetly are we taught here, that it is the presence of the LORD in the assemblies of his people, which gives glory to all services. If JESUS be not with us, the ordinance *is* nothing worth. If the ark be not in the temple, all Solomon's labour is lost. His gold is nothing. Reader! let this very opening of the chapter, teach you the infinite importance of exercising an holy jealousy over your heart in all seasons of worship. Where is JESUS? should be the great inquiry, like those Greeks which came up to the temple, whenever we draw nigh the sanctuary or the closet, for prayer or meditation. John 12:20, 21.

1 KINGS 8:2

(2) And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month.

What a delightful convention of Israel this must have been. Oh! how glorious a sight is it, to see the house of GOD completely filled!

1 KINGS 8:3-8

(3) And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. (4) And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. (5) And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. (6) And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy *place*, *even* under the wings of the cherubims.

(7) For the cherubims spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. (8) And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy *place* before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

The ceremony of fetching the ark, bringing it up, and placing it in the holy place appointed for it, was not done without abundance of sacrifices. JESUS, our Ark, did not enter into the holy place, until by the sacrifice of himself *he had obtained eternal redemption for us*.

1 KINGS 8:9

(9) *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

It is worthy our closest observation, how particular the HOLY GHOST is, in more places than one, in pointing out what was in the ark. Hebrews 9:3-5. Revelation 11:19. No doubt, as the ark was one of the most expressive types of JESUS, all that was put into the ark had a reference to the fulness contained in JESUS. He is the Covenant itself, and all the blessings included in it. Ephesians 1:22, 23.

1 KINGS 8:10-11

(10) And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, (11) So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

It is beautiful to observe, that when the priest came out of the house, and not before, the glory of the divine presence appeared. JESUS is all, and in all, in salvation. Nothing mingled with his righteousness, by way of acceptance. The dark cloud intimated, that while the glory of the LORD was manifested in

a cloudy dispensation, it showed the present unripe state of things. But, by the glory of the LORD filling the house, was no less shown, that the dispensation to come would be brighter: but under both law and gospel, the LORD JESUS is the whole sum and substance of salvation. It is He which filleth all things.

1 KINGS 8:12-13

(12) ¶ Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. (13) I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

Solomon, having made all suitable arrangement, and convened all Israel to the dedication of the temple, now opens the solemn service. He first shows them the certainty, and reality of the divine presence being with them, and in confirmation, quotes a well known saying of the LORD, in the book of Leviticus: see Leviticus 16:2. How delightfully is this (and more strikingly) shown in the gospel church. *No man hath seen GOD at any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him.* John 1:18. Reader! when our GOD and Saviour is pleased at any time to appear unto us in a cloudy dispensation, still remember he is our GOD, our JESUS, notwithstanding. The disciples feared, as they entered into the cloud; but the manifestation afterwards was full of glory. Luke 9:33, 34.

1 KINGS 8:14

(14) And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;)

Was not Solomon, in this instance of blessing the congregation, a type of JESUS? Who can behold the king thus engaged, and forget what is said of our King, who in the moment that he was about to ascend, lifted up his hands and blessed the people. Precious Mediator! Thou didst turn

towards thy servants, when thou hadst first committed their keeping to thy FATHER. See Luke 24:50, 51, with John 17:11.

1 KINGS 8:15-21

(15) And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled *it*, saying, (16) Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel. (17) And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. (18) And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. (19) Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. (20) And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. (21) And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein *is* the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Here is, what may be called, Solomon's sermon, in the dedication of the temple. He calls up the attention of the people to the subject self. He first opens his mouth in blessing GOD, as a faithful promise making, and a promise-performing GOD. He next adverts to the LORD'S gracious design in the building; showing, that what Solomon had done was in perfect conformity to the LORD'S design, and to the LORD'S appointment. Hence, the king evidently meant to imply the certainty that the LORD'S hand was with him in the building, and would assuredly bless it. He then expresses his joy, in having been blest of the LORD, to finish what he had begun. And in the close of these verses, Solomon not only refers all the praise to GOD, but all the right of the building. The house is the LORD'S. Reader! it is truly lovely in believers, both to see

the LORD'S hand in all their ways, and as thankfully to acknowledge it. *Of thine own, LORD, we give thee.*

1 KINGS 8:22

(22) ¶ And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:

What a lovely view doth Solomon afford in this attitude! To see, not only priests, but monarchs thus engaged! Never, in any day of Solomon's life, did he appear so truly great! But, Reader! from Solomon, turn to JESUS. Behold JESUS in the memorable night before his sufferings and death, when just about to enter upon that unparalleled service of redemption; *he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and cried out, FATHER! the hour is come.* John 17:1.

1 KINGS 8:23-30

(23) And he said, LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:

(24) Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day. (25) Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. (26) And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

(27) But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? (28) Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: (29) That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. (30) And

hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

In this former part of Solomon's prayer, I would desire the Reader to remark with me, the posture in which it was offered. It is said, he stood before the altar. JESUS is our Altar, as well as our High Priest and Sacrifice. Therefore, certainly, it was in view of the glorious Mediator, that Solomon prayed. But it also appears, from what is said in the further prosecution of this prayer, at the 54th verse, that Solomon when he had finished his prayer, *arose from off his knees*. I am inclined, therefore, to suppose, that when the king began the prayer, he *stood* as is here said, before the altar: but, perhaps, as his mind became more inflamed with the spirit of devotion, he fell on his knees as he prosecuted the prayer, and so remained until that he had finished it. But what a vast comprehension of subject matter doth the prayer contain, even in the few verses only already noticed. How doth Solomon enlarge upon the being, and attributes, and perfections of GOD! How highly doth he speak of him as a GOD in covenant; here taking into view, the whole Three Persons of JEHOVAH! How solemnly doth he draw the contrast between the greatness and holiness of the LORD GOD, whom the heaven, and the heaven of heavens are not worthy to contain, and the littleness of the earth, and all that is in it! And having thus enlarged on the glories of JEHOVAH, how sweetly, and fervently, doth he plead with GOD for grace, and the performance of all his covenant promises to David and his seed forever. Precious JESUS! was Solomon struck with astonishment, in the contemplation that the heaven, and the heaven of heavens had not splendor enough to contain thee; and what a thought is that, to overpower the mind, that thou shouldest tabernacle in our flesh? Reader! I should suppose it impossible for you to overlook the sweet strain of gospel

mercies, which runs through the whole of this prayer of Solomon, in the part of it which we have already read; Not to see JESUS in the whole of it, as the sum and substance of the covenant, is to pass over the grand and distinguishing feature, which marks every form of prayer and praise, in which it is expressed. But this is not all. I hope the Reader is so far under the teaching of the HOLY GHOST, that he instantly beholds JESUS himself, as the one glorious object the pious Israelite is supposed to have in view, in all his prayers and supplications which he made with his eye towards the temple. And I hope that the Reader is no less alive to behold the fullest testimony to that precious doctrine, that *GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world to himself*, when he hears Solomon say, that *thine eyes may be open toward thy house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there*. Never, surely, was there more clear gospel, or the LORD JESUS more sweetly looked to with an eye of faith, and the FATHER's perfect approbation of redemption by him, than in what these verses express in the prayer of Solomon.

1 KINGS 8:31-53

(31) If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: (32) Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. (33) When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: (34) Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. (35) When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: (36) Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and

of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance. (37) If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, *or* if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness *there be*; (38) What prayer and supplication soever be *made* by any man, *or* by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: (39) Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, *even* thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) (40) That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. (41) Moreover concerning a stranger, that *is* not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (42) (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; (43) Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as *do* thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name. (44) If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and *toward* the house that I have built for thy name: (45) Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. (46) If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; (47) *Yet* if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; (48) And *so* return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: (49) Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, (50) And

forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: (51) For they *be* thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: (52) That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. (53) For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, *to be* thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.

After the petitions for *general* blessings, as they relate to redemption by the LORD JESUS, to the church at large; Solomon, in this part of his prayer, enters into the cases of a great variety of *particular* mercies, all to the same amount: resting wholly upon the covenant promises of GOD in CHRIST, of which this temple was a type. Solomon mentions the case of an appeal by oath, between one man and another, to determine right judgment; the parties looking towards the temple, by way of adjusting what was lawful: he mentions the case of *public* distresses, in national wars, or famine, or pestilence; or the shutting up of the heaven, and no rain given to bring forth the fruits of the earth: he mentions the case of *private* calamity, such as the distress of a man's soul, from a view of the plague of his own heart: he limits not these blessings to Israel, but, no doubt, led by the HOLY GHOST to take in the Gentile church also, he includes the case of the stranger, brought to the LORD by the outward report of GOD'S great name, and by the inward drawings of GOD'S great love he adverts also to the case of war, and points out, that if the LORD'S heritage, by reason of sin, should be given up for a time to the scourge of their enemies: on all these instances he dwells particularly. And in short, that Solomon might omit nothing in this earnest cry to GOD, for being heard by the

LORD, by virtue of this temple building, beholding it as pointing to JESUS, and JESUS only; the king adds, *in all that the people should call upon him for, his dwelling prayer that God would hear, from heaven his dwelling place, and both answer and forgive*: And, as if still with an eye to JESUS the promised Seed, in whom, and with whom all blessings could alone be looked for; Solomon closes his prayer with that unanswerable argument for success, that the LORD GOD had separated his people from all nations: had made them his own; pledged himself to be their GOD, from the day he had brought them out of the land of Egypt, by Moses. Here, Reader! pause to remark with me, the ground work and foundation of success to all Solomon's petition. Not for desert; not for prayer; not for repentance; no, not for faith, in looking to JESUS, which this temple represented: for all these are the sweet *fruits* and *effects* of God's love; not the *cause* of that love. But it is wholly resulting from covenant grace, and covenant favor, founded and given to Israel, in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. This is the tenor of the Covenant; *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. Even so*, FATHER, is our LORD'S own gracious conclusion upon it, and throws to the ground all impious and presumptuous reasonings of men: *Even so, FATHER; for so it seemed good in thy sight*. Exodus 33:19. Matthew 11:26.

1 KINGS 8:54

(54) ¶ And it was *so*, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

How sweet the conclusion to so sweet a prayer. Every part of which was evidently from the awakening and directing grace of the HOLY GHOST; all offered with an eye to JESUS; and

seeking every blessing from GOD the FATHER in his name, and for his sake.

1 KINGS 8:55-61

(55) And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, (56) Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. (57) The LORD our God *be* with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: (58) That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. (59) And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, *be* nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: (60) That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God, *and that there is* none else. (61) Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

Having spoken to the LORD *for* the people; he again now speaks *to* the people from the LORD; that is, still with an eye to JESUS, he watches in prayer, well assured that the blessings implored will come: GOD hath never yet out-promised himself, but of all his good promises, not a word hath failed. Thus, in the experience of the past, faith finds the greatest encouragement for all that is to come. And while we look to GOD's faithfulness, may we look to him for grace also for our own! This is to have our heart perfect with the LORD.

1 KINGS 8:62-64

(62) ¶ And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. (63) And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. (64) The same day did the king hallow the middle of the

court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

Prayer, you observe, was followed with sacrifice. As if to show, that whether in one service or another; all is done with an eye to CHRIST, the Great Sacrifice, who *by his one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Hebrews 10:14. We read that the LORD answered by fire from heaven. See 2 Chronicles 7:1.

1 KINGS 8:65

(65) And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, *even* fourteen days.

Observe, how sanctified blessings produced joy. Not the frothy, frivolous, unholy feasts of carnal men, but the solemn thanksgiving seasons of the gracious. Oh! how different from the feasts of multitudes who call themselves Christians, who make the festivals of their church like festivals of the heathens, and literally convert holy seasons into revels of sin.

1 KINGS 8:66

(66) On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

See, Reader! after all the great events of this chapter, the separation and departure. Oh! that your heart, and my heart, from this view of the subject, may be led upward, to contemplate that joyful meeting, and to long for it, where we shall go out no more. And in the mean time, as the Israelites

are said to have blessed the king, and rejoiced for all the goodness the LORD had shown to David, and to Israel; oh! let us, at the dose of all ordinances, and all means of grace, bless GOD our FATHER for all the goodness, grace, and mercy he hath shown us in David's LORD and King, our adored Redeemer; in having established his throne, an everlasting throne, and a kingdom which shall be forever. And oh! for that mercy to eternal life, which the apostle looked for, and which the people of GOD shall assuredly enjoy; that, *receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, we may have grace to serve GOD acceptably with reverence and godly fear.* Hebrews 12:28.

REFLECTIONS

SOLOMON! I would honour thy memory with great honour, for the view which the blessed SPIRIT hath been pleased to give me of thy ministry, as set forth in the dedication of the temple. Surely, never didst thou appear so truly great, as in this instance, where thou art represented so truly humble. Thou hast shown herein, a dignity well meriting imitation: and manifested, that the most supreme station any mortal can be advanced to in life, is to minister as the servant of JEHOVAH.

But while I behold Solomon thus honoured of his LORD, I would pass over all thoughts of the servant, to contemplate the Master. Thou, dearest JESUS! art formed to eclipse all creature excellence. Even Solomon's temple was but a faded glory, had it not been for the representation it made of thee, and of thy redemption. Oh! precious structure, the temple of thy body! Oh! sacred building, not made with hands. United to the GOD-head, the foundation is eternally sure, and all the blessings contained in it, endless blessings to our souls. Here, dearest LORD! in thee I see security from all evils whensoever, or wheresoever, any poor sinner who feels and knows the

plague of his own heart, directs the eye of faith to thee for salvation. Though he trespass against his neighbor; though he trespass against his own soul; though he transgress against the LORD his GOD; and though he be carried away captive by his spiritual enemies, far from the land of his fathers; yet, if from thence, his whole heart and his whole soul be directed to JESUS, JESUS will hear from heaven, the habitation of his holiness and his glory; for he hath said; *Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am GOD, and there is none else, beside me there is no Saviour!* Help me then, dearest JESUS, to have mine eyes and my whole heart eternally fixed on thee. It is thy gracious office to know all my circumstances, to direct all my ways, to observe, to pity, to regard, and still to love me in every state and every case. Oh! LORD GOD! let not only my eyes, but the eyes of all poor sinners, whose redemption thou hast purchased with thy blood, be gazing upon thee with holy longing, fervent waiting and continual desire: and even under the most discouraging circumstances, even if, like Jonah, I am tempted at any time to exclaim, *I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes;* yet, like him, to have faith still to say, *I will look again towards thine holy temple.* Oh! let that precious experience in thy blessed word be mine; in which it is said; *they looked unto him and were lightened; and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*

CHAPTER 9

CONTENTS

This chapter relates the gracious circumstance of the LORD's second appearance to Solomon. An interview takes place

between Solomon and Hiram. Solomon's yearly sacrifices are also mentioned in the close of this chapter.

1 KINGS 9:1-9

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, (2) That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. (3) And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. (4) And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* will keep my statutes and my judgments: (5) Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. (6) *But* if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: (7) Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: (8) And at this house, *which* is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? (9) And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

What can be equally precious to a believing soul, as the intercourse which is kept up at a mercy seat? It was not enough, in the LORD'S esteem, that he condescended to answer Solomon and his people, on the great day of the dedication, by consuming the sacrifices they offered with fire, which was always considered, in the old church, the highest

token of divine approbation; (see 2 Chronicles 7:1-3) but God graciously afforded a private visit, in the visions of the night, to Solomon. Oh! precious JESUS! thou art the same to thy people yesterday, today, and forever; grant the same sweet tokens of thy love in the silence of the night, when no eye seeth, as in the public ordinances of the day, when the eyes of all the people, as the eyes of one man, are towards the LORD! Thou dost give songs in the night. Job 35:10. This was the second visit of the LORD. And what was the purport of the visit, explained on gospel principles? Is it not, that the eyes and the heart of JEHOVAH, are forever looking with complacency and delight upon him whom this temple of Solomon represented? Oh! delightful thought! in JESUS his church is perpetually and everlastingly beheld and accepted. How sweetly the prophet describes it; *Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH: he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory.* Zechariah 6:12, 13. Reader! observe very particularly, the sin of covenant breaking, to which the LORD refers; going and serving other gods. This is strikingly contrasted with the conduct of David, who, amidst all his transgressions, never fell into idolatry. The LORD foreseeing the events which were to follow in the after life of Solomon, and the Babylonish captivity, for the apostacy of Israel, here most clearly pointed out the sure consequence. But let the Reader also observe, how gracious the provision for Israel's recovery, by the sovereignty of his own grace, when chastisements should have taken place, and by virtue of his covenant engagements. This is more fully and circumstantially set forth in the 89th Psalm; to which I beg the Reader to turn: Psalm 89:28-35.

1 KINGS 9:10-11

(10) ¶ And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house, (11) (*Now* Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished

Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

The amity between these princes may serve, to teach us the happy state of Solomon's reign. Such, Reader, would be the blessed effects in the reign of JESUS, if all his followers felt his sweet constraining grace. Isaiah 65:25.

1 KINGS 9:12-14

(12) And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. (13) And he said, What cities *are* these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. (14) And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

We are not to suppose that this displeasure of Hiram, carried with it the smallest anger; so far from it, that he called Solomon brother, while expressing his disapprobation of those cities. But the sense is, that Hiram's pursuits in trade and navigation, differed so widely from agriculture and husbandry, that those cities were not at all suited to the genius of the men of Tyre. Hiram gave them again to Solomon; for so we read, 2 Chronicles 8:2.

1 KINGS 9:15-24

(15) ¶ And this *is* the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. (16) *For* Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it *for* a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. (17) And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethhoron the nether, (18) And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, (19) And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. (20) *And* all the people *that were* left of

the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which *were* not of the children of Israel, (21) Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. (22) But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they *were* men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. (23) These *were* the chief of the officers that *were* over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work. (24) But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which *Solomon* had built for her: then did he build Millo.

I detain not the Reader with any further observation upon these verses, than just to remark how much they teach us the importance of building for eternity. What a great account here is, of many cities, many inhabitants, much employment; and what is the sum total of all, but vanity and vexation of spirit. So Solomon himself draws the conclusion; and so must every wise man. Ecclesiastes 2:4—11. Blessed JESUS! give me grace to build on thee, the foundation stone in Zion, *an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. LORD! grant that it may be found this is mine, like thy servant, 2 Corinthians 5:1.

1 KINGS 9:25

(25) And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that *was* before the LORD. So he finished the house.

I charge the Reader not to overlook this verse. You see that all Solomon's buildings, all his government concerns, and all his own domestic engagements, diverted not his mind from the observance of the divine law concerning sacrifices. Surely these were with an eye to JESUS. Deuteronomy 16:16.

1 KINGS 9:26-28

(26) And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which *is* beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. (27) And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. (28) And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought *it* to king Solomon.

It is supposed, and not without good reason, that the Ophir here spoken of is the same with what is now called Sri Lanka, in the East Indies. But, Reader, what is the golden wedge of Ophir, compared to the preciousness of JESUS. Isaiah 13:12. It is worthy the Reader's remark, that Judea, the Holy land, and what is called the glory of all lands, had no gold. And as the land, so the people of GOD. What are they, and who are they that are the excellent of the earth? James tells us, *they are the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom.* James 2:5. Reader! see to it, that you are of this description. Remember who GOD'S poor are: not simply poor in outward circumstances but poor in spirit. JESUS' followers. This is to do as Solomon, after all his attainments, recommended. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, (says he), that is JESUS; for JESUS is the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD; *and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.* Proverbs 3:14.

REFLECTIONS

CHIEFLY, and above everything related in this chapter, let my soul ponder over the wondrous condescension of GOD to Solomon, in what is here said of this *second* manifestation to him of his grace and love. And while I mark the tender mercy so shown, let me not forget that *such honour have all his saints.* Yes! blessed JESUS, though not equally splendid, yet equally certain, equally gracious, are thy visits. For thou hast left it upon record as if to silence all doubts and unbelief, that

he that loveth thee shall be loved of thy FATHER, and thou hast added in that assurance, I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Oh! wondrous love! oh! matchless grace! LORD how is it that thou dost manifest thyself unto thy people, and not unto the World!

We are not astonished, O ye carnal men, that you should gaze with such amazement as ye sometimes do at the followers of our JESUS! that we are (as David said) a wonder, to many is not so strange, since we are a wonder to ourselves. That we are born from above; that GOD condescends to acknowledge us for his children by adoption and by grace; that JESUS is not ashamed to call us his brethren; and the HOLY GHOST makes our bodies his temple; when we think of these things, and consider our high calling; when we look within our hearts, and behold such coldness, deadness, and the want of affection to him, who hath so loved us as to beget us by his glorious redemption and his FATHER'S grace to such an inheritance, oh! how passing in wonder must be the love of GOD which passeth knowledge!

My brother in JESUS! you I address, who profess to live in the hope and faith of these precious, these distinguished privileges! think, I charge you, (and while I charge you I desire to feel the full force of it upon my own heart) think, *what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!* Was the LORD thus gracious to Solomon? Did he appear to him twice? Did he solemnly charge him to flee from idolatry, and a breach of his holy covenant? Oh! then, let us consider the infinite importance of living to him who hath purchased our redemption with his blood; whose we are, and to whom we belong. If under the Old Testament dispensation of types and shadows, GOD was so jealous of his honour; can you suppose that now the whole is confirmed and sealed to us, as it is in the New Testament

revelation of his blood, that he is less jealous of his honour, or that he will give his glory to graven images? Oh! my brother! if the LORD hath manifested himself to our hearts, and the grace of GOD hath appeared unto us, let us never forget what that grace teacheth, and what high claims are upon us; namely, that *denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

An interesting relation is given, in the opening of this chapter, of a visit made to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, drawn by the report of his great wisdom. Solomon's riches are again noticed in this chapter.

1 KINGS 10:1

(1) ¶ And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

As Sheba lay to the south of Canaan, and, probably was on the sea coast, where the ships of Hiram, or Solomon, might have touched for provisions or water; there is no great difficulty in conceiving how the report of Solomon's greatness and wisdom gained knowledge in the court of Sheba. Our dear LORD hath conferred the highest honour on this woman, in noticing her on this account in the gospel. Luke 11:31. But I beg the Reader to remark with me, that the expression in this verse of the occasion of this Queen of the South's visit

seems to have been not so much to discover the natural wisdom of Solomon, as his gracious knowledge in divine things concerning the name of the LORD. Is it not more than probable that her visit was on a religious account, and that she was anxious for her soul?

1 KINGS 10:2

(2) And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

The state in which she came, if we consider the subject in a religious point of view, becomes no unapt representation of the soul's first approach to JESUS, before that GOD the HOLY GHOST hath brought the sinner into a real acquaintance with his own heart. Oh! how apt are we to come to JESUS in our best things. And what a beautiful representation of an awakened sinner's mind is here given, in that all the heart is laid open before JESUS. That this woman was led by the LORD to this enquiry is, I think, plain from what our blessed LORD saith concerning her, that she shall rise up in judgment, and condemn the men of that generation in which JESUS came; for she came so far to hear of the LORD from the mouth of Solomon, when they neglected to ask of JESUS when he was present with them. Luke 11:31.

1 KINGS 10:3

(3) And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

How fully and satisfactorily doth the LORD JESUS tell the poor sinner all that is in his heart, when he manifesteth himself to him otherwise than he doeth to the world. Everyone that hath been with JESUS can bear testimony to this, and like the

Samaritan woman, can certify this is CHRIST, by such an unfolding of the heart. See John 4:29.

1 KINGS 10:4-9

(4) And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, (5) And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. (6) And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. (7) Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. (8) Happy *are* thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom. (9) Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

Reader! if such were the surprising effects wrought on the mind of this woman in the view of Solomon, and his wisdom and grandeur; think if it be possible what surprise will overpower the soul when we arrive at the court of our JESUS above; when we come into a perfect knowledge of the wisdom of our JESUS; the house which he hath formed for himself, which is his body, his temple, his people: when we shall behold him as the LAMB in the midst of the throne feeding his church, and leading them to fountains of living waters; the attendance of his angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; their apparel in the garments of his salvation, and his robes: of righteousness: oh! how will our whole spirits be overpowered amidst the Hallelujahs of heaven, when every knee shall bow before him, and every tongue confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER! How delightful are her expressions of holy joy and rapture! and what a beautiful order is observed in them.

Solomon's men are happy; his servants yet more so, who are continually near his person. But above all, blessed is the Author and Giver of all. It is sweet and refreshing at all times to bless GOD for his mercies; and to delight in the instruments by which those mercies come to us. But oh! with what tenfold sweetness do gracious souls bless the GOD of their mercies. And in this view, how infinitely precious is it to behold the hand of GOD our FATHER in all our blessings in CHRIST JESUS. Reader! never, never omit, I charge you, to eye the FATHER in the Son; and to look at JESUS as the Sent, and Sealed, and the precious Gift of JEHOVAH!

1 KINGS 10:10-13

(10) And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. (11) And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. (12) And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. (13) And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

And is there not a mutual exchange made between the Saviour and the sinner? Though you and I, Reader, have nothing to offer, nothing but what we have first received from our GOD, and of his own, whatever we present, we can only give him; yet our JESUS graciously accepts at our hands and hearts our poor offerings, being made acceptable to our GOD and FATHER in him the beloved. And while we present to him our choicest offerings, think what a profusion of blessings he bestows on us. So that we barter our emptiness for his fulness; our weakness for his strength; our darkness for his

light; our pollution for his holiness. And *he is made of God to us wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that all our glorying may be in the LORD.* 1 Chronicles 1:30.

1 KINGS 10:14-29

(14) ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, (15) Beside *that he had* of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. (16) And king Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target. (17) And *he made* three hundred shields *of* beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. (18) Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. (19) The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round behind: and *there were* stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. (20) And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. (21) And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold; none *were of* silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. (22) For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. (23) So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. (24) And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. (25) And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. (26) And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. (27) And the king made silver *to be* in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he *to be* as the sycamore trees that *are* in the vale, for abundance. (28) And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. (29) And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse

for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring *them* out by their means.

I include the whole of these verses within one view, because they all refer to one and the same subject; namely, the grandeur and riches of Solomon. The HOLY GHOST perhaps by this account intends to instruct the church in the incompetency of riches and earthly splendour, to give happiness. Solomon himself was a most lovely evidence of it. For it was at the moment when he was thus exalted in splendour, that he wrote those solemn sentences in his book of Ecclesiastes, to show that the whole is but vanity and vexation of spirit. Reader! do mark it down as a maxim, which the universal voice of mankind in all ages hath decided with the clearest evidence; that the whole world in possession cannot satisfy a soul, void of an interest in GOD'S covenant love. Unless JESUS be in our earthly comforts, be they what they may, there is no real enjoyment in them. It is JESUS which must put a sweetness, and give a real relish to all. If I have him this heightens all creature comforts, and makes up the want of all creature enjoyments. Look therefore, Reader, for the LORD JESUS whenever worldly prosperity is at the highest, or when adversity surrounds you. When I am most happy, is it because JESUS is near? When matters frown, doth JESUS smile? Oh! it is precious to make him the foundation, as GOD the FATHER hath made him in all our blessings. *Men shall be blessed in him.* Psalm 72:17. It is precious to make him the substance of all our happiness, as he himself saith; *I cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.* Proverbs 8:21. It is precious to make him the one enjoyment of all our comforts; because his presence and blessing is absolutely necessary to make all blessings blessings indeed. Unless *the LORD lift up the light of his countenance, who, or what creature, can show us any good?* Psalm 4:6. And it is precious to have JESUS for our portion,

that when the streams of all earthy comforts fail; when neither the fig-tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine, we may then *rejoice in the LORD, and joy in the GOD of our salvation.* Hebrews 3:17, 18.

REFLECTIONS

READER! added to the view we have taken in this chapter of Solomon's wisdom and greatness, as a shadow of him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; are we not led by what we have read to behold in this Queen of the south, thus coming to Solomon, a picture of the whole Gentile church coming to CHRIST? Was it not a promise of our covenant GOD concerning him, that *Gentiles should come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising?* And in allusion to the same blessed and glorious event, did not the LORD JEHOVAH promise that *the multitude of camels should cover him; the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; they from Sheba should come, they should bring gold and incense, and show forth the praises of the LORD.* And how is the mind overpowered in the contemplation, when we behold these great predictions accomplished in the first fruits of the wise men from the East coming to CHRIST in the moment of his Incarnation; and now in the dispensation of the fullness of times the LORD gathering together in one all things in CHRIST?

But Reader! while our souls are deeply impressed with the contemplation of the stupendous blessings and mercies in JESUS; shall we not advance one step higher in the wonderful subject, and look at JESUS himself thus gloriously shadowed forth in the several striking features of Solomon king of Israel? As far as the excellencies of Solomon go, they were surely descriptive of Solomon's LORD GOD, and Saviour. And here (though not in the infirmities of the man) as we read the relation (but in the wisdom of the king) we are constrained to

cry out in the representation, and say, *a greater than Solomon is here*. Yes! blessed JESUS; as the LORD sent by the hand of Nathan to David, and at the birth of Solomon called him *Jedidiah*, beloved of the LORD; so by a voice from heaven at thy gracious entrance upon the work the FATHER gave thee to do, thou wert declared to be the true Jedidiah; the beloved Son of GOD, in whom the soul of thy FATHER was well pleased. And thy wisdom hath not only called forth the whole earth to admire and adore; but all the powers of heaven join to acknowledge thee to be the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD, for salvation to everyone that believeth. Thy kingdom was but faintly represented by the peaceful reign of Solomon; for of the increase of thy government and peace, there is, there can be no end. Well may every true believer, like the Queen of Sheba, and yet in higher notes of gratitude, love and praise, exult and say; Happy are thy redeemed ones; happy are thy servants who minister in thy great name, and stand continually before thee! And blessed be the LORD JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, who hath constituted our JESUS the Solomon of his people, and hath given him an everlasting kingdom, and a dominion that ruleth over all. LORD! hasten thy kingdom, and thy glory; take to thyself thy great name, and rule and reign forever.

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

A melancholy account is here given of Solomon's fall. His many wives and concubines, in his old age, lead him into idolatry. The LORD'S displeasure. Solomon's chastisement, and death. An account of his successor in the kingdom.

1 KINGS 11:1

(1) ¶ But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites;

What an awful account doth this chapter begin with concerning Solomon. Observe in what the evil opens; the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Not only many bad women, but many strange women; that is haters of the GOD of Israel, concerning which the LORD had strictly commanded Israel never to intermarry. Deuteronomy 7:2-4.,

1 KINGS 11:2-8

(2) Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: *for* surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. (3) And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. (4) For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father. (5) For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. (6) And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father. (7) Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. (8) And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

It is worth remarking how subtle the enemy of souls acted upon Solomon. Had Solomon begun without the instrumentality of women exciting his lusts, to depart from the LORD, the strength of his temptation would have been lessened. But by this inlet to the corruptions of nature he gradually paved the way for idolatry. So Balaam advised Moab concerning Israel. The daughters of Moab fascinated the poor

Israelites by their charms, and when once they had been brought to prostitute their bodies the transition was soon made to the prostitution of their souls. Compare Numbers 25:1, 2. Revelation 2:14. But Reader! pause over the alarming account as it refers to Solomon. Well may every one that reads it cry out, LORD! what is man! Is this Solomon, the beloved, the Jedidiah of the LORD? Is this he who built the temple; and now over against it sets up an high place for the dunghill idol of Moab! Oh! precious, precious JESUS! I would say for my Self and Reader, Keep us, dearest LORD, keep us by thine almighty power through faith unto salvation!

1 KINGS 11:9-13

(9) ¶ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, (10) And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. (11) Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. (12) Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: *but* I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. (13) Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; *but* will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

Reader! let me beg you to make all suitable improvement of what is here contained within those verses. And may the HOLY GHOST bless the reading of it to both our souls. Observe! how aggravated the sin of Solomon was, because it was in direct opposition to the former gracious manifestations the LORD had condescended to make him. And observe also how the LORD keeps account how often he visits his people. Sweet thought to the believer! JESUS marks down in his book of remembrance all his gracious love visits, though our forgetful hearts pass them by. And observe, moreover, from this

passage, how very piercing the sins of believers are, above all others, to the heart of JESUS. Reader! think of this as it concerns yourself. Hath the LORD JESUS manifested himself otherwise to you than he doth to the world? hath GOD the FATHER given you JESUS? Hath the HOLY SPIRIT set his love upon you, and opened to your view the glories of JESUS? And must not every act of unkindness after such tokens of special and distinguishing favor, be very, very cutting to the heart of so gracious a GOD; Hath not such a GOD in covenant a right to demand more from such souls than from all the unenlightened nations of the earth? May not every disobedient child of GOD hear that expostulating voice speaking to him after every transgression; "I awakened thee from darkness, delivered thee from Satan, gave thee redemption, and JESUS with all his mercies; for which of all these blessings is it, that thou thus rebellest against me?" But Reader! in the midst of our view of Solomon's crying sins, and the LORD'S judgment, do observe how the name of David is introduced, as the cause for which he shall find mercy. And thus in the covenant of redemption for the sake of David's LORD, the gracious terms are the same. Sweet thought! both from our relation to JESUS, our Spiritual Head and Surety; and from the ransom JEHOVAH hath received in him; believers though chastened, are saved. See that sweet scripture; Psalm 89:30-37.

1 KINGS 11:14-22

(14) ¶ And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he *was* of the king's seed in Edom. (15) For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; (16) (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:) (17) That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad *being* yet a little child. (18) And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them

out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. (19) And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. (20) And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. (21) And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. (22) Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise.

GOD had said that he would chastise David's son with the rod of men, if he swerved from his duty; and the LORD can never long want an instrument for the accomplishment of the purposes of his will, whenever this is the case. See 2 Samuel 7:14, 15.

1 KINGS 11:23-25

(23) And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: (24) And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them *of Zobah*: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. (25) And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad *did*: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

Observe, that though both Hadad, as one of the seed of Edom, and Rezon, the Syrian, were alike natural foes to Israel; yet it is the LORD'S hand that is here pointed out as raising them up. Yes! the devil and all his host, though sworn foes against GOD, and his CHRIST, can wage no war while the LORD restrains. Oh! it is proper in all our visitations humbly to enquire of the LORD concerning the affliction that, as Job saith, *we may say unto GOD, show me wherefore thou con-*

tendest with me, That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Job 11:2; and 34:32.

1 KINGS 11:26

(26) ¶ And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up *his* hand against the king.

Here is first introduced the person of Jeroboam, of whom, in after ages, such an awful character is given. When the LORD chastiseth his children, as in the case of Solomon, what detestable characters, as instruments, he is pleased sometimes to make use of.

1 KINGS 11:27-28

(27) And this *was* the cause that he lifted up *his* hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, *and* repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. (28) And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

Those particulars concerning Jeroboam are here spoken of, as the cause, according to the mind of the man, for which he became Solomon's enemy; but we know that the thing was of the LORD.

1 KINGS 11:29-39

(29) And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two *were* alone in the field: (30) And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and rent it *in* twelve pieces: (31) And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (32) (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) (33)

Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that which is* right in mine eyes, and *to keep* my statutes and my judgments, as *did* David his father. (34) Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: (35) But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes. (36) And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. (37) And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. (38) And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. (39) And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

The sweetest and most precious part, and to be regarded with peculiar emphasis on our minds in the reading of those verses is, the cause assigned why only ten tribes, and not the whole of Israel, should be in the hands of Jeroboam; namely, because in the seed and lineage of David CHRIST was to come. Hence David's stock must not be lost; that lamp must not be put out, but preserved for GOD's anointed. Sweet consideration! and Reader! do not overlook at the same time the precious interest all the spiritual seed of our JESUS have in it. In JESUS all his people, all his seed, are equally preserved. So JEHOVAH hath said, and so his people ought most firmly to keep in remembrance upon all occasions. See that blessed scripture to this effect; Isaiah 59:21. Reader! mark it down. The blessing is still in it. "Destroy it not," one saith; for JESUS's sake, JEHOVAH's servant, it shall be preserved. Isaiah 65:8.

1 KINGS 11:40

(40) Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

No doubt as the prophet Ahijah had signified the advance of Jeroboam, the king became acquainted with it, alas! how could Solomon be led away to conceive his weak attempts should be able to defeat the LORD'S designs.

1 KINGS 11:41-43

(41) ¶ And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? (42) And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years. (43) And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Here ends the history of Solomon, and which is the history of all men. *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Not so thy death, thou glorious Solomon of thy people; for by thy death thou hast overcome death, and hast opened views beyond the grave, of the everlasting mansions of the blessed. Thy soul was not left in hell, neither did thy flesh see corruption. Hail! thou glorious, all-conquering LORD! Psalm 16:10.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the fall of Solomon let us learn what human nature is in its highest attainments. Who that beheld Solomon in his dedication of the temple; who that heard his sweet and gracious prayer on that occasion; who that contemplated the LORD GOD in his condescending visits, and revelations, and promises, to him; would ever have conceived the thought that this wonder of wisdom, this devout, highly favoured servant

of the LORD, should have apostatized to such an extreme length, as not only to drown his body in filthy lusts, but sink his soul into idolatry. Oh! sad instance of human depravity! *Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon!*

But Reader! when you and I have duly pondered over Solomon's history, let us look at our own. *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!* LORD! give we to see, and feelingly to acknowledge, that by nature all men are the same. All equally prone to evil; and all, but for the blessed influences of preventing and restraining grace, subject to the same sin and condemnation. Oh! dearest JESUS! let a deep sense and conviction of this truth lead my whole heart to thee! LORD! *keep thy servant from presumptuous sins, that I may be innocent from the great transgression.*

But principally, and above all, blessed LORD! let the view this chapter holds forth of Solomon direct my soul to the clearest and most settled conviction, that as all have sinned, and come short of thy glory; so nothing but thy precious blood and righteousness can be the sinners refuge, and the sinners salvation. Yes! blessed JESUS! do thou fix and engrave in my heart this most unquestionable truth. It is thou, and thou only, whose finished work in redemption hath made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. May it be my happy portion to be found in thee, having redemption in thy blood, the forgiveness of all sins, according to the riches of that grace, whereby we are made accepted in the beloved!

CHAPTER 12

CONTENTS

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, succeeds to the kingdom. He begins his reign in refusing the old men's counsel, and follows that of young men. Ten tribes of Israel revolt. The chapter concludes with an account of Jeroboam's idolatry.

1 KINGS 12:1

(1) ¶ And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

It should seem that Solomon though he had so many wives, had but this one son. There was no dispute therefore about his succession to the kingdom.

1 KINGS 12:2-4

(2) And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard *of it*, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) (3) That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, (4) Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

After what hath been related concerning Jeroboam in the former chapter, there can be but little doubt that he came and addressed the king in the spirit of rebellion. The complaint which he gave concerning Solomon, was true, if the people meant it respecting his idolatry. But otherwise never was so prosperous a reign, nor one less oppressive.

1 KINGS 12:5-11

(5) And he said unto them, Depart yet *for* three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. (6) And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? (7) And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy

servants for ever. (8) But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, *and* which stood before him: (9) And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? (10) And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins. (11) And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Though Solomon himself was the wisest of men, yet it should seem he had the most foolish of sons. By his folly in listening to the counsel of rash young men, he actually seemed to allow that his father had been a tyrant, but that he would exceed him in oppression.

1 KINGS 12:12-15

(12) So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. (13) And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; (14) And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. (15) Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

This last verse throws a light upon this whole transaction; the cause was from the LORD! that is, the LORD left him to his own devices; and these were only evil. And Reader! is not this the very case of those who reject the counsel of GOD against their own souls; and in turning a deaf ear to the blessed truths of the gospel, justly bring down the judgment of condemnation

upon themselves. That is a most awful scripture which tells us, that the very same blessed gospel, which to some is the savour of life unto life, becomes to others the savour of death unto death. The same fire which melts wax will harden clay. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.

1 KINGS 12:16-20

(16) ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. (17) But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. (18) Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. (19) So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. (20) And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

What I particularly desire the Reader to remark with me in these verses is the honour with which Judah is mentioned, as adhering to the house of David. And while the Reader makes this remark, let him connect with it the recollection that *our LORD sprang out of Judah*. Hebrews 7:14.

1 KINGS 12:21-24

(21) And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. (22) But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, (23) Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, (24) Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to

his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

Let the Reader remark also here how the LORD overruled the minds of his people, and kept them from slaughter by the ministry of his servant Shemaiah.

1 KINGS 12:25-33

(25) ¶ Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. (26) And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: (27) If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. (28) Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. (29) And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. (30) And this thing became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. (31) And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. (32) And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. (33) So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

The awful character of Jeroboam, which the HOLY GHOST in after ages marked with such peculiar spots of infamy, can hardly be contemplated but with horror. His daring impiety in setting up those golden calves, seems to have been intended, not only to lead the minds of the then generation from the

LORD; but also by way of approbation of the idolatry of their fathers in Horeb, which Moses recorded, and the psalmist so pathetically mourned over. Exodus 32:4. Psalm 106:19, 20. His contempt of the priesthood also was manifested in taking for priests of the lowest of the people. His contempt of the temple itself in setting up a place of his own. And his contempt of the solemn seasons which the LORD had enjoined in altering the very day of the month. And add to all, his invading the sacred office in himself, consecrating his creatures, in the priestly office. So that among all the characters we meet with in history of daring, unblushing impiety, Jeroboam stands foremost. And especially, if we recollect how all the appointments in the service of the temple were considered as shadows of a better dispensation, and had an eye to CHRIST, here his conduct riseth to the highest possible pitch of blasphemy as well as profaneness! But if in those remote ages the LORD regarded with such anger the despisers who treated the symbols of his sanctuary with disregard; what an awful state are those gospel despisers in, who set up the idols of their own imaginations in their hearts, and refuse both him that spake from earth, and now speaketh from heaven. From all hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good LORD deliver us!

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a sad page for the most painful reflection doth the HOLY GHOST give us in the view of Rehoboam's folly and Jeroboam's sin! what a train of evil is induced by the fall! what is every man by nature but blind, ignorant, wayward, and perverse! Reader! have you ever remarked how sinners, like Jeroboam, work all uncleanness with greediness? Like soldiers in Satan's army; they enlist under his banner; they wear his uniform; they volunteer in his service; they clothe

themselves with his armour, and wield the weapons of sin, enmity and malice. And unless recovered out of the snare of the devil, if living and dying in his service, their end must be destruction, and their wages everlasting death.

Precious, precious JESUS! what everlasting thanks hath my soul to offer to thee, thou great and glorious captain of my salvation, in that thou hast, at no less expense than thine own blood and life, brought me out of his slavish ranks, and made me free indeed in thy service. Oh! LORD! give me grace to reverence thy temple, thine ordinances, thine house of prayer, thy sabbaths; and never more, like Jeroboam, set up in my poor heart any idol of abomination. Let every imagination be cast down, and every high thing that would exalt itself against the knowledge of GOD, be taken away, and let every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST. Be thou, dearest LORD, everything to me that is precious; and do thou reign and rule in my heart, *the hope of glory!*

CHAPTER 13

CONTENTS

A prophet cometh to Beth-el. Jeroboam, in opposing him, hath his hand withered; which at the prayer of the man of GOD is restored, The prophet himself for his disobedience is afterwards slain by a lion. Jeroboam still continueth hardened.

1 KINGS 13:1

(1) ¶ And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

It should seem that Jeroboam the king was in the very act of prophanation and idolatry when this man of GOD came in the LORD'S name with this solemn commission.

1 KINGS 13:2-3

(2) And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. (3) And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out.

Let us pause to admire the faithfulness of the LORD'S servant in thus executing his warrant in the king's presence. Observe how he executed his commission. He cried no doubt with a loud voice. And observe to whom he spoke; not to man, but to the altar. When men refuse to hear we find the LORD calling upon the inanimate parts of creation to attend. That is a beautiful instance in point, *Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth*. Isaiah 1:2. The prophecy he delivered was not to take place for more than 350 years, and yet the prophet mentions the very name of the prince by whom it should be accomplished. But perhaps what galled Jeroboam most was, that the house of David was so honorably spoken of. Yes! what galls Satan and his race most, is JESUS'S name and cross. Here, Reader, therefore, let you and I, like Paul, glory. Galatians 6:14.

1 KINGS 13:4-5

(4) And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. (5) The altar also was rent, and

the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

Observe, to what a daring height of impiety was the king arrived. Alas! how doth sin harden the heart. Think Reader! what effect must the sinew-struck hand of the king, and the pouring out of the ashes, with the altar's rending, have had upon the minds of the spectators. But we do not hear of any one act of conversion wrought by it. No! until the LORD turns the heart, the most awful signs lose their power. When our dear LORD on the cross bowed his sacred head, and with a loud voice, that all in heaven and hell might hear, said; *It is finished*; though not the altar only was smitten, but the vail of the temple divided, and rocks rent, and the graves opened, yet we read of no heart being rent, nor a soul, except the dying thief, converted. Oh! to what state of obduracy hath sin hardened the soul!

1 KINGS 13:6

(6) And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was* before.

Observe, Jeroboam prays the prophet to intercede for the recovery of his hand, but not his heart. Like another Pharaoh, he desired the punishment to be taken off, but not a word of the LORD'S making off the cause. And yet what could testify the merciful tenderness of the LORD to pardon sin more than thus instantly restoring Jeroboam's hand at the instance of his servant. Precious JESUS! was not this interceding of the prophet a type of the ever-prevailing efficacy of thy intercession at the right hand of power, for the poor withered souls of thy people?

1 KINGS 13:7-10

(7) And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. (8) And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: (9) For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. (10) So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

No doubt, this part of the LORD'S command to the prophet was to testify his abhorrence of idols. And it became a test of his fidelity.

1 KINGS 13:11

(11) ¶ Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

The character of this man is not far to fetch. Had he been a true prophet of the LORD how could he live in Beth-el, and be witness to Jeroboam's continued iniquity, without reproving him? Hence, therefore, in the very opening of his history it is easy to discover that he was of the false prophets. And we read not only of Jezebel's prophets, but of the prophets of Samaria, who caused the LORD'S people to err. See 1 Kings 18:19. Jeremiah 23:13, 14. With this view of the real character of this old prophet, as he is called, we shall be now better able to enter into a proper apprehension of the circumstances of the whole history.

1 KINGS 13:12-32

(12) And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. (13) And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, (14) And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said

unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I *am*. (15) Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. (16) And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: (17) For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. (18) He said unto him, I *am* a prophet also as thou *art*; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto him. (19) So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. (20) And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back: (21) And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, (22) But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. (23) ¶ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back. (24) And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. (25) And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt. (26) And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, It *is* the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. (27) And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*. (28) And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. (29) And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. (30) And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother! (31) And it

came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones: (32) For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

I do not detain the Reader through the whole of this relation, because general observations upon the whole should seem to be most suited to our present conception of things, and the gracious design of the HOLY GHOST in causing such events to be recorded. There can be no question, I think, from what is here said of this old prophet but that he was not a prophet of the LORD. And yet some difficulty will still occur to reconcile this conviction with what is said of him in the 20th verse; that *the word of the LORD came to him*. But in answer to this difficulty I would observe; is it not possible for the LORD to make use even of his enemies sometimes, as suits the blessed purposes of his holy will, to reprove or punish, to nourish or strengthen his servants. Hence the Magicians in Egypt were permitted, to a certain extent, to imitate God's faithful servant Moses. And now in the present hour may not unawakened men, who unsent of God minister in holy things, sometimes be made instrumental for good to the LORD's people? See Exodus 8:7. Matthew 7:22. With respect to the fall and punishment of the man of God that came out of Judah to Beth-el, the subject holds forth a lesson of great usefulness in the church, and no doubt it was one intention of the HOLY GHOST, for which it was recorded. It should be remembered that the LORD had made suitable provision in the church, to guard his servants against false teachers by a positive law; in which the LORD expressly caused it to be stated that it was possible for even the sign which a false prophet might give to come to pass; but yet this was to be considered as no authority for departing from a positive law

of GOD. See Deuteronomy 13:1-4. I beg the Reader to remark with me the nature of the punishment; that his carcass should not come to the sepulchre of his fathers. But there is nothing in this more than a *temporal* judgment. And an apostle under the gospel state had it in commission, to tell the church of believers, that when we are judged we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:32. After all, how sweet is it to wait upon the LORD, and to watch his grace and providence in all events. Surely *the very wrath of man shall praise him*. GOD exercises an holy jealousy over his people; and the sins of his servants shall be chastised, though he shows favor to their persons for JESUS'S sake. The psalmist makes a beautiful observation on this subject. Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, called upon the LORD and he answered them. But though he answered them as the LORD GOD in covenant, and was a GOD that forgave them, it is said that *he took vengeance of their inventions*. Psalm 99:6-8. Reader! do you not eye JESUS in all this? The covenant of redemption holds for ever good; and the blood and righteousness of JESUS never lose their efficacy. Oh! to grace in JESUS what mercies are owing!

1 KINGS 13:33-34

(33) After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. (34) And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

What an awful example doth this man afford of an unreclaimed heart! oh, Reader! learn from it the vast and infinite importance of the SPIRIT'S work upon the soul, without whose gracious influence every sinner's heart would be more and more hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin.

REFLECTIONS

My soul! pause over the perusal of this chapter, and contemplate in what a variety of views thou mayest gather spiritual improvement from it under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching.

In the awful character of Jeroboam, learn the truth of that solemn scripture; *though favor be showed to the wicked; yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.*

In the character of the false prophet, grown old in sin as well as years, what an alarming representation is held forth to what a desperately wicked state men may advance, who though ministering in holy things, never feel their power, and live and die unconscious of their influence.

In the character of the man of GOD acting with such faithfulness in daring the impiety of Jeroboam, and yet falling under the slender temptation of the deceiver, may we learn what a mixture of faith and unbelief makes up the characters of the LORD'S followers.

Where then, blessed JESUS, under all these views, where shall we direct our thoughts for perfection and for comfort but to thee? Thou art indeed holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Here then, dearest LORD, in thee and thy complete righteousness, may my soul direct her sole regard for acceptance and for favor. All altars, sacrifices, worship, doctrine, government, ordinances, and services, which look not to thee are alike false. But in thee all true sanctuary service finds acceptance. As a nail fastened in a sure place by the master of assemblies; on thee, thou precious Lamb of GOD, which takest

away the sin of thy people, would I hang my life, my hope, my confidence, my all!

CHAPTER 14

CONTENTS

In this chapter begins the history of Israel and Judah in the division of the two kingdoms; so that attention should be paid in the reading to distinguish to which the subject belongs. The chapter opens with the relation of the affairs of Israel under king Jeroboam, and concludes his reign. The latter end of the chapter relates to the affairs of the kingdom of Judah under Rehoboam, and the close of his reign.

1 KINGS 14:1-3

(1) ¶ At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. (2) And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there *is* Ahijah the prophet, which told me that *I should be* king over this people. (3) And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

Was not this sickness of Jeroboam's son, and perhaps his heir, enough to have arrested the heart of the father to seek the LORD? Is it possible to behold Jeroboam as convinced that the LORD's prophet was a sure prophet; and yet to attempt the deceiving him, as is here said. Alas! to what a desperate state is the mind of the sinner capable of being reduced, void of grace!

1 KINGS 14:4-5

(4) And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age. (5) And the LORD said unto

Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he *is* sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself *to be* another *woman*.

What an interesting view is here given us of the LORD's servant, and yet infinitely more of the graciousness of the LORD himself. Reader! how blessed are those who when the bodily eyes fail, have a sight by faith, and enjoy the visions of the almighty! and oh! how doubly blessed when JESUS sweetly visits them and manifests himself to them; when (as the church beautifully expresseth it) *he standeth behind our wall, looketh forth at the windows and showeth himself through the lattice*. Song Of Solomon 2:9.

1 KINGS 14:6-16

(6) And it was *so*, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself *to be* another? for I *am* sent to thee *with heavy tidings*. (7) ¶ Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, (8) And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and *yet* thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that only which was* right in mine eyes; (9) But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: (10) Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, *and* him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. (11) Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. (12) Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: *and* when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. (13) And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found

some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. (14) Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. (15) For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger. (16) And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

What a delightful portrait is here drawn of a faithful minister in the character of Ahijah! though commissioned with heavy tidings, yet he keeps nothing back. Oh! for all the ministers of JESUS to have grace to imitate such an illustrious example. How gracious is the LORD, even in the midst of judgments, represented! Reader! remark, though Israel had so shamefully revolted, and set up idols, yet the LORD still calls himself the LORD GOD of Israel. Let the Reader consult another beautiful evidence of the same kind; Malachi 2:14-16. What an awful message is sent to Jeroboam! and what an awful character he was! He had exceeded in impiety all that were before him. Even Saul had never set up idols! and what a dreadful end is pronounced concerning him! Let us, Reader, stop, however, in the midst of this alarming account of the wicked, to remark what is said concerning his son. Some good thing was found in him. And what could this be but grace? And was not this grace distinguishing grace, when found in the child of so graceless a father? See Reader! how the LORD in all ages of his church hath been carrying on his blessed designs in reference to him in whom all the families of the earth are blessed! The prediction of Jeroboam's ruin in the advance of another king whom the LORD would raise up over Israel, was to take place so speedily, that it might be said to be even now; so near was it at hand. And to show how true the LORD is concerning both his threatenings and promises, it may not be amiss here to remark that this prophecy of a king to be raised

to Israel against Jeroboam and his house took place in the person of *Baasha* soon after the elevation of Nadab to the throne. And indeed the whole race of Jeroboam was extinct in little more than 20 years. So short, so very short, are the triumphs of the ungodly!

1 KINGS 14:17-18

(17) And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: *and* when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died; (18) And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

The distress must have been aggravated in that she saw not the child alive. I cannot pass over the mention here made of *Tirzah*, short as it is, without remarking that as this was the city, on account of its loveliness, which one of the ancient kings of Canaan made choice of for his residence, (see Joshua 12:24), and now inhabited by Jeroboam, and until the time of *Zimri* by his successors; so JESUS, in commending the loveliness of his spouse, compares her beauty to that of *Tirzah*; being made so by his righteousness, and by the graces of his SPIRIT. See Song Of Solomon 6:4.

1 KINGS 14:19-20

(19) And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. (20) And the days which Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

The wars of Jeroboam, how splendid soever they might seem, are not so much worth remarking as the relation of his death. If the Reader will consult the corresponding history, of this impious prince, as recorded in the Chronicles, he will there discover that his death was induced by an immediate

visitation from heaven; for it is said that the LORD struck him.
2 Chronicles 13:20.

1 KINGS 14:21

(21) ¶ And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess.

The sacred historian here turns to the subject of Judah in the government of Rehoboam. The account of this son of Solomon is short and nothing interesting. No act of obedience towards God. No act of kindness toward men. He is said merely to have lived, and to have reigned so long, and sprung from the race of the Ammonites. See Reader! what sad effects spring out of ungracious alliances!

1 KINGS 14:22-24

(22) And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. (23) For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree. (24) And there were also sodomites in the land: *and* they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

What a melancholy account is here given of Judah! she is become more degenerate than in any period before. And this at a time when the temple was in all its splendor! Reader! do not fail to remark with me how little the sweet simplicity and godly sincerity of true spiritual worshippers, hath to do with pompous buildings, and the formalities of devotion. Precious Jesus! make me an inner court worshipper!

1 KINGS 14:25-31

(25) And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: (26) And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. (27) And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed *them* unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house. (28) And it was *so*, when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber. (29) Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (30) And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days. (31) And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

Calamities both public and private, are near at hand, when men desert the LORD! dreadful is the state of that man, or that nation, which hath GOD for their enemy. So everlastingly true is that aphorism of Solomon: *Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.* Proverbs 14:34.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE we have reason to shudder in beholding the sad consequences of our fallen nature, in an example so truly dreadful as that of Jeroboam; and while I would for myself and Reader pray for grace to lay low in the dust of self-abasement in a conscious sense, that if we differ from him it is grace alone that hath done it; I would pause over the beautiful account that is given of the man of GOD, and pray that the LORD in mercy to the present hour would grant his church many, many *Ahijahs*. Blessed JESUS! I would say, send forth faithful ministers who will neither fear the frowns, nor court the smiles, of any man; but speak the whole truth as it is in JESUS, and keep back nothing that may be profitable to

the alarming of sinners, the comforting of saints, and to the building up thy people in their most holy faith.

But while I would thus look up and beg a blessing for a faithful ministry, shall I contemplate the servant and forget the master? Shall not the view of Ahijah lead my soul to thee, thou great Prophet and Priest of thy people? Yes! blessed JESUS! if I forget thee let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. Thou art indeed a faithful high priest! and thy faithfulness and truth in making manifest thine and thy father's laws, which our whole race have broken, have been the blessed means, through the influence of thy HOLY SPIRIT upon our hearts, of turning thy people from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to thee the living GOD. Yes! dearest JESUS! thou art a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the LORD pitched, and not man! and thou hast not only proclaimed to us our faults, and by the influence of thy blessed SPIRIT convinced us of sin, but thou hast in infinite mercy constrained us to thy love, and turned our hearts back again. LORD JESUS! break down all our idols! take away all our false refuges of lies! do thou sit, blessed JESUS, as a refiner and purifier of silver; and purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. For then the promise is sweet, and will surely be fulfilled; *then shall the offering of Judah be pleasant to the LORD as in the days of old, and as in former years.* Hasten, blessed JESUS! the accomplishment of this glorious end; purge away all my dross, and take away all my sin.

CHAPTER 15

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The history of the two kingdoms is again carried on through this chapter. The former part of it relates the history of two kings of Judah; Abijam and Asa. And the latter part of the chapter records the history of two kings of Israel; Nadab and Baasha.

1 KINGS 15:1-3

(1) ¶ Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. (2) Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. (3) And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

I stop the Reader in the very opening of Abijam's history, to call his attention to one or two things concerning this man, which merit notice. In the account given of him here he is called *Abijam*; and he is said to have walked in all the sins of his father. By which I am led to think, that this refers principally to the latter end of his reign. For if the Reader will consult the parallel history concerning him in the Chronicles, he will there discover him as dignified with a more honourable name. He is there called Abijah meaning, *My Father is JEHOVAH*; probably in allusion to the victory the LORD gave him over Jeroboam; upon which occasion he ascribed the glory to the LORD. I desire the Reader to consult that part of scripture, and read through his address before the battle. See 2 Chronicles 13:1 to the end.

1 KINGS 15:4-5

(4) Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: (5) Because David did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

How sweet is it to observe how the HOLY GHOST doth now and then design to lead the church in the midst of an apparent history of kings and contests, to a glimpse of JESUS, on whose account, and for whom the lamp in David's family is kept burning. Oh! HOLY SPIRIT! grant me grace to love thee, and to adore thine exceeding riches of grace, in thus glorifying JESUS in the darkest ages, and the most distant periods, before the coming of the LORD!

1 KINGS 15:6-8

(6) And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. (7) Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. (8) And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

What is the whole history of man, and every man, from the fallen stock of a fallen race, when the sum total of his life is added together, more than what is here said! Oh! how precious, in the midst of such dying views, to look to JESUS, and contemplate him who is always the same, and whose years shall have no end. Psalm 102:27.

1 KINGS 15:9-24

(9) ¶ And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. (10) And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. (11) And Asa did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father. (12) And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. (13) And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt *it* by the brook Kidron. (14) But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days. (15) And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD,

silver, and gold, and vessels. (16) And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. (17) And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. (18) Then Asa took all the silver and the gold *that were* left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, (19) *There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.* (20) So Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. (21) And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *thereof*, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah. (22) Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none *was* exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah. (23) The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. (24) And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

In order to have a clear account of the good reign of Asa, we must compare what is here related of him with what is said, 2 Chronicles 14 and 2 following chapters. His reign was long and prosperous. And it is expressly said of him, that *his heart was perfect with the LORD all his days*. What is said of him therefore in the book of the Chronicles, in his old age, in the reproof Hanani the seer gave him, must be considered as referring to the infirmities of declining years. The sad tokens of a fallen nature, which amidst the many evidences of a renewed state, furnish no less testimonies that we are

renewed but in part. We carry about still a body of sin and death, as Paul complained, which drags down the soul.—Here again, precious JESUS, how increasingly precious is thy perfect righteousness to the believer's view.

1 KINGS 15:25-34

(25) ¶ And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. (26) And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. (27) And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. (28) Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. (29) And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: (30) Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. (31) Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (32) And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. (33) In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. (34) And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

What a short reign was this of Jeroboam's son! what a doleful end to all Jeroboam's greatness! and how sure are the declarations of the LORD to overtake the guilty! the whole race of this impious prince is destroyed. And that prediction the prophet Abijah gave literally fulfilled. See 1 Kings 14:10.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE I read of the miseries of war, and behold in the succession of kings, like what is here represented in this chapter, one rising up to the destruction of another; how sweet and gracious a relief is it to my mind, to contemplate him of whom the prophet, ages before he came, thus delightfully predicted the features of his character; *Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind; and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of great rock in a weary land.*

All this, and infinitely more, blessed JESUS, art thou to thy people! Thou art a king indeed under whose government thy happy subjects live in peace and everlasting security. And thou art a covert and hiding place; a sanctuary and refuge; a fountain indeed of waters, even living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

In thee, and under thy gracious reign, whatever enemies arise, thou lightest all our battles, and makest thy people more than conquerors through thy grace enabling them. And oh! when I consider how secretly and securely in the union with thy person, and by virtue of thy finished redemption, thy subjects are eternally safe from all the possibilities of danger; how doth my soul rejoice, and my heart is made glad. Yes! blessed JESUS! I can and do speak to my soul in the sweet words of thy prophet, and enter into an heart-felt participation with the church of old of all its blissful properties; *Sing O daughter of Zion; shout O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments; he hath cast out thine enemy. The king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more.*

CHAPTER 16

CONTENTS

This chapter relates nothing of the history of Judah but wholly concerns the kingdom of Israel. Jehu comes with an alarming message from the LORD to Baasha. His ruin and death; the reign of his son Elah; the conspiracy of Zimri; the division of Israel after the death of Zimri between Tibni and Omri; the beginning also of the reign of Ahab; and more especially the rebuilding of Jericho which fulfilled the curse of Joshua.

1 KINGS 16:1-4

(1) ¶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, (2) Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; (3) Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. (4) Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.

It is remarkable that while Hanani the father was sent on a commission to the king of Judah, (See 2 Chronicles 16:7.) Jehu his son is here sent on a like errand of reproof to the king of Israel. But Reader! it becomes a more interesting remark of the gracious dealings of GOD with sinners when sending his faithful servants to such characters at all. Are not all the LORD'S expostulations to this amount? "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, said the LORD GOD!" Ezekiel 18:32. And I beg the Reader to take notice of this further mark which those verses record of GOD'S love, notwithstanding all the sin, and idolatry, and rebellion, of Israel, the LORD still calls them his people. I made thee prince

over my people Israel. Oh the wonderful condescension and unparalleled grace of GOD!

1 KINGS 16:5-7

(5) Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (6) So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. (7) And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

Such is the sure end of impiety. Strange that as Baasha had seen in the instance of Jeroboam and his house, the dreadful effects of idolatry, that his heart should have been so lifted up as to forget the LORD'S mercy towards him. But alas! what is man, what is every man, unless renewed by grace, but the servant of sin, and the slave of Satan!

1 KINGS 16:8-10

(8) In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. (9) And his servant Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of *his* house in Tirzah. (10) And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

This is the famous, or rather infamous Zimri, concerning whom it almost became a proverb in Israel. *Had Zimri peace who slew his master?* 2 Kings 9:31. What a solemn lesson is here read to drunkards in the sudden death of Elah! Reader! what an awful thought is it to meditate on the multitudes that are going out of life daily from the effect of this one detestable vice; some by sudden, and some by lingering consequences! and what can charity itself plead in apology for

such conduct, which sinks men into the brute, and in itself, if the word of GOD had not so decidedly spoken upon the subject, proves a total disqualification for all the pure joys of heaven. Oh! that Paul's words were put up in golden letters in all the haunts of drunkenness in the kingdom. *Know ye not that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD.* 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

1 KINGS 16:11-14

(11) And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends. (12) Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, (13) For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. (14) Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

What a quick transition of government from father to son, and from the master to the servant, do these few chapters, and even these few verses bring before us. And is it for such short lived honors, and interrupted, as they are, with continued disquietude, men in all ages lose their immortal souls! oh! blessed JESUS! how striking are thy sacred words; *What is a man profited to gain the whole world, if it were possible, and in the end thus lose his soul?* Mark 8:36,37.

1 KINGS 16:15-22

(15) ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were* encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. (16) And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. (17) And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and

they besieged Tirzah. (18) And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, (19) For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. (20) Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (21) Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. (22) But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

Is it not somewhat extraordinary, amidst all these revolutions and contentions for the empire, that no one Israelite had firmness of mind enough to propose to return to the house of David! Reader! Is it not still more extraordinary that amidst all the tyranny of sin and Satan, no one sinner hath grace enough to say "I will return to the LORD?" Alas! until the LORD hedges up our way with thorns that we shall not find our lovers; and until the LORD leads us into the wilderness, in order that after straits and difficulties he may speak comfortably to us, no son of Adam will ever think of returning to the LORD. Grace must first enter into the heart before that any cry of returning to the LORD will arise in the soul; and when in great mercy the LORD doth this, the next thing we hear the sinner say is, *I will arise and go unto my FATHER!* We have a beautiful illustration of this precious, truth in the case of the church, as described by the prophet; See Hosea 2 throughout.

1 KINGS 16:23-28

(23) In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. (24) And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

(25) But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him. (26) For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. (27) Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (28) So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

As a king of Judah, the good king, had a long and prosperous reign, while all these troubles were going on in Israel. And Omri though successful over Tibni, had but a short triumph, and full of evil. Nay, the HOLY GHOST records of him that *he did worse than all that were before him*: Is it possible that his iniquity could exceed Jeroboam's? Alas! alas! if the Reader be desirous to know the price for which Samaria was bought, it may not be amiss to observe that a talent of silver was in value of our money somewhat about £350. This hill, as it is here called, is the memorable city of Samaria, where our LORD JESUS directed his steps for the conversion of a poor adulteress there. John 4:5.

1 KINGS 16:29-33

(29) ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. (30) And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him. (31) And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. (32) And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. (33) And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

Still going on in the progression of wickedness the son of Omri exceeds his father. Open idolatry, barefaced and impudent, and open alliances with idolatrous princes, formed the leading features in the character of Ahab. Sad proofs of which are recorded in the succeeding chapters.

1 KINGS 16:34

(34) In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest *son* Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

It was about 500 years before this period when, at the destruction of Jericho, Joshua pronounced a curse on the man that should rise up to build it again. But in the impious reign of Ahab, one of his subjects, more daring in impiety than the rest, calling to mind perhaps this prophecy, as if to make a jest both of GOD and his servant, undertook it; and the event exactly corresponded to the prediction. See Joshua 6:26. *Who hath hardened himself against GOD, and hath prospered?* Job 9:4.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the reading of this chapter, and carefully mark the dreadful end of all the workers of iniquity! and what doth the history of all ungodly men furnish, whatever rank or situation they move in, but sad examples of the same. Under what striking images and similitudes doth the word of GOD represent them. They are said to be captives and slaves, the servants of sin, and that cannot cease from sin. And how do their lives give evidence, to the reality of such figures! For what is the wretched effect of carnal pursuit in the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, but the hire, the wages, the sure reward, in the sorrow

that must follow? And are not all characters of this description, however diversified in their different occupations and pursuits, treasuring up unto themselves sure misery, here in this life not unfrequently recompensed to them, and endless sorrow in that which is to come; and are not these like the covenanted wages of the hireling and the servant, which he expects and hath a right to, in the termination of his labour?

Blessed JESUS! how refreshing is the thought to thy people, that thou hast brought them out of the service of Satan, and made them free in thy service. Thou graciously didst search for them in their haunts of sin, when, like others, they were children of wrath, and were wandering far from thee, on the same mountains of iniquity, and vanity, and worldly enjoyments. And now, having brought them, by the illumination and conviction of thine HOLY SPIRIT, into the bond of the covenant, thou preservest them from falling into those depths of sin which swallow up the ungodly. Dearest JESUS! be thou my Guide, my Counsellor, my Keeper, and my supreme joy; then sin shall not have dominion over me, nor the vanities of the world draw me into perdition. Having *put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, I shall put on the new man, which after GOD, is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

CHAPTER 17

CONTENTS

We have in this chapter, for the first time, introduced to us, that eminent prophet and servant of GOD, Elijah. He comes to Israel, prophesying of a long season of drought. He is hidden of GOD, and fed by ravens. Afterwards he sojourneth with a

widow, at Zarephath: works a miracle to supply her and household with food: and raiseth the widow's son, when dead.

1 KINGS 17:1

(1) ¶ And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

This eminent prophet of JEHOVAH, whose history forms so considerable a figure in the Bible, demands our attention the more closely. His name is most striking —Elijah; which is a compound word, doubly significant, and means, Eli, my GOD; Jail, JEHOVAH; most probably, so called because implying in whose name, and by whose authority he came. It is remarkable that he differs from all other prophets, in that no account is given of his genealogy. The Jews, in high veneration of Elijah, had a tradition that he came from heaven. But we have an authority to know better. The HOLY GHOST, by his servant James, the apostle, tells the church that *he was a man subject to like passions as we are.* James 5:17. But what I would beg the Reader particularly to observe concerning Elijah, is his faithfulness, and boldness in the cause of GOD. Shutting up the heavens was considered as one of GOD'S sore judgments. Therefore for Elijah to go boldly to the court of Israel and tell the impious monarch to his face, that this judgment should take place, was faithfulness indeed! The apostle James, under the blessed SPIRIT, carries the commendation of Elijah even a step higher than mere faithfulness. For he expressly saith, that his prayer of faith both shut and opened heaven. With an holy indignation against Israel's sin, he prayed that it might not rain. And when he found the LORD softening the hearts of the Israelities

by repentance, he prayed, and the heavens gave rain. See Reader! the preciousness of faith in JESUS. James 5:17, 18.

1 KINGS 17:2-4

(2) And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, (3) Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. (4) And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

It should seem that this hiding of the prophet, was not so much by way of security to his person, as it was that the LORD might accomplish his purpose concerning Israel. A time was determined of famine, by way of punishment. And Elijah shall not be at hand to make intercession, to reverse the sentence. Reader! think of thy privileges: JESUS ever liveth, ever loveth; is ever at hand to make intercession for poor sinners; and by him the distressed soul may have access at all times, by one SPIRIT, unto the FATHER. What deeper designs were in this event, or what it might be intended to prefigure, I do not venture to say. But it is worthy of remark, that when the church, which is represented in the book of Revelations under the similitude of the woman, is said to have been driven into the wilderness, a place is said to be prepared of GOD for her, where they should feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And in the same chapter, it is said, that she should be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. Which, if explained according to the usual terms of prophecy, would correspond (in this latter part, at least,) to the three years and half of Elijah's concealment. See Revelation 12:6, 14.

1 KINGS 17:5-6

(5) So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. (6)

And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

Besides the providence of GOD in this, as far as related to the supplying of the necessities of the body, there was much of a gracious, spiritual ordinance in it, if I mistake not. How doth the LORD JESUS hand his bread and flesh to his people in secret! How doth he give them to eat of the hidden manna! Whatever messengers he makes use of, as the ravens were here, ministering to his servant; yet, blessed be his name, it is he himself which gives to them of his flesh and blood, by which they live *in* him, and *to* him. John 6:51. Revelation 2:17. I must detain the Reader for one observation more, on this interesting passage. In all this gracious process for the maintenance and preservation of his servant, it is beautiful to remark how the LORD acted by the very contrary means to the common course of things; nay, even contrary to the common course of nature. Of all creatures in the creation, none so unpromising as ravens, to bring flesh to the prophet. For it is well known that ravens are carnivorous creatures; that is, I mean, they live on flesh and carrion. And, as they are very voracious; what but an overruling power, could have inclined those creatures to carry food, which they themselves would rather gorge upon forever, than desist from eating. Moreover: Ravens are said to neglect their own young. And hence the LORD himself demanded of Job; *Who provideth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry unto GOD, they wander for lack of meat!* Job 38:41 The Psalmist also expresseth the same, when he saith, *He giveth to the young ravens when they cry.* Psalm 147:9. Hence, therefore, to make creatures void of the natural instinct of affection to their own young, to carry flesh to the prophet; how supernatural was this act? And is there anyone, after this, disposed to cavil with the divine authority, and impiously enquire where those ravens could get their supplies for the prophet? Is not the earth the

LORD'S; and the fulness thereof! But, Reader! think what a strengthening this must have been to the faith of Elijah! LORD JESUS! art not thou daily supplying thy people with the sweet morsels of thy grace! And shall not our faith in thee, be equally strengthened as the prophet's! That a life of grace is kept and preserved in the souls of thy people, what, but thy seasonable supplies could accomplish it, amidst all our famine and need? And being thus kept and preserved, shall we any longer doubt? Oh! for faith, like the prophet, to live upon JESUS!

1 KINGS 17:7

(7) And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Perhaps this drying of the brook was for the exercise of Elijah. And when our friends, like Job's, deal deceitfully by us, as a brook, (Job 6:15) or when all creatures comfort fail; how sweet is it to live upon the full and never-ceasing fountain? JESUS is all this to his people! GOD the FATHER is a fountain, and the HOLY GHOST also: See Zechariah 13:1. Jer. 2:13. John 7:37-39.

1 KINGS 17:8-9

(8) ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, (9) Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

Observe, though all means of sustenance were over, at the brook Cherith; yet Elijah doth not move his quarters, until directed of GOD. It is sweet in all our movements, to wait the pillar of Cloud directing the way. There is a great beauty, as well as mercy, in this movement of the prophet to Zidon. This was among the Gentiles. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, the great advocate for idolatry, came from Zidon. Hath the LORD mercy for the inhabitants of this place! Yes! There is one of JESUS'

seed there. His eye hath been upon her from everlasting. Thither Elijah must therefore go. It is worthy the Reader's remark, that it was the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, the Son of GOD particularly visited, and from whence he gathered that pearl of his Redemption crown so gloriously shining in the gospel. See Matthew 15:21-28. And it should seem, from what is said in this passage concerning Elijah, that the LORD had commanded this widow woman to sustain his servant, that she knew the LORD! Oh! precious distinguishing grace!

1 KINGS 17:10-15

(10) So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. (11) And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. (12) And she said, *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. (13) And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. (14) For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. (15) And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.

What a most beautiful and interesting history this is, independent of the sacred and spiritual sense of it. See how the LORD in his providence overruled the events, that this widow should be coming to the gate of the city as Elijah entered it. See how graciously the LORD directed the mind of the prophet to speak to her. See how the same gracious God influenced the widow's mind, not only to attend to the call of the prophet, but, in the midst of such a pressing famine, to be

ready to give to a stranger. And see what strong faith she had in the words of a stranger, as upon first sight to believe what Elijah said, that the LORD by a miracle would keep her stock undiminished. And only conceive what sweet living that must have been, kept up as it was daily by faith, both for Elijah, and the widow, and her whole house for many days, and which *many days*, as appears by the calculation of the time Elijah was there, could not have been less than two whole years. But when the Reader hath paid all due attention to those many interesting things in the account as an history, I beg of him to look at one feature of it in a spiritual sense, and then say, whether it is not in this point of view beautifully enhanced. *Make me a little cake first* (said the prophet) *and after, for thyself and son*. And doth not JESUS say the same to his people in the exercise of their faith and dependence upon him? Our stock is low, and all supplies are seemingly over. Nevertheless, faith, real, lively, active faith, like this widow, hears JESUS command, Let me be first supplied, and hastens to do it. For when brought down to the lowest state, and the soul casts herself, and all she hath upon JESUS; acting faith upon the naked promises of GOD in CHRIST: this is precious, precious faith. And every poor believer that is enabled to do this will find, like the widow's cruse, that seeking first JESUS and his righteousness, all other things necessary will be added thereto. Thus saith JESUS himself, and thus as the prophet here, the authority is backed in the name of the LORD GOD of Israel.

1 KINGS 17:16-17

(16) *And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

(17) ¶ And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

Of this sickness, as it is proved by the issue, it may be said, as our LORD did of the sickness of Lazarus, it is not unto death but for the glory of GOD, that the Son of GOD might be glorified thereby. John 11:4. Let the Reader observe how, in the midst of all the smiles and favors of the LORD'S providence, this apparently frowning dispensation is sent into the household of this woman. How sweet is that scripture, when received and truly believed in, by GOD'S people. Hebrews 12:6.

1 KINGS 17:18

(18) And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

Reader, do not fail to remark, (and which is, indeed, the sweetest improvement of the passage) what a close connection there is in the mind, between the guilt of sin and the afflictions of life which are the consequences of sin. You see how the death of her child revived a sense and conviction of sin in her conscience. And this is the sting of all afflictions. For only suppose the sting of sin removed, though the affliction be not removed, the burden and pressure is gone, and the mind is at ease. Hence the prophet, speaking of gospel-times, and of the blessed effects of the sting of sin taken out by the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, makes this sweet observation: *The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquity.* Isaiah 33:24 Not that the prophet meant by this, to say that mankind had discovered a climate where no sickness was known; for wherever sinners, even redeemed sinners, live, there must be sickness and death, the sure consequence of sin. See Romans 5:12. But the inhabitant of the Gospel Church of JESUS shall no longer complain of sickness; because he is forgiven all his iniquities in JESUS. The burden and

sorrow of sickness is gone, because the guilt of sin is taken away. Hence David, under the assurance of pardoning mercy in CHRIST, calls upon all that is within him to bless the LORD, who hath forgiven all his iniquities, and healed all his diseases. Psalm 103:1-3.

1 KINGS 17:19-23

(19) And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. (20) And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? (21) And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. (22) And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. (23) And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

What an interesting representation is here made of the prophet. He stops not to reason with the disconsolate mother: makes no reply to her angry expostulation: presumes to promise nothing; gives no encouragement; but takes the child and hastens with it to the LORD. Reader! oh! that you and I could learn from hence, where we are to have recourse in all our trials, difficulties, and discouragements. No doubt the mind of Elijah was distressed greatly at the event. It is probable, from long living with the widow and her child, he had conceived no small affection for him. But we hear nothing of this. He hastens to a throne of grace, there to pour out his soul before the LORD. But what were his views? Never to this period, was there any instance upon record, of a dead body raised to life again. And could Elijah hope that such a miracle would be granted? Yes! it is certain, from his prayer, that he looked for this mercy. For after having pleaded with the LORD, he makes this the one great desire of his petition; that *the*

child's soul might come into him again. And the event answered his expectation. Oh! what cannot strong faith perform! One of the ancient fathers, in his observation on this passage, saith, that certainly such a return of the soul to the body, not only taught the early church the reality of the soul's existence when separated from the body; but also conveyed the further intimation, in the outlines of it, of that glorious doctrine of life and immortality, hereafter to be brought fully to light by the gospel. 2 Timothy 1:10.

1 KINGS 17:24

(24) And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou *art* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.

Poor woman! notwithstanding the long series of miracles, which she and her household were supported by, ought to have convinced her that Elijah was a man of GOD; yet, it should seem, the death of her child staggered her faith. Alas! what poor creatures the best of us are. It is only for JESUS to throw down one of our props, and like Jonah, we think we do well to be angry. Dearest LORD! *increase our faith!*

REFLECTIONS

IN contemplating the character of Elijah, as represented to our view in this chapter, what an illustrious example doth he stand forward, of the noblest faith! With what confidence do we see him going in before the idolatrous king of Israel, to tell him, that for his impiety, GOD had shut up the heavens, and their influences! With what confidence in his GOD doth he proceed to hide himself by the brook, where there could be no sustenance, but what should be sent to him miraculously! With what cheerful resignation doth he remove to Zarephath, when the brook became dry; still depending for his daily

supply from the same resource of faith! And while he knew, that Jezebel was feasting the false prophets with luxuries, at her table daily, how delightfully doth Elijah feast himself on the product of the barrel of meal, and the cruse of oil, under the favor and smiles of the LORD? And yet, if possible, still more, when by the alarming visitation of his hostess' son's death, the LORD seemed, for the moment, by this breach, to have made a breach in her affection to him, and all his peace and comfort; how truly glorious doth the man of GOD then appear, in the exercise of a faith almost unparalleled. And,

Reader! what shall be our improvement in this view of the prophet? What indeed, should it be, what ought it to be, but to look more stedfastly than ever we have yet done, unto all-precious JESUS, who is the Author and Giver of faith! Was it not the SPIRIT of CHRIST which was in the prophets, which did signify to them the sufferings of CHRIST, and the glory that should follow? The HOLY GHOST, by his servant the apostle Peter, hath graciously taught the church that this was the case! And may we not, from the same blessed authority, conclude that it must have been the same SPIRIT of CHRIST in the prophets, which led them on to such glorious deeds, as are recorded of them in his holy word? And shall we not then, under this precious assurance, look up to JESUS, all-gracious JESUS now, and beseech him to give us the like precious faith, through the righteousness of GOD our Saviour? Yes! thou Almighty Author and Finisher of our faith, to thee would I direct mine eyes, beseeching thee to grant me such measures of this blessed principle, in the view of thy servant the prophet here set forth, that when called upon in public, I may be bold for thy truth, and when retiring into private, I may live by faith upon thee, thou Son of GOD, when all creature comforts, like the brook, shall dry up. And, LORD JESUS! grant that I may be the follower of them, who now, through faith

and patience, inherit the promises. And being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, may we lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset thy people, and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto JESUS!

CHAPTER 18

CONTENTS

This chapter relates to us the further history of Elijah. The time being arrived for his appearance again before Ahab, the LORD commands him to go on this embassy. An account of this interview. Elijah demands a decision between the prophets of Baal and himself before all Israel, who is the GOD. The day of determination. The LORD's answering by fire. Israel convinced. Baal's prophets destroyed. And the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

1 KINGS 18:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass *after* many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

This is a most beautiful chapter, in which the faith of Elijah is put to the strictest test. The LORD promised to visit Israel with the needed rain. After many days it is said: But from the apostle James's account we find that the draught had been for three years and six months. James 5:17.

1 KINGS 18:2-16

(2) And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore famine in Samaria. (3) And Ahab called Obadiah, which *was* the governor of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: (4) For it was *so*, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by

fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) (5) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. (6) So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. (7) And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art* thou that my lord Elijah? (8) And he answered him, I *am*: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. (9) And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me? (10) *As* the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, *He is not there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. (11) And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. (12) And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and *so* when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth. (13) Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? (14) And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*: and he shall slay me. (15) And Elijah said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. (16) So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Reader! figure to yourself the poor, despised, solitary prophet, thus going to show himself to such a prince as Ahab, backed with a wife of such diabolical principles as Jezebel! Recollect what is here said, that during the long famine Jezebel had been destroying all the LORD'S prophets; those that escaped had been hid in caves, and dared not to appear! Consider further that so dreadfully the famine raged, that the king himself went in search of any brook or fountain which could be found. And lastly, in order to view properly the intrepidity of Elijah, let the Reader recollect what Obadiah told Elijah when he met him, that diligent search had been made for him

in every nation or kingdom where he could possibly send to enquire; plainly testifying thereby what Ahab would have done to Elijah had he got him into his hands. Let all these circumstances be considered; and then let the Reader pause with rue, and admire the greatness of that blessed principle of faith with which the Great Author of it endued his servant. Before we prosecute the chapter, I would detain the Reader to remark with me also, the graciousness of GOD in preserving to himself a seed in the earth in the worst of times: and moreover, when iniquity, as in this reign of Ahab, had ripened to such a degree, that his grace was still reserved for them to turn the hearts of his people back again!—I would beg the Reader also to behold in the character of Obadiah, how evidently the covenant promises of GOD must have wrought upon his mind, who in the very court of Ahab, and while governor of his house, yet followed the LORD. See the promise, Jeremiah 32:40. And lastly, before we proceed to the other part of the chapter, I request the Reader to consider how the heart of Elijah, in his zeal for the LORD'S honour, and his love to the souls of the LORD'S people, must have been burning with impatience during the long period of three years and half, and secretly praying that the awful judgment of famine, and the dreadful consequences thereof, might be sooner averted.

1 KINGS 18:17-18

(17) ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel? (18) And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

Observe the hardness and impenitency of the king! Observe the firmness and intrepidity of the prophet!

1 KINGS 18:19-20

(19) Now therefore send, *and* gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

(20) So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

How must the mind of this wretched man Ahab have been overruled so immediately to comply with the prophet's request. It is more than probable that Ahab thought, as Elijah had declared when he predicted the famine, that there should be no dew, nor rain, but according to his word, that Elijah would give that word on mount Carmel. No doubt, the LORD's hand was in the whole, and he overruled Ahab's mind to obey the prophet implicitly.

1 KINGS 18:21

(21) ¶ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

This argument was very powerful for decision of character: but the question to an infidel would be still undetermined; Who is the LORD? This was settled by the ensuing miracle.

1 KINGS 18:22-24

(22) Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. (23) Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: (24) And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

Here the man of God brings the question home nearer, and puts it at once to a decision, so that every man confessed the

mode of trial was fair. But Reader! think in what a frame of mind the servant of the LORD must have been to trust the whole event upon this issue. Surely Elijah manifested himself to have been a true son of him who against hope believed in hope, and showed to what a degree of stability his faith had brought him. Reader! can you and I look up with equal steadiness to JESUS, and say, Let that JESUS who answereth for my sins, let him be my GOD?

1 KINGS 18:25-29

(25) And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*. (26) And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. (27) And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. (28) And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. (29) And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Had Baal answered there would have been no opportunity for Elijah's trial. But this the LORD overruled, so that among 450 of their artful priests there should be no deception. And had Elijah first appealed to the LORD before the trial of Baal's priests, many of the deluded followers of Baal would not have been convinced, perhaps, but that Baal could have done the same. But by this plan of letting Baal's priests make their experiment first, the man of GOD took effectual means to make his triumph complete. The mockery of Baal's priests exactly corresponded to the ridiculous nature of their idol worship.

1 KINGS 18:30-35

(30) And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. (31) And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: (32) And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. (33) And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. (34) And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time. (35) And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

There is somewhat very solemn in this conduct of the prophet, when we consider what the expected event was to be.—The building, or repairing, the altar, intimated that the people had suffered it to go into ruins; and that it was not a new religion, but the religion of their fathers he aimed to bring them back to. The taking twelve stones was to show thereby, that though two of the tribes were away, yet the whole of Israel belonged to the God of Israel; these were very striking things in the plan Elijah observed. And the covering the whole of the sacrifice with water, which was to be consumed by fire, intimated with what ease the God of Israel could, and would accomplish, the purposes of his holy will: surely it must have had, a wonderful effect upon the minds of the people. It is probable that as mount Carmel was so near to the sea, and the long draught had made a scarcity of water, that the prophet had this water which was thrown over the sacrifice taken from the sea.

1 KINGS 18:36-37

(36) And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God

of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that* I *am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word. (37) Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

There is a great beauty in this part of the relation; that it was at the time of offering the evening sacrifice; that solemn season appointed in the church, and observed by the faithful in all ages, and which, as it had an eye to the one all-sufficient and all-finished sacrifice of the LORD JESUS on the cross, so it corresponded to the same hour. See Daniel 9:21. Matthew 27:46, &c: Observe the prayer of Elijah! It is addressed to JEHOVAH in his covenant relations. And observe the object of it: The glory of the LORD; and the welfare of his people.

1 KINGS 18:38

(38) Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

Observe the graciousness of GOD, and how faithfully he proved himself to be a prayer-hearing, and a prayer-answering GOD, agreeably to that sweet promise, Isaiah 65:24.

1 KINGS 18:39

(39) And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God.

No doubt such a demonstration carried *conviction* to every heart; though it is to be feared that it did not carry *conversion* to many an heart that was present. Had Ahab felt as he ought, he must have dreaded lest the fire which consumed the sacrifice should have consumed him also. But alas! it is one thing to say, The LORD he is the GOD, and even to repeat

it; and another to say, This GOD is our GOD, for ever and ever, he shall be our guide even unto death. Reader! can you say this. Psalm 48:14.

1 KINGS 18:40

(40) And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

This sentence of Elijah's was in conformity to the law; and Ahab could not dare to deny it. See Deuteronomy 13:1, 2, 5. But it is evident by what follows in the next chapter, that had the sentence not have been executed in the moment, while all Israel were under the impression of this solemn scene, in all probability Baal's prophets would have escaped.

1 KINGS 18:41

(41) ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is a sound of abundance of rain.*

Observe, Reader! the continuance of the divine graciousness.—The heavens shall give fire to prove GOD's sovereignty: and the heavens shall give rain to manifest his grace.

1 KINGS 18:42

(42) So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

How lovely view doth this give us of the prophet. As soon as he had dispatched the public duties of the day, he hastens to private communion with GOD. Such, blessed JESUS, was thy unequalled example! Matthew 14:23.

1 KINGS 18:43-46

(43) And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. (44) And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot* , and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. (45) And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. (46) And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

While the prophet was wrestling in prayer with GOD, his servant is sent on the lookout for the first sign of answers to his prayer. Six ineffectual searches were made; teaching, that though GOD waiteth to be gracious, yet for these things he will be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them. At length at the seventh look out a little cloud is seen, *the day of small things*. That is enough to the mind of the prophet. He knew that in the womb of that little cloud all the blessings he was praying for were contained, and would be brought forth. Oh! Reader! let you and I be continually on the lookout, for the LORD JESUS is everlastingly looking upon his people; let us catch at the smallest things of JESUS, for his promise, like himself, is yea and amen.

REFLECTIONS

I WOULD pass over, methinks, many other considerations which this sweet chapter holds forth to view, to behold in the prophetic character of Elijah what a wonderful degree of faith the LORD GOD had given to him for the arduous service to which he was called. What firmness and magnanimity were manifested in his whole conduct! When the LORD commanded him to show himself to Ahab, not a word of request to be spared the unpleasant embassy, but an instant readiness to

obey. And when in the first interview with Ahab the monarch accused him with being the troubler of Israel; with what zeal did he refute the charge, and return it home upon the king. Reader! shall not you and I, in the contemplation, look up and bless the great author and giver of such faith, and pray for a portion of the same blessed SPIRIT? But let us pass over these lesser instances of this most wonderful gift of GOD in the former part of Elijah's conduct, to behold him in the exercise of it, when singly and alone he stood at mount Carmel, opposed by 450 persons. Oh! what confidence must he have had in GOD as the GOD of Israel, that the LORD would answer by fire, consume the sacrifice, and dry up the water, when in the fulness of the SPIRIT'S influence upon his heart he commanded to drench the whole in such a way as should call for one miracle upon another, to prove the LORD faithful. Who that reads this history of Elijah but must rejoice in beholding the great blessedness of faith which is capable of producing such things. And who but must be led to bless the great author of the principle itself, who both implanted that grace in the heart, and so graciously crowned it with divine approbation!

But Reader! while looking at the servant, let us look higher also, and contemplate the master. Yes! blessed JESUS! it is thou which art the sole author and giver of it. And therefore to thee would we ascribe all the glory. Had it not been for thy gracious undertaking, such is the human mind by nature, universally speaking, that not one spark of faith could ever have been kindled in the breast of any. Here every man is the same, without any predisposition, or inclination to believe. Nay, with every prejudice against it.—The water poured over the sacrifice of Elijah did not tend to damp the materials more than the prejudices, darkness, and natural hatred of our hearts tend to damp all divine impressions. Shall I not then,

blessed JESUS, adore the riches of thy grace, in that thou condescendest to kindle a flame of faith in my heart, when everything that pride, ignorance, self-righteousness, and an unconscious state of my own condition, and thy suitableness as a Saviour, stood in opposition against it? Blessed JESUS! everlasting praise to thy dear name, like the sacrifice of the prophet, the fire of thy love and mercy hath descended from heaven and consumed all. And my soul hath been constrained to say not only, The LORD he is the GOD; but that the LORD is my light, my JESUS, my salvation, my GOD and Saviour for ever.

CHAPTER 19

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The event in the destruction of Baal's prophets calling forth the anger of Jezebel, Elijah fleeth to the wilderness of Beersheba. The LORD comforts him there. He returns by GOD's command, and anoints Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha.

1 KINGS 19:1

(1) ¶ And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

What an awful character is Ahab! one might reasonably have expected that after such a miracle, and such mercy in GOD's answering by fire, and sending rain to refresh his inheritance, that the heart of Ahab, with all Israel, would have been turned to the LORD. But Reader! learn from what is here said, that neither punishment nor mercy, can of themselves reclaim. Nay; I do verily believe that if the souls in everlasting misery could be liberated from their sufferings, and were

permitted to return to the earth again, their hearts would remain unchanged. Oh! for grace, free, sovereign grace, to turn our souls from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and satan unto the living God.

1 KINGS 19:2

(2) Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

And what a most detestable character is this Jezebel! was ever so daring a threat; and backed, as she sent it, by such an impious authority! Reader! what views hath the HOLY GHOST given us in many parts of his blessed word, of the dreadful lengths to which the human mind is capable of being led by its own corruptions, and the temptations of Satan!

1 KINGS 19:3-4

(3) And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there. (4) But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

Is this Elijah, who but the day before confronted all the host of Baal's worshippers? What, to flee because of the threats of a poor woman? And moreover, at a time like this, when after such a miracle he had reason from his own prayer to hope, that the LORD would turn the heart of the people back again! But Reader! let you and I learn from it, that great faith and unbelief are near neighbours in the same heart. Some of the LORD'S highest servants have given striking testimonies of both. Abraham could, and did, at the LORD'S command, offer up his son. But Abraham could not trust to GOD for the safety of his wife. Genesis 22 with 20:1, 2. Peter could, and did, at

the command of JESUS, venture to walk to him upon the water. But the same great apostle, at the instance of a poor servant-maid, denied CHRIST. Matthew 14:28. Matthew 26:72, &c. And what are the precious lessons the HOLY GHOST teacheth us from such views of the faithful, but these; that faith is GOD'S gift, not man's own creating: that as Paul saith, we can do nothing of ourselves; but can do all things through CHRIST strengthening us. And therefore we can never trust ourselves too little, nor JESUS too much.

1 KINGS 19:5-8

(5) And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat. (6) And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. (7) And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee. (8) And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

Oh! Reader! do pray observe the tender mercy of a gracious GOD. Had the LORD taken Elijah at his word, what a sad event! instead of which we find the angel of the LORD feeding him. I cannot suffer the Reader to go on without pausing to remark with me, in what a variety of gracious ways the LORD fed his servant. By ravens at one time; by a widow woman at another. Now by an angel; and now for forty days without food he is preserved. And was he not here a type of his adored LORD and master? Can I look at Elijah from the wilderness of Judah, strengthened for a forty days abstinence in Horeb, without calling to mind thine unequalled abstinence, dearest JESUS, when added to the hunger of the body, and the conflicts of the soul, Satan was permitted to spend all the fiery darts of his temptations upon thee?

1 KINGS 19:9

(9) ¶ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

Some have thought that this was the very spot in which Moses was placed when the LORD showed him his glory. If so, how sweet a token of the presence of JESUS. For JESUS is all the goodness of JEHOVAH passing by, considered in redemption. So thought the church when she said: *Oh! my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance: let me hear thy voice.* Song Of Solomon 2:14. But the word of the LORD came to him also similar to the voice which spake to Adam in the garden; *Adam! where art thou?* What doest thou here, Elijah? However solemn and alarming to both, and though speaking in a way of demand, yet to both the words were alike full of grace and mercy. Reader! do remark from the enquiry that all communion and converse between GOD and sinners through JESUS, begins in a sense of our wrong conduct, and the LORD'S rich and free mercy.

1 KINGS 19:10

(10) And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Observe how even faithful men seek at times to justify themselves. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments!

1 KINGS 19:11-13

(11) And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: (12) And

after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. (13) And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

What an awful display of the divine power and the divine presence! Moses stood *within* the cave when the LORD passed by. But Elijah is commanded to *go forth*, and stand *before* the LORD upon the mount. Do observe, Reader, the LORD'S passing by, and the strong wind rending the mountains, and breaking the rocks in pieces, the earthquake, and the fire; but the LORD was not discovered by the prophet in either of them: neither did he cover his face in his mantle until he heard the still small voice. So is it with the sinner; Not the most dreadful things of GOD'S wrath, the terrors of the law, the alarms of threatening justice, nor even the apprehensions of hell, and everlasting misery, though passing before his view, will compel him to cover his face in shame and confusion, and make him tremblingly cry out, *LORD! save or I perish*; until the LORD himself speaks to him in the still small voice. Reader! have you heard that voice? Hath your soul passed under the condemning sentence of GOD'S law, and are you fled from it to the LAMB of GOD for salvation! if so, you will know by your own feelings, better than by any words that I can make use of, to convey a sense of these grand things. A soul that hath so been led, and both from the sentence of death in himself, and a manifestation of life, and pardon, and peace in JESUS and his righteousness, hath been enabled to venture and rest his eternal welfare on this sure foundation, will read this passage of the prophet with such enlightened eyes as none but such exercised souls can ever discover. Blessed Reader! I may say if this be your happy case, oh! what a precious thing it is to have a CHRIST to plead, and a CHRIST to justify, when both law and justice give in a verdict against the soul.

1 KINGS 19:14-18

(14) And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (15) And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael *to be* king over Syria: (16) And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint *to be* king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint *to be* prophet in thy room. (17) And it shall come to pass, *that* him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. (18) Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

In this answer of the LORD to the complaint of the prophet, which he had before in the same words lodged with the LORD; we discover new tokens of the LORD'S graciousness. Elijah, poor man, with his dim-sighted observation, concluded that he was the only faithful servant remaining. While to the LORD'S view seven thousand were in Israel, and how many more in Judah whose hearts were with the LORD! Reader! never forget, as Paul makes the comment upon it, in the worst of times the LORD hath a remnant that serve him. And remember also that this remnant is of the LORD'S reserving. JESUS must have a church, a seed; a people! precious thought! oh! let us cherish it in the warm foldings of the heart. But let us remark also that, in answer to the complaint of the prophet, the LORD graciously preserved Hazael still to be king over Syria; and he shall punish Israel for their idolatry. Jehu shall be king over Israel, and he shall punish the house of Ahab for all his daring impiety. And since Elijah desired to have his services closed, the LORD hath provided him a successor in Elisha.

1 KINGS 19:19-20

(19) ¶ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. (20) And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

The call of Elisha is very striking. It was wholly unexpected, unlooked for on his part; but on the LORD'S part long ordained, long intended. What a proof we have of this in the call of Jeremiah. *Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, (saith the LORD) and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* Jeremiah 1:5. And depend upon it, so it is in the appointment of all GOD'S sent servants. See a beautiful instance in the case of Saul and Barnabas. Acts, 13:2. Acts 9:15, 16. Of all subjects none can be more important than that everyone who ministers in holy things should see to it that his call is clear. Most awful it is to rush into the ministry unsent; and most awful in the end will be that solemn question, *Who hath required this at your hands?* And assuredly that awful sentence which will follow: Isaiah 1:12. Matthew 7:22, 23. In the instance of Elijah we see all the marks following the LORD'S declaration to Elijah. The mantle of Elijah was accompanied with the SPIRIT of Elijah'S GOD. He was made willing in the day of his power. Thus the LORD prevents, or goes before-hand with the sweet influences of his grace. Disposes the heart, constrains the mind, and leads the soul to follow the soft calls of his grace. Reader! as it is by his ministers, so is it by the private believer. The LORD passeth by when we are in our blood, and bids us live. Ezekiel 16:6. The LORD gives grace to follow his call, notwithstanding both the unexpectedness of the call, and our unpreparedness to receive it; and yet more, all our undeservings; and though the whole life of grace as much exceeds all we can ask or

think, as his thoughts exceed our thoughts, or his ways our ways. Ephesians 3:20.

1 KINGS 19:21

(21) And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! over this chapter, and take another view, not less profitable to our souls, though less to the prophet's honour, than what *we* regarded before in the conduct of Elijah. In the former chapter we beheld him, indeed, *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*. But here we see him, and human nature in him, shrinking at the bare apprehension of fear, and running away from the post of duty, as if Elijah's GOD could no more save. But Reader! let me charge it upon my own heart, while I earnestly and affectionately recommend it to yours, let neither of us lose sight of the sweet and blessed lesson the HOLY GHOST most graciously holds forth to our view, in the contemplation of the shortcomings of his faithful servants. When we see a prophet thus shrinking with fear at the threat of Jezebel; or an apostle, like Peter, at the charge of a servant maid; for what doth the example serve in either case, in such eminent followers of the LORD, but to teach us how far short the highest characters are from perfection; and that they, as well as we, stand in need of the same justifying righteousness of the LORD JESUS, whose holy life is the only righteousness which comes up to the standard of the divine law. Yes! dearest, blessed JESUS! most fully we are hereby taught, and our souls rejoice in the contemplation, that none but thou canst justify thy people. *In*

thy name, O LORD, would my soul rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make my boast.

Let us, Reader, also gather another sweet lesson from this chapter; and in the precious assurance the LORD gives his prophet, that while he thought himself the only one left of the LORD'S servants, there were seven thousand; let us take comfort that even now, in the present dark and degenerate day, there is still *a remnant according to the election of grace*. Yes! Reader! though it be but a remnant, and a small remnant, yet JESUS hath said; *Fear not little flock, it is your heavenly FATHER'S good pleasure to give you the kingdom*. JESUS will preserve it. For it is the FATHER'S gift; it is JESUS'S own purchase; and the conquest of his SPIRIT'S grace on the heart; and therefore it must be preserved, And however small, or inconsiderable in the eyes of men, yet when the whole come to be brought together in glory, it will form *a multitude which no man can number*. *In my FATHER'S house, (saith JESUS) there are many mansions*. LORD! grant, if it be thy blessed will, both to Writer and Reader, to be found among that multitude.

Lastly. Reader! let both of us from this chapter be very diligent while reading the call of Elisha, to see that we make *our calling and election sure*. Oh! for grace to discover the preventing, unexpected, unmerited and sovereign call of GOD! Dearest JESUS! do thou pass by, and cast thy mantle upon us: thou LORD GOD of the prophets! do thou give Us the yielding, willing heart, to follow thee at thy call. And do thou grant that we may leave the oxen, the cares of the world, father and mother, and all creature enjoyments, and like Elisha, run after thee whithersoever thou goest; and like Ruth, to Naomi, may resolve to live with thee, and to die with thee, convinced that *to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain*. Oh! for faith, precious

faith to have JESUS for our portion; for in him *we have all things*.

CHAPTER 20

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This chapter relates more to the history of Israel as a nation, than to the government of the church. It informs us of a battle between Syria and Israel, in which the Syrians are worsted. Ahab doth not avail himself of his victory, for which he is reproved by the prophet.

1 KINGS 20:1-4

(1) ¶ And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and *there were* thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. (2) And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, (3) Thy silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine. (4) And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I *am* thine, and all that I have.

During the time that Israel served the LORD, the LORD made all their enemies submissive. But when Israel rebelled against the LORD, the enemies of Israel became formidable. We may spiritualize this passage with great safety. While the LORD'S people live in dutiful affection to JESUS, *he maketh even their enemies to be at peace with them*. But when they leave their first love, many subdued foes gain their ascendancy. But what an object still is the soul of that man reduced to by sin, that, like Ahab, will rather live a pensioner upon the devil's favor, than die a freed servant of the LORD of hosts.

1 KINGS 20:5-6

(5) And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; (6) Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, *that* whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and take *it* away.

Reader! And is not this the language of the enemy of souls to his vassals? is not the man that committeth sin, the servant and slave of sin? And if we have yielded ourselves servants to such a tyrant, and such a master; can we expect anything but rigor in his treatment?

1 KINGS 20:7-11

(7) Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not. (8) And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not *unto him*, nor consent. (9) Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Benhadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. (10) And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. (11) And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell *him*, Let not him that girdeth on *his harness* boast himself as he that putteth it off.

The historical sense of this passage, is what is very common in human life. A proud, imperious character triumphing over a less, and the oppressed obliged to submit, until overacted oppression compels the trampled upon to resist. But the spiritual sense is sweeter. While the enemy of souls, like Pharaoh, threatens total ruin; the believer in JESUS saith, **I** know that my GOD can, and I trust that he will deliver. We

have a beautiful example in the case of the three servants of the LORD; see Daniel 3:16-18.

1 KINGS 20:12

(12) ¶ And it came to pass, when *Benhadad* heard this message, as he *was* drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set *yourselves in array* . And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

So the enemy, confident of victory, sets on with his legions on our poor nature.

1 KINGS 20:13-15

(13) And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD. (14) And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, *Even* by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou. (15) Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand.

Observe the graciousness of GOD. Though Ahab be so undeserving: and though Israel be so undeserving also, in general; yet the LORD hath his seven thousand in Israel, for whose sakes the city must be preserved. Oh! how much, could it be calculated, do the ungodly owe to the LORD'S people! See sweet examples, Genesis 19:22. Isaiah 1:9. 65:8.

1 KINGS 20:16-21

(16) And they went out at noon. But *Benhadad was* drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. (17) And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and *Benhadad* sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria. (18) And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive. (19) So these

young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. (20) And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse with the horsemen. (21) And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

Observe how true GOD is to his promises.

1 KINGS 20:22-30

(22) ¶ And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee. (23) And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. (24) And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms: (25) And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. (26) And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Benhadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. (27) And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country. (28) And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD *is* God of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD. (29) And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And *so* it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. (30) But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and *there* a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men *that were* left. And Benhadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

I pass over the mere history itself, to call the Reader to the spiritual lessons arising out of it. See, Reader! how confident the enemies of our GOD and of his CHRIST are: and see how the LORD, amidst all the undeservings of his people, is merciful. But, as in the case of Ahab's history, so in the history of the LORD'S Israel, everything speaks the same language: *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the LORD GOD, be it known unto you, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake.* Ezekiel 36:22, 23. There is a similar gracious reason given in Moses' song. Deuteronomy 32:26, 27.

1 KINGS 20:31-34

(31) ¶ And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. (32) So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and *put* ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is* he yet alive? he *is* my brother. (33) Now the men did diligently observe whether *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch *it*: and they said, Thy brother Benhadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Benhadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. (34) And *Benhadad* said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then *said Ahab*, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

I would again pass over the mere history, to gather somewhat spiritual. Is not Benhadad like the proud sinner when humbled and brought low? Doth he not come, as with a rope round his neck, and sackcloth on his loins, like one ready for execution; confessing, after all his proud and self righteous language, that now, the weapons of sin being taken out of his hands, he merits nothing but punishment in the very moment he pleads for mercy. Reader! depend upon it, every truly awakened

sinner doth so; and while he sues for pardon, confesses he deserves it not. I dare not represent the clemency of our dear JESUS by such a character as Ahab, in his kindness to Ben-hadad. But yet, I may say, without the danger of sullyng the holiness of the Saviour, by the view of the sinner; that in reading the account that Ahab called his enemy brother, and caused him to ride in his chariot, it reminded me of thy tender mercy, thou who art mercy itself, in that thou not only condescendest to receive sinners, and to eat with them; but on the cross, and now in glory, thou commendest thy love to us, in that while we were enemies, thou didst die for us. And not only is it said of thee, that thou art not ashamed to call such brethren; but hast shown thyself, *a brother indeed born for adversity; one that loveth at all times, notwithstanding our undeservings; and who sticketh closer than a brother.* Oh! unparalleled love, and matchless grace of our JESUS! Proverbs 17:17. Psalm 22:22. Proverbs 18:24.

1 KINGS 20:35-43

(35) And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. (36) Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him. (37) Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded *him*. (38) So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. (39) And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. (40) And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So *shall* thy judgment *be*; thyself hast decided *it*. (41) And he hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he *was* of the prophets. (42) And he said

unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. (43) And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

Who this certain man of the sons of the prophets was is not said. The Jews have concluded that it was Micaiah, of whom we read in the 22d chapter, because Ahab expresses in that chapter his hatred of him on account of his prophesying evil. But, be it whom it might, certain it is, that he came to Ahab in the name of the LORD. The story he feigned was just corresponding to the real state of the case. The LORD had delivered his enemy into his hand; and he, without consulting the LORD, had let him escape. And the prediction, that his life should pay the forfeiture for the life of Benhadad, and the people of Israel for the Syrians, came to pass. Chap. 22:35.

REFLECTIONS

READER! the perusal of this chapter ministers to our minds two very opposite reflections; but both such as may be rendered sweet and profitable under the LORD'S teaching. It is hardly possible to look at Ahab in the determined hardness of a corrupt heart, which neither the fear of man nor the mercy of GOD proved sufficient to subdue, but with the most painful consideration on the awful state of the wicked. To what an extent of power must Satan have reigned and ruled in this man's mind! Deaf to all danger: to all the alarming providences of GOD around him! Deaf to all the calls of grace and mercy: neither moved by the alarms of Benhadad's army, any more than as it concerned temporal safety: nor moved by the gracious message of GOD, though twice repeated, and as often followed with the promised deliverance: we hear nothing of his expressing any sense of his undeserving; nor of

his thankfulness for the great and unmerited deliverance. Having eyes and seeing not; and having ears, and hearing not; neither regarding the works of the LORD, nor the operations of his hands.

But how blessed is it, in the midst of all the unworthiness and continued provocations of Ahab, and of his people, to see the LORD still saving his Israel and remembering his covenant-mercy. Oh, LORD! let these precious tokens of thy love comfort my soul, amidst all mine unhallowed and soul-distressing departures I am continually making from thee. Oh, Holy FATHER! let me never forget that tender, that unparalleled love of thine, who, though thou knewest I should be a transgressor from the womb, still didst not keep back thy Son, thine only blessed Son, but gave him up for my salvation! Oh! most precious JESUS! cause my soul to hang for ever on thee, in the contemplation of thine unheard of mercy, when for my sake thou didst endure the cross, despise the shame, and art now sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. And oh! thou HOLY GHOST, the Comforter! for ever blessed be thy matchless love to me, in that thou hast condescended, in defiance of all my carnal enmity and hatred to the ways of salvation, which by nature my whole frame was full of, to become my teacher, and to make me willing in the day of thy power! Oh! LORD GOD! JEHOVAH! now reign and rule in all, and over all my affections, that while, like Ahab, men of the world go down to their houses heavy and displeased, I may come to Zion with Songs of everlasting joy upon my head, with all the redeemed of thy people; and sorrow and sighing may flee away forever.

CHAPTER 21

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The history of Ahab still continues a melancholy, because a sinful history; to the end. Here he is presented to us as coveting his neighbor's vineyard. By Jezebel's stratagem he succeeds. Elijah is sent to him with an awful message from GOD.

1 KINGS 21:1-3

(1) ¶ And it came to pass after these things, *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. (2) And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; *or*, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. (3) And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

The sin of Ahab, in coveting this vineyard of Naboth, will not so fully appear, unless we connect with it the law of GOD, concerning the possessions of Israel in Canaan. The LORD had solemnly commanded, that no land in Israel should be sold off from the proprietor forever. For, even in case of extreme poverty, at the year of jubilee, if the poor Israelite's poverty, before this year, prevented him from repurchasing it; unbought in that year, it was to revert back to the original owner again. And there can be no doubt, but that a blessed gospel mercy of redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, was veiled under this command. Indeed the matter is so plain, that a reference only to the scriptures concerning it, will be sufficient proof: see Leviticus 25:23-28. Well might Naboth therefore excuse himself, and say, The LORD forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

1 KINGS 21:4-7

(4) And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he

laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. (5) ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? (6) And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. (7) And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Whether Jezebel communicated to her husband the plan of villainy, by which she would accomplish this diabolical deed, is not said—But whether or not; both she and her husband were implicated in the sin and consequent punishment.

1 KINGS 21:8-14

(8) So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth. (9) And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: (10) And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die. (11) And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto them. (12) They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. (13) And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. (14) Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

Nothing can exceed the deliberate purposes of sin in this most atrocious deed. Religion is first called in to the aid of it. A fast is to be proclaimed, as if under the judgments of the LORD,

the nations were to be assembled to humble themselves before him. Justice and judgment also to men, shall be apparently regarded for the poor unconscious Naboth, for the accomplishment of whose death, this mockery, both of religion and justice, was to be observed, shall be confronted by witnesses, as if jealous of God's honor and glory. Reader! let me beg of you, never to peruse such instances of cruelty and oppression, without pausing to consider, to what a state of sin our nature is sunk; and what mercy it must have been in our JESUS, to recover our nature from it.

1 KINGS 21:15-16

(15) And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

(16) And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

After looking with horror and astonishment at the murderous prince, in this expedition to take possession of his prey, I would beg the Reader to turn to the 9th chapter of the 2d Book of the Kings, and read the 25th verse, and there he will discover that Jehu, who attended Ahab, as his master on that expedition, was the very person deputed by the LORD to revenge the blood of Naboth on Jezebel; see also 33d and 34th verses. Neither is it a subject less worthy of remark in this place, that as the elders of Jezreel were so forward to execute Jezebel's orders for the murder of Naboth; so were the elders of Samaria equally obedient to execute Jehu's orders, in the after reign, for the destruction of the 70 sons of Ahab. Surely the judgment of God lingereth not, and the destruction of sinners slumbereth not. See 2 Kings 10:1-7.

1 KINGS 21:17-26

(17) ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, (18) Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which *is* in Samaria: behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. (19) And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. (20) And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found *thee*: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. (21) Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, (22) And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked *me* to anger, and made Israel to sin. (23) And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. (24) Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. (25) But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. (26) And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all *things* as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

Observe in this account, how the LORD'S eye had been looking on through the whole transaction. He did not stop Jezebel's proceedings, He did not stay the minds of the elders of Jezreel; no! nor the hands of the common executioners, who stoned Naboth. In the government of the world, how often do the oppressed cry out by reason of the oppressor! Nay, Reader! look at the cross of CHRIST! think of that! Paul sums up the account, when he saith, *He spared not his own Son*. Romans 8:32. Is the Reader at a loss to explain these things? The Bible fully doth it for him. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST*. This one assurance answers all inquiries. And oh! what a precious thought is it, that He who

will preside there as Judge, is at the same time, the Saviour and Brother of his people.

1 KINGS 21:27-29

(27) And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. (28) And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, (29) Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: *but* in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

Though Ahab humbled himself before the LORD, and like another Felix, trembled; yet we read nothing of his heart being turned towards the LORD. But behold the graciousness of GOD. The evil day is postponed, intimating the LORD'S readiness to pardon, and his reluctance to punish. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel; how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?* Hosea 11:8.

REFLECTIONS

IT is impossible to behold human nature, as represented in such characters as Ahab and Jezebel, but with the most humiliating pain and sorrow, from our connection in the general mass. When I consider that, by nature, we are all alike children of wrath, enemies to GOD by wicked works; oh! how humbling is the view! But when, through grace, our souls are brought to look at the rock whence we are hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence we are digged; oh! how precious, how inestimably precious is that mercy, which is so distinguishing. Never, blessed JESUS; never, I beseech thee, dearest LORD and Saviour, suffer me to read of such awful characters in thy sacred word, without feeling the blessedness of that question of thy servant the apostle, applied and

brought home to my soul; *Who maketh thee to differ from another: and what hast thou which thou didst not receive?* And, LORD! suffer me to ask another mercy from thee: while beholding the miseries of our nature, the sufferings of the oppressed, and the cruelty of their oppressors; oh! give me to behold the virtue, the efficacy, the merit, the power, the all sufficiency of thy precious blood, in cleansing from all sin. Here let me gaze on thee and thy cross, until my whole soul goeth forth in the most ardent faith and dependence upon thee. LORD! impress upon my mind, in yet stronger characters, thy eternal excellency. And let my dying moments bear one uniform correspondence with my living conviction; that salvation is in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

CHAPTER 22

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In this chapter, some account of the history of the kingdom of Judah, which hath not been taken notice of during the five preceding chapters is again revived. After a three years peace between Syria and Israel, war is sounded afresh, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, joins Ahab, king of Israel, in the battle at Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab is slain. Ahaziah succeeds him. Some account of Jehoshaphat's reign.

1 KINGS 22:1-2

(1) ¶ And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. (2) And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

It is a little extraordinary that Jehoshaphat, whose conduct is said to have been right in the sight of the LORD, should visit so impious a prince as Ahab. Reader! depend upon it, the people of GOD can have no profitable society or fellowship with carnal men. That is an universal precept, and founded upon the soundest principles: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

1 KINGS 22:3-4

(3) And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, and we *be* still, *and* take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? (4) And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

We see here the consequence of the visit. The king of Judah is drawn into a battle. But how could Jehoshaphat wound his conscience so much, as to allow Israel and Judah, and himself and Ahab, to be so much alike? Surely he meant only in earthly concerns.

1 KINGS 22:5

(5) And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.

I beg the Reader to admire Jehoshaphat's piety in this instance. Though he knew well the infamous idolatry of Ahab, yet he calls upon him to consult the LORD. Reader! it is always profitable to look up for guidance from heaven, before we undertake any thing upon earth. That is a blessed maxim: Proverbs 3:5, 6.

1 KINGS 22:6

(6) Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

I think that these 400 men were the false prophets who were fed at Jezebel's table. By such the LORD never speaks. Though they used the LORD'S name, yet they were not the LORD'S servants. The LORD himself hath marked, in very plain terms, the character of such: His account of such will, for the most part, serve all ages of the church, as well now as then: see Jeremiah 23:21 to the end.

1 KINGS 22:7-8

(7) And Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? (8) And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

What a delightful character, though undesignedly, doth Ahab here, give of Micaiah! Reader! mark it down for a standard, in some degree, to ascertain faithful ministers by, in the present hour. Do they deal faithfully between GOD and souls: then are they abused by the carnal? Depend upon it, faithful dealing must bring reproach.

1 KINGS 22:9-16

(9) Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah. (10) And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. (11) And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. (12) And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand. (13) And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is* good. (14) And Micaiah said, *As*

the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak. (15) ¶ So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. (16) And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is* true in the name of the LORD?

It is probable, that poor Micaiah is the same that spake to Ahab, as we read in the 20th chapter, 35, 42. In the opening his commission, though in the first reading of what he said, *Go and prosper*, it should seem as if he concurred with the other prophets; yet by the king's answer, it is plain that Ahab himself thought that he was only echoing their words in contempt, and that he thought otherwise. So that Micaiah was only hereby preparing both the king, and the people around him, to attend more particularly to his prophecy.

1 KINGS 22:17-23

(17) And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. (18) And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? (19) And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. (20) And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. (21) And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. (22) And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. (23) Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

That Micaiah had been favoured with a divine vision, upon this occasion, is evident: for his prediction, and the event so exactly corresponding, plainly proved it. With respect to the lying spirit here spoken of, as influencing the prophets, to the destruction of Ahab: as this is an interesting part, and perhaps is not so generally understood; the pious Reader will not be displeased if I detain him with a few observations upon that subject. That there is at the head of our spiritual enemies, a leader, called Satan, who had a principal hand in the ruin of our nature at the fall; and who from that time, hath ruled, more or less, in the minds of the children of disobedience, is a doctrine, I take for granted, no wise person will venture to question, or deny. That the Son of GOD came to destroy his kingdom, is also an undoubted, and thoroughly allowed truth. That therefore, in this instance he had permission, by the mouths of the false prophets, to deceive Ahab; and that in numberless other instances, his power hath been, and still is, exerted (only limited as the wisdom of JESUS for blessed purposes allows) to influence the corrupt passions of men: scripture so decidedly shows, that it must argue great folly, as well as great wickedness, to dispute it. That the prophet Micaiah, therefore, should be taught this by the ministry of a vision, seems agreeable to the whole analogy of the divine word. And with respect both to the permission and success of his deception, when we consider what Job saith, and Paul confirms, the whole is most fully and satisfactorily explained. The former tells us, from inspired authority, that *both the deceiver and deceived are his*. And the latter, that *in those that perish with the deceivableness of unrighteousness in the working of Satan*, it is for this cause, *GOD hath sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*. See Job 12:16. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11. If the Reader would see more on this subject, I refer him to Job 2:1. Of Satan's power in putting into the heart, as in the case of Judas; John 13:2: Of

filling the heart, as in Ananias; Acts 5:3: Of making the whole man full of subtilty, as in Elymas; Acts 13:9, 10: And of reigning and ruling in the children of disobedience at his will; see Ephesians 2:2. 2 Timothy 1:26.

1 KINGS 22:24-25

(24) But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? (25) And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

In all ages false prophets have been the bitterest foes of GOD'S faithful servants!

1 KINGS 22:26-28

(26) And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; (27) And say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. (28) And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

Observe the cruelty of Ahab. Hard fare and coarse food, poor requitals for faithfulness. But how much sweeter to Micaiah all this than the rich fare of Jezebel's table with the impending ruin. Paul's prison must have been a blessed place when the HOLY GHOST was so much with him as to enable him to send forth that charming Epistle to the church at Philippi, which he wrote in his confinement at Rome. See the Epistle to the Philippians. And John found cause to bless the hour of his banishment to Patmos, which brought him such a visitor as the LORD JESUS. See Revelation 1 &c.

1 KINGS 22:29

(29) ¶ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.

It is not a wonder that Ahab should persist in going to battle, after Micaiah's prophecy; because he was given up to his ruin. But that Jehoshaphat, who desired counsel to be sought of the LORD upon the occasion, should have gone after what he had heard, is not so easily to be explained.

1 KINGS 22:30-33

(30) And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. (31) But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. (32) And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it *is* the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. (33) And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

There seems to have been a good deal of art in Ahab's thus disguising himself, and advising Jehoshaphat to go in his robes. It is probable that he had heard of the king of Syria's command to his generals, to fight only with the king of Israel. And as the person of Ahab was not known to those generals, it is very probable that Ahab pleased himself with the idea that the robes of Jehoshaphat would expose him, and his own disguise conceal himself. So that Ahab, if so, was as defective in friendship to Jehoshaphat, as in duty to the LORD. And no doubt, he that is false to GOD can never be true to man. The danger of Jehoshaphat, no doubt, taught him that he was out of the path of duty. In the parallel history in the Book of the Chronicles, we are told somewhat more particularly of this situation and conduct of the king of Judah. For there it is said that when the Syrians compassed him around to kill him, and

he cried out, *the LORD helped him, and GOD moved them to depart from him.* And that when Jehoshaphat returned to his own home after the battle, the son of Hanani, the seer, who went out to meet him, *reproved him for having gone to the help of the ungodly; and that therefore the wrath of the LORD was upon him.* See 2 Chronicles 18:31, and ch. 19:1, 2.

1 KINGS 22:34

(34) And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.

A *certain man* is a very decisive expression in the word of GOD. In this place it was the very man commissioned of the LORD; for the LORD both strung the bow, directed to the mark, and found out Ahab amidst all his disguise, and away to his heart in spite of all his armour. Alas! how could he think to escape when GOD pronounced his sentence?

1 KINGS 22:35-37

(35) And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. (36) And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country. (37) So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

Think, Reader! what an awful death this was, amidst the horrors of Naboth's blood calling for vengeance; and the GOD of Israel's altars, which he had caused to be deserted for Baal's, calling for judgment.

1 KINGS 22:38-40

(38) And *one* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according

unto the word of the LORD which he spake. (39) Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (40) So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

The HOLY GHOST is particular in causing to be related the circumstance of dogs licking his blood, by way of fulfilling his servant the Prophet's word, showing with what contempt his death was followed. And thus ended the life of this worthless, unprincipled man!

1 KINGS 22:41-50

(41) ¶ And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. (42) Jehoshaphat *was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. (43) And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. (44) And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. (45) Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (46) And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land. (47) *There was* then no king in Edom: a deputy *was* king. (48) Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber. (49) Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. (50) And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

The subject in those verses turns to the history of the other kingdom of Judah, and honourable mention is made of

Jehoshaphat the king of Judah. The account of this prince is but short in the book of the Kings; but it is more largely dwelt upon in the book of the Chronicles. He seems to have fallen under the divine displeasure in consequence of his forming an alliance with Ahab and his son Ahaziah. And his want of success upon those occasions at length taught him to withdraw his connections. But it appears; upon the whole, that he was a good king, and Judah flourished under his government. See 2 Chronicles 17:20.

1 KINGS 22:51-53

(51) Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. (52) And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: (53) For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

This is but the beginning of the short reign of Ahaziah. But short as it was, it was too long in evil. Alas! what a melancholy account, for the most part, is the statement given of the reigns of such men. The relation generally runs in the same words; He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father. O LORD what is the sum total of man's history, but of man's sinfulness, and thy grace. Doth not every act of thine speak in language like thine, O LORD, by the Prophet; *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger: I will not return to destroy Israel: for I am GOD, and not man: the HOLY ONE in the midst of thee.* Hosea 11:9.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not close this first book of the Kings without taking with it into our minds the many gracious lessons the

great author of it evidently intended that the church in all ages should gather from the records contained in it. In passing over the lives, the actions, and pursuits of the several successive monarchs it holds forth to view, we behold, though diversified by various characters, one general subject, though here and there it may be a page a little less stained with evil, of the dreadful effects of pride and ambition. In general a total departure from GOD. The *form* indeed with some kept up, but *the power of godliness* wanting. For though we make some exceptions, as in the instance of Solomon in the former part of his reign, yet after all allowances to soften the shades of the history, what is the whole picture but a perspective of fallen man exercising the long-suffering and patience of a most gracious covenant GOD.

In the lives of the few faithful servants and prophets of the LORD, raised up to minister in holy things amidst the general corruption, how delightful it is to read that the LORD hath not, and will not, cast away his people whom he foreknew. The period promised shall come. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Successive ministers in his church shall arise to keep alive the remembrance of this great event. And with an eye to him, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed, the LORD will have his heart engaged for Israel, from one end of the year even to the other end of the year.

Blessed JESUS! thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Stedfastly would I fix my eye on thee while passing through the several ages, and the reigns of those monarchs in Israel and Judah. And when I behold thy church oppressed, thy worship despised; idols desecrating thine altars, and impious men profaning thy sanctuary; I would be consoling myself with the assurance that in the worst of times thou hast a seed that serve thee; and while thy faithful ones are discouraged, as if none were left to call thee

blessed, many a thousand yet thine eyes regard, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. *The glorious LORD therefore will be unto his people at all times a place, of broad rivers, and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars; neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge! the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us!*

Hail! then, thou blessed LORD GOD, JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST! the gracious almighty covenanters in redemption. All scripture joins issue in this, and all the faithful rest secured in the mercy, that the LORD is bringing home his church through the wilderness of this world to glory; and whether evil men, or devils, rise up in confederacy against it, or whether by terrible things in righteousness the LORD is pleased to work, that period is ripening, and will unfold its blessed fruit in the very moment already appointed; *The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST; and he shall reign for ever and ever.—* Amen.

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE
SECOND BOOK

OF

THE KINGS

COMMONLY CALLED

THE

FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

AS this *Second* Book of the Kings is but a continuation of the same subject as the *First*; it may not be amiss to remark, that the same general observations, which were proposed to the Reader's consideration in the opening of the *former*, will be proper to be kept in remembrance at the entrance on *this*. The Reader of discernment, whose mind is under divine teaching, will discover in this, as in the preceding book of the Kings, many precious things contained in it, beside the history itself: which, to an awakened, and enlightened understanding, will abundantly tend to satisfy him, both of its divine authority, and of the gracious design of the HOLY GHOST, in causing it to be written, for the comfort and edification of the church in all ages.

Indeed there is one circumstance, and that of great note, to be attended to, in the perusal of the *second* book of the Kings, with which *the first* hath not such immediate connection: namely, that the greater part of the prophets, whose writings are placed at the end of the Bible, ministered to the church in their respective ages, during the period which this second book of the Kings records; that is from the days of *Uzziah* to the time of the Babylonish captivity. All from *Isaiah* to *Zephaniah* (*Ezekiel* and *Daniel* excepted) exercised their ministry during the years this second book of the Kings compriseth. It will be a point of no small importance, to the help of the pious Reader to keep this in his recollection, while going over this book of GOD.

In regard to the period of history contained in the second book of the Kings, it includes somewhat about 340 years; carrying on the history of the church from the death of *Ahab*, to the death of *Jehoiachim* which brings down the age of the world to between five and six hundred years before the advent of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. And as, by so much the nearer the circumstances of mankind are seen to approach to that one glorious era, which alone gives importance to the history of man; everything in reference to it, must be found to rise in importance also. I would therefore beg the Reader to have his attention the more awakened as he prosecutes the history, that he may catch here and there, if possible, some precious glimpses of JESUS. For if, from the earliest dawn of revelation, in the days of the patriarchs, the great Covenant Head of his church never left himself without witness, but frequently (as if to manifest how much he longed for the period of his becoming man for the redemption of his people) he showed himself to the faithful; surely, as that period drew nearer, it might be reasonably supposed, that he would now and then give a glance of his lovely Person, or (as the church

beautifully expresses it) *from behind the wall of our nature look forth at the windows, and show himself through the lattice.* In this book, if I mistake not, several instances of the kind occur. Happy will it be, both for Writer and Reader, if their discoveries correspond!

I only, upon the present occasion, as in the former, desire to send forth my poor labours, accompanied with the humblest prayers to him, whose blessing can alone make them profitable, that both to him that writes and him that reads, this sacred book may be blessed. Vouchsafe, gracious GOD! to instruct both by it, in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

This Chapter opens with relating a circumstance of sin in the conduct of Ahaziah. Elijah is commissioned to send an awful message to him. The king, in consequence, commands the prophet to appear before him. His messengers are destroyed. Ahaziah dieth, and Jehoram succeeds him in the kingdom.

2 KINGS 1:1

(1)¶ Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

The rebellion of Moab is a rod in God's hand to correct his people. Blessed are those corrections which lead our souls to bear the rod and who hath appointed it. Micah 6:9.

2 KINGS 1:2-4

(2) And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron

whether I shall recover of this disease. (3) But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? (4) Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

Reader! to what a wretched state was Israel reduced, in consequence of their idolatry! It is almost incredible to conceive how the mind of any man could ever be so degenerate as to fancy a dumb idol could speak. The name of this dunghill god is remarkable. The devil himself is called Beel-zebub. And this god of Ekron is Baal-zebub. Baal is the well known name of lord: and Zebub signifies a fly. But wherefore Ekron's image was so named, it is difficult to form an opinion. Are not the doctrines of charms, and omens, and what is called fortune telling, and the like superstitions, similar to the consulting this dunghill idol? I wish many who call themselves Christians, would learn the wickedness, as well as folly of such conduct. How lovely the prophet Elijah appears in his open reproof. Oh! for faithfulness in all the servants of JESUS!

2 KINGS 1:5-8

(5) And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? (6) And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* thou sendest to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. (7) And he said unto them, What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet you, and told you these words? (8) And they answered him, *He was* an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It *is* Elijah the Tishbite.

It is somewhat remarkable that the prophet Elijah, and John the Baptist, should have been as much alike in dress as they were in their commission. Our dear LORD pointed to John as the Elias of the gospel. *If ye will receive it, (said CHRIST) this is Elias which was for to come.* Matthew 11:14. Observe the alarms of a guilty conscience in the case of Ahaziah. His own fears interpreted to him that this must be the servant of the LORD, whose religion he had despised. Like his father, he knew that no prophet of the LORD could prophecy good concerning him, but evil. See 1 Kings 22:8.

2 KINGS 1:9-10

(9) ¶ Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. (10) And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I *be* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

This is a most interesting passage. Observe the rage and folly of the king, in sending to seize upon the prophet. Did he hope to alter the sentence by destroying the prophet? Could he indeed conceive so desperate a thing, as to think that the LORD'S servants would be unprotected in the LORD'S cause? But if the king was a wicked fool, how much greater this captain of his, with his fifty men! It is plain, he either did not believe him to be a man of GOD, or if he did, that he treated both him and his GOD with equal contempt. But what are we to think of Elijah? The apostle tells us that *he was a man of like passions with ourselves:* James 5:17. Reader! mark in the circumstances of GOD'S best servants, how much all men need grace to subdue their angry passions. In making this observation, however, let it be remembered, that it is not made with a view to condemn the prophet, in the destruction of the captain with his fifty. Perhaps the awful example here

made by their death was needful. And indeed, in the LORD'S answering by fire and consuming them, it is plain that it was so. Elijah, therefore, did not exercise this authority given him, for himself or his own safety, but for the glory of the LORD. But what I particularly wish the Reader to observe with me in this history is, how different the servant is from the LORD. When the disciples of JESUS desired permission to do as Elias had done, to a village of the Samaritans, how sweetly did our LORD rebuke them: *Ye know not* (said CHRIST) *what manner of spirit ye are of.* Luke 9:53-56. Oh! thou dearest JESUS! how lovely dost thou appear? And how precious is it, to see thee in thy gracious features of character, in that thou wert truly *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.* Hebrews 7:26. Reader! behold in the awful death of this captain and his fifty, how jealous the LORD is of his honour! *See* also, what interest the LORD'S servants have in the court of heaven? And observe, moreover, how careful the LORD is of his people. *Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones.* Matthew 18:6, 10.

2 KINGS 1:11-12

(11) Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. (12) And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

Had not this wretched captain with his fifty, heard what had taken place? If the king was hardened and bound with the blindness of iniquity! was it needful that he should follow him to his ruin? This man exceeded in presumption, if possible, the former. For he had not only the awful example of his ruin before his face, but his demand on Elijah is more impious. He not only demanded him to come down, but to come down quickly.

2 KINGS 1:13-14

(13) And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight. (14) Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.

How lovely doth this third captain appear, in thus intreating for mercy! He comes to Elijah because it was the king's command! But he comes to sue for favor. Reader! when the sinner, humbled under a sense of sin, and conscious of his undeservings, comes to the LORD GOD of the prophet's son, Elijah's Master; and throws himself upon the free bounty and sovereign grace of JESUS; oh! how we feel interested in his cause? He must succeed! Jesus waits to be gracious. He will save; that is, he will be JESUS. How beautifully the prophet describes this: Zephaniah 3:17.

2 KINGS 1:15

(15) And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king.

We are not told who this angel was. But may we not conjecture? When we recollect how much our Almighty JESUS, who is expressly called *the angel of the covenant*, delighted to manifest himself, in those early ages of his church, as if thereby, he meant to teach the faithful, that he longed for the fulness of time to come, when he would openly tabernacle among them; and when we consider, that this Angel of JEHOVAH's presence *saved them, and in his love, and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old*: I confess I am inclined to imagine that I see

JESUS, in all such sweet moments of communion with his servants. Isaiah 63:9.

2 KINGS 1:16-18

(16) And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, *is it* not because *there is* no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. (17) So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son. (18) Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Oh! how faithful is the prophet, when the LORD GOD of the prophets strengthens him! And, oh! how timid is the sinner, when the hand of GOD is upon him! Behold, Reader! the sure end of the ungodly: he shall not, be cannot stand in *the judgment; nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. The way of the ungodly shalt perish.* Psalm 1:5, 6.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, awfully behold, in the sad example of Ahaziah and his captains of fifty, with their fifties, how sin hardens the heart, and renders men ripe for punishment! See in them thine own picture by nature; and, but for grace, how justly the features would be marked still. To what a desperate length should I have run, had not the mercy of my God interposed, and stopped me in my daring career! Enlisted under the banner of sin and Satan; wearing his livery, and equipped with his armour, bow readily in those days of unregeneracy, should I have contended with his faithful servants, and from ignorance, malice, and deceitful lusts, have dared to oppose all that was gracious. Blessed JESUS! at

what expense of love, of grace, of mercy, and of blood, hast thou redeemed me, and made the deadly weapons of opposition fall from my hands.

To whom but thee, thou HOLY ONE of Israel, who hast made our peace in the blood, of thy cross, shall I ascribe this great salvation? Yes! blessed JESUS! thou, and thou alone, as thy FATHER'S precious gift to poor sinners, art the sole deliverer of the captive; for thou hast indeed taken away the captives from the mighty, and the prey of the terrible thou hast delivered. And now, LORD! what is the language of my heart, but like the poor submissive suppliant at the foot of Elijah, I would say to thee, as he did to the prophet; *let my life, I beseech thee, be precious in thy sight*. Oh! JESUS! thou Man of GOD, thou Man at GOD'S right-hand, who art fellow to the LORD of Hosts; again I say, as he did, let my life be precious in thy sight! Haste then, come down quickly, O LORD, and let my soul live before thee. So shall I live to thy glory while here below, and to thy redeeming praise when thou shalt take me to thyself above.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

This is an interesting Chapter, in that it contains the history of the removal of Elijah to heaven, and of establishing Elisha as his successor in the prophetic office upon earth: the dividing of Jordan; healing the waters: the children mocking Elisha, torn and destroyed.

2 KINGS 2:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

The ascension of Elijah to heaven, without passing through the intermediate passage of death, is striking and singular; never such an event happening before, except in the case of Enoch; (see Genesis 5:24, compared with Hebrews 11:5) it merits the more particular attention. Some have thought that the honour conferred upon this man, was on account of his great piety. And others have conjectured that it was to rouse the attention of the LORD'S people, Israel, to the consideration of another state, which, from their long degeneracy into idolatry, was almost effaced from their dark and earthly minds. But though this latter motive might, in a secondary point of view, be in the design; yet I cannot be brought to think that Elijah's singular piety and faithfulness, great as both these qualities, (through grace) were in the prophet's life, were the cause. I rather think that both in the patriarchal age, in the instance of Enoch, and now, while the church was in Canaan, in the instance of Elijah, these things were wholly intended to signify that glorious event hereafter to take place in the church of GOD, in the ascension of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Did not GOD our FATHER by such remarkable circumstances, mean to give the old church lively tokens of the triumph of our JESUS who, in this return to heaven, entered as the glorious forerunner of his people, and took possession of the kingdom in their name? Seen in this point of view, oh! how inconceivably sweet and precious is this account of Elijah, dearest LORD JESUS, if by thy blessed SPIRIT our views of this subject are directed to the right apprehension of it! Oh! do thou open our hearts more and more to the discovery of the many precious things as they concern thee, which are contained in it, that while we read this chapter *our meditation of thee may be sweet.*

2 KINGS 2:2-6

(2) And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said *unto him*, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel. (3) And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. (4) And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. (5) And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. (6) And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

It should seem that Elisha, as well as Elijah, had the knowledge of the great event about to be wrought. And indeed it was generally known, among the sons of the prophets. By what means the revelation was made is not said. But of what were the feelings of the school of the prophets, and of Elisha, on this departure of Elijah, we can only form conjectures. No doubt Elijah filled every hour, as the time drew on, in giving suitable instruction and consolation to those around him. There seems to have been a desire in the hoary prophet to have privacy, in that he so often requested Elisha to tarry behind him. Here, Reader! we may learn a lesson; how suited it is to dying men, and especially dying believers, to be free from much interruption. It is true, indeed, it becomes a most important office of the dying believer to leave a rich testimony behind him whose he is, and of his sure expectation of dying in the LORD. But this being done, the true believer in JESUS hath too much to say to JESUS himself to suffer interruption from the world, or the

people of it. But here, dearest LORD JESUS, shall I not leave Elijah and his successor going from Gilgal to Bethel, and from Bethel to Jericho and Jordan, to contemplate thee in the garden of Gethsemane, and at the farewell supper? Oh! how sweet that discourse followed up and closed with prayer, in which thou didst commit thy people to thy FATHER before the awful night, when cold as it was, so as to compel the servants of the High Priests to make a fire to warm themselves, thy sweat and agony was so great as to induce great drops of blood falling to the ground from thy sacred body! Here, dearest JESUS! here is a subject enough to call up animation in the most lifeless heart. See Luke 22:39-44.

2 KINGS 2:7-8

(7) And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. (8) And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

That sacred river Jordan, what miracles have been wrought upon it! Here it was that Joshua, as a type of the LORD JESUS, made so illustrious an appearance. See Joshua chap. 3. Header! as the ark which was always considered a lively type and symbol of GOD'S presence, made to Joshua a dry and safe passage over Jordan; so to Elijah. Jordan itself is like the river of death. JESUS hath opened a safe and easy passage through it to all his followers. Here, according to the highly finished representation of the prophet, the ransomed of the LORD shall pass over. JESUS himself is the way; and by his finished redemption work he hath divided the waters hither and thither; so that the faithful will pass over as on dry ground. Isaiah 35:9, 10.

2 KINGS 2:9-10

(9) ¶ And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. (10) And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

Elijah's question differs from Elisha's answer. What shall I do for thee! Whereas what Elisha desired, was not what Elijah *could* do. He had not the gifts of the spirit at his disposal. The departing prophet therefore seems to have referred it to the LORD, and to leave the decision of it in its being known by a sign. The greatest beauty in this passage, as it strikes me is, to notice wherein the servant Elijah differs from his master JESUS. The prophet Elijah desires to know what he should do for Elisha *before* he left him, conscious that he could do nothing for him *after*. But our JESUS, as if to teach his people that his departure was that he might enter more especially upon his glorious office of intercessor, bade them ask whatsoever they needed in his name, and promised it should be done for them. Reader! mark this in the memorandums of your heart, for it is a precious view of the LORD JESUS. John 15:16.

2 KINGS 2:11

(11) And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Instead of unprofitable and improper enquiries concerning this event, I would rather refer the Reader to the consideration, how lively a type the prophet was, in this instance, of his divine master. And is it not probable (for I beg it may be understood that I do not presume to say as much) that from this view of the prophet, in his translation, like

Enoch, to glory, the minds of the faithful in the church through all the intermediate ages from Elijah to CHRIST, were strengthened in their faith of the coming Saviour; the outlines of whose redemption-work they were brought savingly acquainted with? Hebrews 11:5.

2 KINGS 2:12

(12) And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

Hereby Elisha gave proof that the petition he had asked was granted. The renting of his garment perhaps had a greater signification than the mere expression of grief.

2 KINGS 2:13-15

(13) ¶ He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; (14) And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. (15) And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

Hereby the LORD gave a decisive testimony that Elisha was by him appointed the successor of his servant Elijah, Oh! that all who minister in holy things were careful to be convinced, that they carried with them their credentials.

2 KINGS 2:16-18

(16) And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. (17) And when they urged him till he

was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. (18) And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

There is somewhat mysterious in those verses. That the sons of the prophets should be so destitute of faith, and Elisha suffer himself to be led away to the permission of what is here said appears so truly unaccountable, that I confess I know not in what sense to consider the passage. If the whole arose from the slenderness of their faith, it only serves to afford a renewed instance of human infirmity. Might not the prophet do in this instance as in after ages, John the Baptist did concerning the enquiries of his disciples about CHRIST, send them for their own conviction unto JESUS? Matthew 2:2-6. Oh! blessed JESUS! how precious at every review is thy finished work!

2 KINGS 2:19-22

(19) ¶ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground barren. (20) And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him. (21) And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren *land*. (22) So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

Here Elisha enters upon his ministry. And a lovely service it was to heal the barren and corrupt waters of Jericho. Like the waters of Marah the appointed remedy cast in by the LORD'S command became efficacious to both. Reader! remark with me, that this remedy in both cases was of the LORD; and the remedy itself also typical of CHRIST. Is not JESUS the healer of all our Marahs, and all our barrenness? And is not JESUS all

this as the CHRIST of GOD; the Sent, the Sealed of the FATHER!
John 6:27.

2 KINGS 2:23-25

(23) And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. (24) And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. (25) And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

In this destruction of the wicked children there is more evidently implied than is here related. If we look into the book of the Chronicles, and compare what is there said with what, from this book of the Kings, we learn of the present despised and low estate of the church, we shall discover that to such a degree of contempt was the LORD'S cause now held by Israel, that the scoffing at *GOD'S* servants was in common practice. Here the LORD was pleased to show his abhorrence by this awful judgment on the children. It is not said that they were killed, but torn. Perhaps, however, in many instances, if not in all, death might follow. 2 Chronicles 36:16.

REFLECTIONS

I PASS over all lesser considerations in the perusal of this chapter, to behold with all suitable thankfulness to the LORD, as the gracious author of the mercy, thy happy privilege Elijah, whom thy GOD was pleased to take to himself in glory, without passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Thou wert indeed an highly favoured servant of our LORD! no doubt as Enoch, so Elijah, found the translation by faith. For nothing but *GOD'S* covenant love and grace in CHRIST JESUS, *could either have first procured heaven, or have*

opened a way of translation thither. In this believing view of JESUS, and by faith in his blood and righteousness, all the faithful have lived, and died as they lived, in the exercise of it. In this most dear and holy name I would hail thee, thou prophet of my GOD and Saviour on this happy departure of thine. And though now so many ages have run out since, yet in the faith of him who is the same yesterday, and today, and forever, I would bless the LORD JESUS in the recollection of his grace and goodness toward thee. At the same time praising his most holy name for all his departed servants, who while passing through the grave to their home in glory, were not less beloved, neither less happy, but found in the same complete and finished salvation; the same entrance being abundantly administered unto them, into the everlasting kingdom of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

But let not my meditations end here. Do I not behold in the servant some of the faint outlines of the master? Shall I see the prophet Elijah going up by a whirlwind into heaven, and shall I not recollect that the LORD GOD of the prophets ascended visibly into heaven in the presence of his apostles, attended with angels to grace his triumph? Yes! precious LORD! thou risen, ascended, and exalted Redeemer, my soul would take her flight on the wing of faith to the mount of Bethany, and gaze on thy blessed person, until that I followed thee to the right hand of power, and beheld all things put under thy feet! And surely the distinguished mercy manifested to the prophet Elijah in this instance, was principally with a view to show to thy church under the Old Testament dispensation, that such would be thy glorious triumphs when thou hadst conquered sin, death, hell, and the grave; and hereby opened thy kingdom to all believers.

And was not this Elijah a type in many other similar situations wherein a servant might be supposed to mark out the

features of his LORD. Was the prophet poor, and was our JESUS rich? Did he go in the strength of the LORD'S sustenance forty days and nights to mount Horeb? And was not JESUS led up of the SPIRIT forty days into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil? Did the widow's cruse multiply under Elijah's ministry by the word of JEHOVAH? And shall I not call to mind, blessed JESUS, how the loaves and the fishes multiplied under thine own Almighty hand, to give bread to the people in the wilderness? Did the LORD so far honour his servant as to raise the widow of Zarephath's son; and shall I overlook him who by his own power called from death the widow of Nain's son; and as a confirmation that he was GOD, brought up Lazarus from the grave, and will at the last day raise the bodies of all his saints, because he is the resurrection and the life? Oh! precious LORD of all thy people, I would bless thy holy name in all I read of thy ministering servants, of grace and mercy manifested to them. And in all I behold of miracles wrought by their instrumentality, I would ever be looking unto thee as the cause. Thou art the author and the finisher. By thee kings reign, and princes decree justice. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and the faithful in all ages, have acted under thy commission, and in thy name. To thee they bend the knee, and now the whole army of them, both in heaven and earth, joyfully confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

We are here presented with some account of the reign of Jehoram, In an enquiry concerning a quarrel between Israel and Moab, Elisha is commissioned with a gracious message from the LORD to Israel. The Moabites are conquered.

2 KINGS 3:1-3

(1) ¶ Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. (2) And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. (3) Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

The account of Jehoram is somewhat more favourable, than that of his father. He put away the image of Baal, it should seem, from his own house and family, but not out of Israel. What a strange thing this is? If he was convinced of the sin and folly in his own house: surely it must have been equally so in Israel. And we find that Jehu, as related in the after part of this history, found the kingdom, overrun with this idol. See Chap. 10:19. Moreover, it should seem that those sins which he followed of Jeroboam's were particularly the worship of the calves in Bethel. 1 Kings 12:28.

2 KINGS 3:4-5

(4) And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. (5) But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

The rebellion of Moab became the cause of the renewal of the war. The Reader may perhaps not immediately be able to reconcile the idea of a king connected with that of a sheepmaster in the same person. It would be so indeed in the present day. But he must be told that the revenues of princes in those ages of the world consisted more in the riches of agriculture and vineyards than either in extensive territories, or in gold and silver.

2 KINGS 3:6-7

(6) ¶ And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. (7) And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and* my horses as thy horses.

It is somewhat strange to find Jehoshaphat in league again after his former escape with Israel.—1 Kings 22:4 and 32. But Reader! how often is it the case in a spiritual sense. Alas! though we never go among mere carnal men without being wounded by their company, yet we are too often found with them again. Well might the apostle say, *Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing.* 2 Corinthians 6:17.

2 KINGS 3:8-9

(8) And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. (9) So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

This was the very wilderness in which Israel more than 500 years before had wanted water; and where the LORD had miraculously provided them with water. See Numbers 20:1-11.

2 KINGS 3:10

(10) And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

Observe the daring impiety of the king of Israel, in charging this plan of his own upon the LORD. Oh! how disposed the mind of man is to evil.

2 KINGS 3:11-20

(11) But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. (12) And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. (13) And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. (14) And Elisha said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. (15) But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him. (16) And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches. (17) For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. (18) And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. (19) And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones. (20) ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

I pray the Reader to mark with me the astonishing goodness of the LORD. Surely here, in an eminent degree, that scripture was fulfilled, *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. Romans 5:20. Is it not somewhat strange that the prophet Elisha should be upon this occasion with the amyl It would be so, had not the LORD been about to bestow a signal mercy upon his people, in the midst of all their undeservings. Reader! doth not GOD cause his holy word, as here he caused his servant the prophet, to be always near at hand for the consultation of his people. And Reader! do not fail to remark that though none of the kings knew Elisha was near them; yet

a poor, despised, and overlooked servant did. So is it not unfrequently now. While JESUS and his precious gospel are hid from the wise and prudent, how often are they revealed to babes. It should seem from the answer of the prophet that it was for the salvation of Jehoshaphat, and the faithful followers of the LORD, which were in the army, that Elisha had it in commission to attend the camp. How sweet the thought! It is on account of JESUS'S Church the world is upheld. Believers in CHRIST are the salt of the earth, which preserves it from universal putrefaction. There is somewhat very striking in the prophet's waiting for the LORD'S presence, and in the mean season composing his mind with melody. Observe the LORD'S mercies. Israel shall have abundant supply, and to show the LORD'S hand in this supply, it shall be without the ordinary means. Moreover; Israel shall have a complete victory over her enemies; and this victory shall be of the LORD. But what I most particularly would beg the Reader not to overlook in those mercies is what is said as to the time in which the beginning of them was shown; namely, that it was *in the morning when the meat-offering was offered*; thereby evidently alluding to the season of sacrifice. If the Reader will consult the law of Moses on this grand subject, he will find that in the daily offering of the two lambs, one in the morning, and the other in the evening, this meat-offering with both formed a part in the solemn service. And as the LORD declared it to be *a continual offering*, in his sight of a *sweet savor*; and which was expressly commanded to be observed throughout their generations; and that there the LORD would *meet them*; would *dwell among them*; would be *their GOD*; and they should *know him*: I hope the Reader is led by the HOLY GHOST, the great author of this appointment, to see so much of JESUS and his precious sacrifice, which he offered to GOD for a sweet smelling savour in all this, that he cannot need any observation from me for the pointing it out. What

was the morning and evening lamb offered daily for, but to keep up a perpetual type of the LAMB of GOD, slain from the foundation of the world? And what did the continual presentation of this sacrifice set forth, but that the efficacy of CHRIST's blood should be of perpetual duration, and his priesthood an increasing ministry? And wherefore was the promise of JEHOVAH to meet his people upon these occasions so solemnly assured, but to teach the church that the meeting place of JEHOVAH with his people is in CHRIST JESUS, and nowhere else Reader! let me beg of you to turn to the several scriptures I shall here mark at the close of these observations. And oh! that the LORD may make them most blessed to your meditations! Exodus 29:38-46. Daniel 9:21. Ephesians 5:2.

2 KINGS 3:21-25

(21) And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. (22) And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as red as blood*: (23) And they said, This *is* blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. (24) And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country. (25) And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it.

No doubt the LORD overruled the minds of the Moabites to this delusion, in supposing what they beheld of the water to be blood. And indeed as they knew no rain had fallen, such an idea was not, altogether improbable. The victory of Israel, which Elisha had promised in the LORD'S name, certainly was well followed up. It is remarkable upon this occasion, that the

Israelites were permitted to act different from a known law!
Deuteronomy 20:19.

2 KINGS 3:26-27

(26) And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

(27) Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

Observe the sad state of an idolatrous mind. Human sacrifices to devils are among the abominations. Thus the great enemy of souls to confound, as he thought, the divine institution of sacrifices in his church, which were all directed with an eye to CHRIST, tempted to this imitation among his vassals by such dreadful inventions. See an awful device of Satan to corrupt Israel: Numbers 25:2, 3.

REFLECTIONS

I stay not to remark all the interesting things which this chapter contains; otherwise I might charge it upon my soul to admire and adore, what I have read of grace and mercy transcending iniquity and undeservings. But I pass over; for the present; the consideration of all these, important as they are in themselves, to contemplate JESUS: most beautifully shadowed forth in the prophet's prayer, being answered in the time of the morning sacrifice. How sweetly was the prophet's mind prepared for the expectation of this mercy when the HOLY GHOST; whose office it is to glorify JESUS, poured out of his blessed influences through the medium of this minstrel. But how glorious an object is it thus to behold in ages so remote from the hour of the Redeemer's sacrifice, its blessed efficacy in bringing down all needed blessings.

Pause, my soul; I charge thee pause, and say what upon earth can impress thy mind more in token of the infinite importance of the redemption by JESUS'S sacrifice, than that JEHOVAH, in so many instances; made even the hour when in after ages that sacrifice was to be offered memorable, in the pouring out of his mercies. Did the LORD GOD appoint the morning lamb, and the evening lamb, a standing daily memorial of his lamb slain; and did all his faithful servants eye JESUS in their morning and evening oblation? And wilt not thou, my soul, now thy JESUS, thy GOD and Saviour, hath by that *one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified*; wilt thou not eye him in all thy poor presentations of the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Precious JESUS! grant me to look on thee continually. Thou art the only sacrifice for sin. Thou art the only lamb of GOD for a burnt-offering. The golden altar of thy divine nature, on which the sacrifice can alone be offered; and the everlasting High Priest by whom all can be presented. Thou, thou art the sum and substance of all. Oh! Holy FATHER! having boldness to enter into the holiest by his blood; behold I come in his name, making mention of his righteousness, even his righteousness only. Covered under his complete, all justifying robe, and washed from all impurities in his blood: let me enter into the sacred retirings of the LORD GOD. Yes! most gracious, indulgent FATHER! the remedy is of thy own providing; it is thou, blessed be thy glorious name, thou who hast *reconciled all things to thyself by JESUS CHRIST*. Look, holy FATHER, upon the face of thine anointed! and say, Canst thou deny me any mercy while I ask it in thy dear Son's name? And blessed, forever blessed, be GOD the HOLY GHOST, for having left upon record that sweet scripture to confirm those well grounded assurances in JESUS'S name and work; *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

In this chapter the prophet Elisha is again introduced. He multiplieth the widow's oil. A son is given her. The child dieth. Elisha raiseth the child again. At Gilgal he healeth the poison in the pot. He feedeth an hundred men with twenty loaves of barley and ears of corn. These are among the contents.

2 KINGS 4:1

(1) ¶ Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

The conduct of this widow may serve to teach us where we are to apply in our insolvency and distresses, even to the LORD GOD of the prophets. You and I, Reader, may truly say to JESUS, thou knowest; LORD, we are insolvent, and the creditor is come to take us into bondage. But thou knowest also, that thy fear is in us, and that we are thy servants. That is, if indeed JESUS hath called us by his grace. The conduct of this poor woman may serve also, in a yet more peculiar manner, to teach where the widows of GOD'S servants, and especially his prophets, I mean his poor ministers, are to apply, when from the narrowness of their income they are left by their husbands insolvent and in poverty. What a blessed and gracious direction to this effect is that sweet precept and promise. Jeremiah 49:11.

2 KINGS 4:2

(2) And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

So may all the faithful servants: of the LORD say, by way of leading the minds of the needy to JESUS;—What shall I do for thee? But JESUS can do all.

2 KINGS 4:3-6

(3) Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few. (4) And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. (5) So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out. (6) And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

Do I not see in this representation how all the vessels of our poor nature may be unceasingly filled from the inexhaustible fullness of JESUS, *the fullness of him that filleth all in all*. Borrow as we may of our neighbours, the largest vessels for containing his gifts and graces; the oil of gladness and of mercy, will infinitely overrun them all. I mean whatever views we derive from the instruction of others concerning the LORD JESUS, all vessels fail before his infinite fulness fails. Nay, JESUS takes occasion from our very wants to make vacancies for the pouring out of his fullness. I cannot but hope that the Reader will learn from hence that in all barrenness, leanness; and the like, the cause is in ourselves. It is unbelief which raiseth up a cloud of difficulties, as if the infinite fulness of JESUS was not enough to answer the wants of his people.

2 KINGS 4:7

(7) Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

See what a blessed issue to the poor widow's poverty. There was enough not only to pay the creditor, but to live both herself and household on what remained. And Reader! Is there not enough in JESUS and his precious salvation, to answer all the demands of that law, the breaches of which hath made you and me insolvent, and also to justify our souls before GOD?

2 KINGS 4:8

(8) ¶ And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where *was* a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

It appears from Elisha's history that he frequently travelled from mount Carmel to Samaria, and therefore was necessarily obliged to ass through *Shunem*, which was a small city belonging to the tribe of Issachar. See Chap. 2:25. But (as the after events in this woman's life make it appear) the LORD was overruling the prophet's path in this instance to a work of mercy. The Reader will not fail, I hope, to have his mind directed to the steps of JESUS, concerning whom the Evangelist expressly tells us that *he must needs go* through Samaria; that is, I apprehend, JESUS was constrained in his coming into this world to seek and save that which was lost, to visit Samaria, because he knew that there was a woman among the number which his FATHER had given him for redemption, who was then living in a state of unawakened sin and unregeneracy. Oh! precious JESUS! And is there not an holy constraint, even now, in thine hallowed bosom, that in thy gathering all thy people unto thee, thou shouldest send thy blessed SPIRIT to awaken sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of sin and Satan to GOD?

2 KINGS 4:9-10

(9) And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. (10) Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

There is a vast deal of generosity in this woman's mind: and yet nothing costly. How often, when entertaining strangers, have men found that they have been entertaining angels, or messengers of GOD, unawares. Yes! JESUS was a stranger when he came into this world; and had not where to lay his head. And oh, Reader! how little did you and I know of him when he turned in and invited himself to our house, and to our heart? for if he had not, we never should have invited him. Hebrews 13:1. Matthew 25:35.

2 KINGS 4:11-13

(11) And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. (12) And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. (13) And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

There is a nobleness of soul in the woman, in thus declining court favor. The prophet's interest was more with GOD than with the king. It is as if she had said, Speak for me not to man, but to GOD. Reader! would you be spoken for? Yes! to the King of Kings, and LORD of LORDS to the captain indeed of the LORD'S host; even JESUS, the GOD of our salvation!

2 KINGS 4:14-17

(14) And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. (15) And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in

the door. (16) And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. (17) And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

In order to have a clear conception of the great earnestness manifested among all the Israelites for children, it should be remembered that this was with an eye to the coming Messiah. That promised seed every Israelite was extremely anxious should spring from his family. Hence Gehazi concluded that a son would be so highly esteemed a blessing. And hence the Shunammite's expressions of joy were so lively.

2 KINGS 4:18-21

(18) ¶ And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. (19) And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. (20) And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died. (21) And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out.

What an unexpected event was this? Who would have thought that a child unasked, and given at the instance of the prophet's prayer, should be thus soon recalled. Reader! do not fail to gather from it in the first opening of the subject, that the LORD exerciseth the graces of his people. They must be tried; they must be afflicted; on purpose that they may be led to trust on the LORD. Zephaniah 3:12.

2 KINGS 4:22-24

(22) And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. (23) And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* well. (24) Then she saddled an ass, and

said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.

What can be the object of this Shunammite in this journey? Are not all her hopes now gone? The child is dead. Had he still life in him there might be hopes. But now he is dead; wherefore go to the prophet? Doth she really believe that the prophet can raise him from the dead? Yes, Reader; depend upon it she thought so. I do not, for myself, hesitate to conclude that she really did believe that Elisha would give her son to her again. For observe, she said to her husband as she went: *It shall be well*. And I confess that I am the more inclined to this conclusion, because the apostle Paul, under the HOLY GHOST, tells us in his animated account of those illustrious heroes of faith in the Old Testament scripture, that the faith of the woman was such as to receive their dead raised to life again. See Hebrews 11:35. Hence therefore this woman, with a faith in GOD'S covenant-love and mercy, and which is equal to almost anything we meet with in scripture, was so firmly persuaded that the gracious GOD who gave this child to her, on her part unasked, could as easily restore him to her again, that she hastens to the prophet to seek an interest in his prayers for the accomplishment of it. So that she leaves her dead child to fly to the living GOD. She makes no preparation for his burial; as if confident he should not be buried; but tells her husband all shall be well; and like a true descendant and daughter of the patriarch, goes in faith and confidence to GOD, accounting that GOD was able to raise him up even from the dead. Hebrews 11:19. Stop, Reader, I pray you, before you go further in the relation of this wonderful history, and ask your own heart whether, amidst the lesser trials for the exercise of your faith, you can imitate such an illustrious example! have not you the same gracious covenant GOD to fly to as she had? Hath the LORD anytime raised your expectations in his pardoning love and mercy; and hath any

thwarting providences afterwards intervened so as to cloud your hopes; how do you feel upon those occasions? It is true you have not the prophet Elisha to intercede for you. But I hope you do not overlook and forget that you have one infinitely higher, even the LORD God of all prophets, JESUS, JEHOVAH'S High Priest forever, an everlasting advocate with the FATHER, and the propitiation of our sins. Oh! precious JESUS! how faded appear the most splendid actions of all thy ministering servants, when thy glory is beheld in view.

2 KINGS 4:25-26

(25) So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite: (26) Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

The relation of this scriptural story, in the mere letter of the subject, is uncommonly interesting. The prophet's salutation and enquiry of her welfare, and that of her family, and her short but expressive answer, are very striking. It behoves the ministers of God both in spiritual and temporal mercies, to take part in the concerns of their people. And observe the pious frame of mind in the woman. Though her soul within her was convulsed with sorrow, as afterwards when she came nearer Elisha, he saw her agony, for her very looks expressed it; yet such was her faith and patience, that she said, *All is well.* That is, all is well, because what hath taken place is from God's appointment. She hoped an happy issue both from what she knew God was *able* to do, and from what she hoped that God would do. Sweet and blessed frame of mind! And depend upon it, Reader, the same can our LORD JESUS CHRIST work by his HOLY SPIRIT in every heart of his people, when, as in the instance of this woman, he works a faith suited to every trying situation.

2 KINGS 4:27-28

(27) And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.
(28) Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

This is a most interesting part of the narrative. It is here rising to a great degree of earnestness. Her whole soul was in action, and the body participated, as is evident in catching hold of the prophet. Not in anger, as Gehazi thought; but in love, as Elisha well interpreted by her looks. And her words vehemently spoke it in the most fervent pleading. What she said strongly expressed her faith that even now, unpromising as matters appeared, that gracious GOD who gave a son so contrary to all her expectations, could as easily give him to her again. Did I desire a son? Was this blessing first in *my* thoughts? Was it not in GOD'S? And did GOD raise my expectations, and then so suddenly blast them? Surely this can never be in the plan of him *whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure*. Isaiah 46:18. Reader! oh that you and I had grace to exercise such lively faith in JESUS? May we not, with infinitely greater reason, as to the foundation of our faith, may we not say; Did we desire a Saviour? Did we first ask this unspeakable gift of our GOD? Did we even know that we needed a Saviour? Nay, did we not stand out long, very long, after the blessed, precious gift was given, against all his gracious calls; and in actions, if not in words, say, *We will not have man to reign over us?* Now then, when he by his HOLY SPIRIT hath conquered our stubborn nature, and made us willing in the day of his power; shall we fear or doubt his love? Did GOD our FATHER raise such glorious hopes of salvation; and will he now disappoint them? Oh! precious JESUS! I would gather a lesson from the Shunammite's faith;

and as she caught thy servant the prophet by the feet, so LORD would I lay hold of thee while I lie at thy feet, and never, no never, let thee go until that thou bless me.

2 KINGS 4:29-30

(29) Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. (30) And the mother of the child said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

It is gracious when JESUS sends his servants, the ministers of his gospel, to his people, and commissions them to good. But, oh! how infinitely surpassing the whole choir of angels in their ministering service, is the coming of JESUS himself. Yes! dearest LORD; like the Shunammite I would say, never shall my soul give over her importunity, till thou comest in thine own dear Person.

2 KINGS 4:31

(31) And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

How important an instruction ministers of the gospel may gather from hence! Though they preach in their master's name, and act wholly by his authority; yet there will be no voice or cry for salvation in the sinner's soul; no, nor even the grace of spiritual apprehension in the most earnestly delivered truth, until the HOLY GHOST speak in the word, and by the word, to the sinner's conscience. See 1 Corinthians 3:7. 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

2 KINGS 4:32-35

(32) And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. (33) He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. (34) And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. (35) Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

While I desire the Reader to remark with me the graciousness of GOD, in thus teaching the early church by such miracles the blessed doctrines of the resurrection; and more particularly, as all of them referred to the Person of the LORD JESUS; I beg the Reader at the same time very particularly to keep in view the striking difference between the miracles of JESUS, and those of his servants, which acted in his name, and by his authority. Elisha prayed unto the LORD: JESUS commanded the dead to rise. The servant acted in the LORD'S name JESUS in his own. What prophet, what servant of JEHOVAH, ever said as JESUS did; I am the resurrection and the life. And who but GOD himself could, in confirmation of this blessed truth, have commanded the dead, like Lazarus, to have come forth? Oh! glorious LORD JESUS; John 11:25. 43, 44.

2 KINGS 4:36-37

(36) And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. (37) Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

And will not the resurrection of the bodies of believers at the last day, be accomplished in a similar way? Shall not the soul take up the body? and then from being a glorified body, no longer partaking of its former corruption, but which the grave, in its office of a destroyer, hath forever done away, it wilt become the joyful, happy, holy partner with the soul in the

union of both with JESUS, and altogether will partake in all the joys of salvation through an unceasing eternity. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

2 KINGS 4:38

(38) ¶ And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and see the pottage for the sons of the prophets.

This setting before the prophet, implies receiving instruction: probably expounding the scripture. Ezekiel 8:1.

2 KINGS 4:39-41

(39) And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not. (40) So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O *thou* man of God, *there is* death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*. (41) But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

The poison in the food, spiritually explained, leads us to consider how cautious men should be, and especially the sons of the prophets, in consenting to anything but what the apostle calls wholesome words, even the words of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. The pure faith of the gospel is the food of our souls, and there is death in the pot indeed, when anything be mixed with this, contrary to JESUS, as the sole cause of salvation. The wild gourds are like our wild works, all poisonous. But thou, O man of GOD, flee these things, and let JESUS be the first and the last, and the all in all of redemption! 1 Timothy 6:3. 11.

2 KINGS 4:42-44

(42) And there came a man from Baalshalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. (43) And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*. (44) So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.

I cannot help remarking again, if peradventure I have mentioned it before, that among the precious things of the sacred scriptures of the Old Testament, those are not the least, which represent the HOLY GHOST as shadowing forth, upon many occasions, the outlines of JESUS. When we see the prophets, and priests and servants of the LORD sketching, in type and shadow, some of our LORD'S characters, though it be ever so faintly; doth it not serve to teach you, Reader, (I bless the LORD it doth me) the graciousness of the HOLY GHOST? Did not the blessed SPIRIT seem to intimate by this plan, that he always delighted to glorify the LORD JESUS: and as such, as if to keep up in the minds of his people, the coming of the Son of GOD, caused his servants to perform occasionally such acts of beneficence and mercy, as the LORD JESUS himself should hereafter more fully display, when the time came for his tabernacling among us? Hence feeding; with a few loaves, an hundred men, was a beautiful representation of him, who not only would cause the loaves and fishes to multiply under his Almighty hand, for the supply of the bodies of the hungry; but would himself be the everlasting sustenance of his people, as the living bread of their souls, forever. LORD! I would say; *Ever more give us this bread!* John 6:5-14, 32-58.

REFLECTIONS

How lovely is it to behold in this *great* woman of Shunem, (as she is called) the blessed fruits of real piety. Reader! if we

love JESUS, we cannot but love his people. *This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth GOD love his brother also.* She did not say to the prophet; *be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding, the things are not given which are needful to the body.* But, like another *Lydia*, her language was; *If ye have Judged me to be faithful to the LORD, come into my house, and abide there.* And shall I not constrain thee, thou blessed JESUS, as oft as thou passeth by, to turn in unto me, that we may eat bread together? And be thou not as a way-faring man, that tarrieth but for a night; but I would constrain thee to continue to the breaking of the day: and do thou, dearest, honored LORD, do thou make thyself known to me *in breaking of bread and of prayer.* And though I have nothing to provide thee; nothing, like this Shunammite, to give thee, (as the *bed*, and the *table*, and the *stool*, and the *candlestick*;) yet, when thou comest, thou wilt bring all things with thee; and thou thyself wilt be all things to me; light to my darkness, a rest for my wearied soul to repose upon, and *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all my glorying may be in thee, O LORD!*

My soul! do thou learn from this great woman, *another* sweet lesson. While men of the world, *from* the world are seeking their portion, and would rejoice at the offer of being spoken of to the king of an earthly court; oh! for grace, like her, to see the happiness of dwelling among that people, whose distinguishing character it is, that *they shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.* Yes! blessed JESUS! I would be spoken for to thee indeed, and count it my chief joy to be of thy people.

And lastly, before I take my leave of this precious chapter, let me look up to thee, thou blessed Author and Finisher of faith, that thou wouldest give me a portion of the same precious spirit, which this Shunammite possessed in so large a degree.

Is it possible, dearest JESUS, that I can thus read of a woman, who lived in ages so remote from thy coming, acting faith upon covenant promises, to such an extent as really to receive her dead child, by virtue of it, raised to life again; and yet who live so many ages after thou hast wrought out and completed thy salvation, possessing all thine exceeding great and precious promises, doubt and fear, and too often call in question, the certainty of them? Oh! for grace to believe the record GOD the FATHER hath given of his dear Son. LORD! I would pray, above all things, give me faith, that I may be a patient follower of them *who now through faith and patience inherit the promises*. LORD! make me faithful unto death, that I may obtain *that crown of glory which fadeth not away*.

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

The interesting ministry of Elisha is continued throughout this chapter. The prophet healeth Naaman, the Syrian, of his leprosy. He refuseth the gifts and rewards of the Syrian. Gehazi, his servant, taking them, is in judgment smitten with the leprosy.

2 KINGS 5:1

(1) ¶ Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was* a leper.

How beautiful is the account given by the sacred historian of this Naaman, by way of raising our notions of him. He was a great man; and an honourable man, and though an heathen, and an idolator, yet the LORD had given him success in arms; but in the midst of all these things, the dreadful, loathsome

disease of the leprosy, made him a matter of terror to everyone that came near him, lest they should be infected by him. As a commentator once said, in reading this account of Naaman, "there was not a slave in Syria which would have exchanged his skin with him." Reader! such is sin! Wherever it is, and in whomsoever it reigns, it throws down all other endowments!

2 KINGS 5:2

(2) And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

Was there not an overruling providence in the captivity of this Israelitish damsel? Reader! look at the subject as it really is. The LORD had a mercy in store for Naaman. He causes, therefore, this daughter of his people to be taken into captivity. She tells of Israel's prophet, and the wonders he had wrought. And at length, for the better accomplishment of GOD'S purpose, she is taken into Naaman's family. How often doth the LORD do this in spreading the savor of his grace, and making his salvation known. The early knowledge this little maid had of Elisha and his miracles, may serve to give parents a profitable lesson by the way, how very speedily they ought to bring them acquainted with JESUS and his great salvation. Parents know not how soon their children may be sent out into life, or they themselves taken from them. Oh! that fathers and mothers, whose bowels yearn over their little ones, would seriously lay this to heart, and very early bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD! Ephesians 6:4.

2 KINGS 5:3-4

(3) And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would recover him of his

leprosy. (4) And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.

I cannot but request the Reader's attention with me, to the story of this case of Naaman altogether, because I conceive that it is intended, in a spiritual sense, to set forth both the grace, and the freeness of that grace, as a type of JESUS's cleansing poor leprous sinners. And I think it the more remarkable, because we only meet with the instance of this Gentile in the Old Testament to this point; and the instance of another Gentile in the New, the woman of Canaan; though her child's disease was not of the leprosy, yet JESUS can be alone the healer of both. Matthew 15:22 &c.

2 KINGS 5:5-8

(5) And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten changes of raiment. (6) And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. (7) And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. (8) And it was *so*, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

Reader! observe the different conduct induced by nature and grace in the minds of men. When the king of Israel received this letter, nature, untaught of God, made an alarming interpretation. When Hezekiah received a letter from an

idolatrous, prince, grace prompted him to spread it before the LORD. Isaiah 37:14.

2 KINGS 5:9

(9) ¶ So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

Reader! do not fail to observe how Naaman came. His gifts were in his hand, and he himself, no doubt, gorgeously dressed, to cover his leprous body. And could he hope that an enemy to Israel, the GOD of Israel would regard him? Behold in this man, an emblem of the coming of every unawakened sinner! He comes to purchase his salvation. He comes in his best robes, his best chariot, his gifts to hide his sinful soul. Alas! all these must be put off, and the sinner come down from all high flights of fancied goodness, before a cure can be obtained for the leprosy of the soul.

2 KINGS 5:10

(10) And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

And says not the prophet, in this instance, like the gospel? *Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved*, is the sweet language it proclaims. Go, wash in the blood of the Lamb, not seven times indeed, for he that is once washed, needs no more sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 10:18., And, as JESUS himself graciously said, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. John 13:10.

2 KINGS 6:11-12

(11) But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. (12) *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of*

Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

Reader! observe in the conduct of Naaman, what a deadly foe the pride of man is to the reception and enjoyment of our chiefest felicities. And observe further, though this Syrian had cause enough, in such a filthy, loathsome disease, to have made him meek of heart, yet it had not subdued his pride. Alas! how many are there under the most humbling situations, that are never truly humbled in soul. Is not the conduct of Naaman, in preferring the great rivers of Damascus to the sacred streams of Jordan, not dissimilar to those who are unconscious of the difference between the outward means of grace, and the inward power. And wherein! doth Naaman differ from modern unbelievers, who, ignorant of GOD'S righteousness, go about to establish their own righteousness, and take up with their own washings in the Abenas and Pharparas of unrenewed nature rather than the precious blood of JESUS?

2 KINGS 5:13-14

(13) And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? (14) Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Father has the same sense and meaning here, as master. Every master of a family may be said to be the father of it, in this point of view. But what I principally desire of the Reader in this verse is, to trace the hand of the LORD in the work. It was the LORD that caused this little maid of Israel to be tarried captive into Syria: and perhaps among other causes, very principally with a view to lay a foundation for the cure of this

leper. Our LORD himself expressly tells us, that while many lepers were in Israel at this very time when Naaman was healed, Elisha had commission to cleanse none but him. Luke 4:27 It was therefore the LORD which caused this little maid to be taken captive. It was from the same overruling providence of the LORD, that she was brought into Naaman's house. It was the LORD which brought to this young Israelite's mind, while in Damascus, the recollection of Elisha the prophet, in Israel. And it was the LORD which prompted her to recommend Israel's prophet to Naaman's wife. And was it not the same Almighty LORD which operated upon Naaman's other servants to cool down their master's rage, and induce him to listen to reason. And above all, who but the LORD of Hosts, *who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working*, could have influenced this haughty Syrian to go down into Jordan, after all the hatred and rage he had manifested against it. Pause, Reader! in the review of the many means adopted to the accomplishment of this one purpose, and learn with me to admire and adore the providences of GOD, thus wonderfully carrying on the sacred purposes of his will. And do not stop here. From the world of nature press on and contemplate the same Almighty hand unremittingly engaged in the world of grace. Who was it, my soul, that first gave me to see, amidst all my fancied greatness and importance, that I was but a poor leper! Who was it first told thee of JESUS CHRIST? Who inclined me to seek from this Almighty Prophet in Israel, the cure of my leprosy? And when, like another Naaman, I came to him in all my best things, hoping to purchase his favor by presenting him his own gifts; and the mortifying message from his holy word was sent me, to wash in his blood and be clean, my proud self-righteous heart was lifted up to reject, in rage, such a doctrine; who was it that rooted out that pride, that softened that rage, and made me willing to be saved in GOD'S own way, and by the LORD'S own power? Oh! precious,

precious JESUS? never, never let me lose sight of thy Person, grace and mercy, but delight to give thee, what is so justly thy due, all the glory!

2 KINGS 5:15-19

(15) ¶ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant. (16) But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused. (17) And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. (18) In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. (19) And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

Observe what a vast work the LORD had wrought upon the heart of this Syrian! The leprosy of his skin was not only washed away, but the leprosy and unbelief of his soul, he is at once convinced that the GOD of Israel must be the true GOD, and that there can be no other. Observe, moreover, how his heart was affected in wishing now for Elisha to take this blessing, as he called it, not any longer as the price of his cure, but as the token of his love. And observe how precious the very earth of Israel was to his view, who before this had despised her sacred river. Such, Reader will ever be the blessed effects of a change of heart, and the real conversion of the soul to GOD. Poor man! he feared indeed, that he should be obliged to dissemble his religion when the king, his master, on his return to Syria, made him attend him to his idol worship. And here he strikingly represents the case of many a young convert in the first opening of his renewed life.

Timid and apprehensive lest carnal friends should mock or ill treat them, many there are, like this Syrian, or like Nicodemus, who in their first awakenings, visit JESUS by night. John 3:1-2.

2 KINGS 5:20-24

(20) ¶ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. (21) So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is* all well? (22) And he said, All *is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. (23) And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him. (24) And when he came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

I cannot pass over the review of these verses, without desiring the Reader to stop and remark with me, one or two circumstances which deserve our observation. What an awful character was this Gehazi! Though he had been so long with his master, had seen his miracles, heard his discourses, and was fully convinced that Elisha's God could and would supply all their need; yet he covets the pitiful things of silver and gold Naaman had brought with him! And, Reader! do not fail to observe, for it is a point of the greatest importance; that being in the prophet's service, seeing his miracles, and hearing his sermons, conveyed no grace to the heart of Gehazi. Naaman's servants, though idolators, were faithful. Elisha's, though worshipping the true God, was base and unworthy. Oh! what lessons do such things teach us! And

note, in this lying conduct of Gehazi, how daringly he called upon the LORD'S name in the deed: *As the LORD liveth*, was his expression. If I mistake not, the HOLY GHOST hath marked the self-existence, sovereignty, and supremacy of the LORD JEHOVAH, under this phrase in scripture, in many parts where we meet with it. But then it is always spoken either by the LORD himself, or in the most reverential manner by his servants, in reference to him. And it implies that, strictly and properly speaking, none but GOD himself can be said to live. All other existence is derived from him. If this be the real state of the case, I pray the Reader to remark with me, what an awful profanation that must be of this distinguishing perfection of JEHOVAH, when light minds, and which is very common in the world, in their trifling conversation, by way of confirming what they say, assume this language, and cry out; *as I live*; Isaiah 49:18. Jeremiah 22:24. Ezekiel 14:16. 1 Kings 18:15, &c.

2 KINGS 5:25-27

(25) But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, *Whence comest thou, Gehazi?* And he said, Thy servant went no whither. (26) And he said unto him, *Went not mine heart with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?* (27) The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper *as white as snow*.

It should seem from what Elisha said to Gehazi, concerning *oliveyards, and vineyards*, and the like, that the prophet not only knew by divine teaching the *sin* of Gehazi, but the *design* he had in seeking Naaman's wealth. He was probably planning a scheme to dispose of the money, in the purchase of

those things for himself and family. Observe, if so, what an awful purchase he had made, instead of the one he intended. He and his seed shall be marked with a loathsome disease and with infamy forever. Oh! ye unhappy, deluded, and wretchedly mistaken parents! do ye not, when determining to be rich, pierce yourselves through with many sorrows. Oh! Sirs! what of real happiness do you entail upon your offspring, though you entail upon them the largest estates! And if for the purchase of this world's treasure for your children, you sacrifice your own everlasting good; think in a dying hour, with what reflections in yourself, or what *real* thankfulness and affection from them, your mind will be comforted. Oh! for that solemn sentence of our adorable LORD, to be written on the walls of every worldly man's house, and sounded in his ears every day; *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Matthew 16:26.

REFLECTIONS

READER! though I have already detained you, as we have passed through this chapter, with several suitable reflections, as they appeared to my view, and arose in my mind, yet I would call upon you before we close the book, to gather up a few more of a spiritual nature, which I pray the LORD to make profitable.

If we have been reading the history of Naaman's leprosy, as a matter remote from ourselves, and simply no other than a transaction which occurred in the annals of Israel, many years since; we have lost all the gracious designs which the HOLY GHOST had in view, in causing such a memorable event to be recorded. Reader! you and I, and every child of Adam, bring with us into the world the leprosy of sin. *Behold!* (says David) *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Are you, Reader, sensible of this? Do you know it? Do you believe it? Oh! then, I say as the captive maid in Syria; Would to GOD you were with the Prophet that is in Samaria, even the LORD GOD of the prophets, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, for he would recover you of your leprosy!

And, Reader! do not come, as the Syrian did, with chariots and horses; do not seek with gifts and rewards to purchase redemption. Our JESUS is too rich to need our gold; too gracious to accept anything from his creatures. He hath a fulness, a suitableness, an all-sufficiency in himself; and his precious blood cleanseth from all sins. Dearest JESUS! behold I come to thee. No Naaman, no leper at the foot of the mountain; no Ethiopian can need cleansing more than I the cry of my soul is, *Lord! if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!* Oh! then put forth thy gracious hand; put forth thy sovereign grace in my soul, and pronounce the healing word, *I will; be thou clean;* and immediately my soul shall be healed. And healed by thee, like Naaman, my soul will be fully convinced that there is no GOD in all the earth, no other name under heaven given among men, whereby sinners may be saved! Oh! for grace to know with Paul, now that *we are washed, that we are sanctified, that we are justified in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the SPIRIT of our GOD.* And shortly we shall *then* come to sing that song with all the congregation in heaven, who were once leprous as ourselves,

but have been cleansed in the same laver of redemption; *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.*

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

The account of the ministry of Elisha is continued yet further through this chapter also, as in the former. He causeth iron to swim. He discloseth the king of Syria's counsel. He smiteth his army with blindness.

2 KINGS 6:1

(1) ¶ And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.

It is more than probable that the place spoken of here, was at Gilgal, for there we find Elisha presiding over the sons of the prophets some time before. See chap. 4:38. But surely the Reader, (if he be acquainted with the Bible) cannot but be put in mind, from the straitening of the sons of the prophets, of that spiritual straitening, it was predicted the sons of the Prince of the prophets, even the Lord Jesus, in after ages should feel, when from flocking to Christ the multitudes should be so great, that there should not be room enough to receive them. Isaiah 49:20, 21. Malachi 3:10. Luke 5:1. Mark 3:20.

2 KINGS 6:2-3

(2) Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. (3) And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

It will not be doing violence to this passage to look through the servant to his LORD in it. In all my goings forth shall I not say to thee, thou blessed JESUS, go I pray thee with thy servant? Yes! dearest LORD, like Moses would I always seek thy presence. For heaven itself would be darkness without the light of the Lamb. Revelation 21:23. Exodus 33:15.

2 KINGS 6:4-7

(4) So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. (5) But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed. (6) And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim. (7) Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

Observe how very poor the sons of the prophets were. In all ages it hath been so. Hence James calls upon the church to attend to this, as a mark of GOD'S choice; *poor of this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*. James 2:5. It is refreshing to behold the LORD'S presence with his sent servants, in working miracles for the confirmation of their faith.

2 KINGS 6:8-10

(8) ¶ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be* my camp. (9) And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. (10) And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

Reader! while you pay a just tribute of praise to the LORD of Elisha, for making him thus instrumental in the deliverance of Israel; shall not our minds be led to reflect how graciously our JESUS, by the sweet, but secret influences of his SPIRIT, saves

us again and again from the stratagems of our great spiritual foe. Oh! who shall say how often, and to what extent this interposing grace and wisdom of our JESUS, is made the cause of numberless redemptions in times of danger, while we are unconscious of it! What a beautiful instance we have of this superintendence of the LORD, in the case of Hagar, Sarah's handmaid; and what a lovely evidence she gives of her faith in beholding it. She called the name of the LORD that spake unto her; *Thou GOD seest me*. Genesis 16:13. Reader! keep this in view. Never forget that JESUS is still same; always looking on, always ready to deliver. What a thought is that to refresh my soul! JESUS, my GOD, seeth me: he is always with me. He knows the path I take. He seeth the approach of every foe. Oh! for strength in the LORD, and in the power of his might!

2 KINGS 6:11-14

(11) Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel? (12) And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. (13) ¶ And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan. (14) Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

The mad and childish attempt of the king of Syria to take the prophet, serves to set forth the bitterness of the carnal mind against GOD and his servants in all ages, for it is always the same, only manifesting itself under different forms and ways. If the king of Syria really believed that Elisha could divulge the thoughts of the king of Syria, so as to deliver Israel; surely he ought to have known that he must be equally

competent to know, and to counteract his base design planned against himself.

2 KINGS 6:15-20

(15) And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? (16) And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. (17) And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. (18) And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. (19) And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. (20) And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.

The dreadful alarm of Elisha's servant, and the perfect composure of Elisha himself, hold forth a precious lesson. In minds of little or no faith, the smallest events, which appears unpromising, excite fear. Alas! what shall we do? But firm, steady, fixed faith in JESUS, passes over all that *we* can do, to rest upon what the *LORD* can do. When we behold JESUS for us, and JESUS with us; he alone makes our mountain full of horses of fire, and chariots of fire, and we are enabled in his strength to bid defiance to every foe. Doth not this confirm that precious doctrine of the ministry of angels Hebrews 1:14. But oh! how much greater and sweeter the doctrine of the everlasting presence of JESUS. Matthew 28:20. But, Reader! while attending to this very delightful instruction, arising out of this passage, do not neglect to attend to another. Observe, how at the instance of the prophet's prayer, the eyes of his

servant were opened; and the eyes of the Syrians blinded. What is this but a confirmation of what every day, and in every faithful ministry of the word, occurs. *Some* have their eyes opened to see the wonderous things of GOD'S law. *Others* remain in total blindness and ignorance, under the most powerful preaching. And is not this a solemn confirmation of the words of our LORD JESUS, when he said; *For judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.* John 9:39.

2 KINGS 6:21-23

(21) And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite *them?* shall I smite *them?* (22) And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them*: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. (23) And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

How sweet a gospel lesson is folded up under these verses! When JESUS brings his enemies under his power; and when their eyes are opened to see how the LORD hath surrounded them, their knees bow before him, and the weapons of sin fall out of their hands: oh! how graciously doth he feed them, and what great and gracious provisions doth he set before them. Yes! dearest LORD JESUS, I will bear testimony to thy clemency, for when thou hadst brought me home to thyself, and made me thy captive in the day of thy power; then it was. O LORD, that I discovered the truth of that blessed scripture: *This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.* Luke 15:2.

2 KINGS 6:24-25

(24) ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. (25) And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver.

It should seem that this must have been a long time after what is related in the foregoing verse; probably several years, because that a famine had taken place to lead to it, of which we have no immediate account. And to what an extent must have been this famine, when the head of an ass, which was among the unclean, was sold so high. Dove's dung, it should seem, was the name of some herb, or root, or pulse.

2 KINGS 6:26-30

(26) And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. (27) And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? (28) And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. (29) So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. (30) And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh.

To what a dreadful state was Israel now reduced; but yet not a word of reform. We do not hear of a single soul sending up a cry to heaven. Alas! how sin hardens the mind! And to what a dreadful degree is our nature fallen, when, passing by all natural feelings, such shocking deeds, as are here recorded concerning these women, take place!

2 KINGS 6:31-33

(31) Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day. (32) But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him? (33) And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?

Let the Reader mark the blessed properties of distinguishing grace. Oh! how hardened was the king of Israel's heart, to have so soon, forgotten the ministry of Elisha, in bringing the Syrians by blindness into his power. And, yet further: He confesses that he sees GOD's hand in it, and yet dares to rebel. Reader! pray do not overlook and forget, that by the fall all men are the same. If preventing, and restraining grace hath happily kept you from such presumptuous sins, learn to behold the cause, and give GOD the glory.

REFLECTIONS

IN the perusal of this chapter, methinks I would behold the prophet Elisha with the greater attention in the several interesting services here recorded of him, by way of having my soul directed, with more awakened earnestness, to contemplate the grace of his heavenly Master. Surely it is refreshing and comfortable, and highly encouraging to the souls of the faithful, when we see the gracious condescension of the LORD in the employment of such men. What a series of servants the LORD hath called forth in his church! And to what a noble, employment have they been called! And when we call to mind the cause of their ministry; and more especially their Employer; how is the mind overpowered in the

contemplation of that love of CHRIST which passeth knowledge. He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.

But is it possible, my soul, to look at these, even all of them, though of the highest order, and pause a moment in the review, without having all the finer affections exercised, and called forth in the contemplation of thee, thou blessed JESUS, thou Prince of prophets, thou LORD of all thy faithful apostles, and of the innumerable host with which thou art encircled on mount Zion, where, as a Lamb that hath been slain, thou still appearest to manifest the everlasting nature of thy priesthood, and the eternal efficacy of thy redemption! Oh! precious LORD GOD! how do all prophets, priests, and kings sink to nothing before thee! Be thou my unceasing meditation! Teach me, LORD, to behold thee so as to have all my soul's affections drawn out after thee, and unto thee. Oh! for grace to behold the LORD always before me, and to set him on my right hand. May my eyes, by the lively exercise of faith, gaze upon him with unceasing, and increasing, delight, until he shall come to take me home, to behold his glory in one full blaze of everlasting day; and never, never more shall I then take off my ravished eyes from beholding his beauty. *Make haste, my Beloved; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

The ministry of Elisha is continued through this chapter. The prophet, in the midst of dearth, foretelleth an immediate, and incredible plenty. An unbelieving lord treating the prophet's prediction with contempt, Elisha foretels his death, which accordingly takes place.

2 KINGS 7:1

(1) ¶ Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

I think it is more than probable, that as Elisha had been at prayer for this mercy, he now acted faith upon GOD'S promise of kind answers to prayer, and in the strength of it thus predicted. But observe how he speaks of this great and unexpected mercy in the LORD'S name. Reader! it is very precious when, from the lively actings of faith in GOD'S promises in CHRIST, we can take confidence in a faithful covenant GOD during dark seasons. It was this that rendered the patriarch's faith so memorable. Romans 4:18-22.

2 KINGS 7:2

(2) Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

What a solemn lesson is read to us in the short, but awful history of the unbelieving lord! Reader! depend upon it, that the grossest of all sins is this want of faith in GOD'S CHRIST. And John tells us the reason of it; *he maketh* GOD (says the apostle) *a liar, because he believeth not the record that GOD gave of his Son.* 1 John 5:10, 11. And what an awful thought, that after such rich and astonishing mercy and grace, with which the LORD JEHOVAH hath introduced his dear and only

begotten Son, as the salvation of poor sinners, that any sinner should be so daringly wicked and ungrateful, as to disbelieve God, and slight his mercy. Think, Reader! and let the thought be rivetted on your whole soul; how impossible it will be to escape if you neglect so great salvation. Hebrews 2:3.

2 KINGS 7:3-4

(3) ¶ And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? (4) If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

Passing by the particulars of this event as an history, I pray the Reader to look beyond the mere letter of the subject, to discover the very sweet, spiritual instruction it contains. In this light perhaps, the Reader will perceive in these men, the state of poor leprous sinners strikingly pointed out. Sin, like the leprosy, shuts out the soul beyond the gate. Every way and all around, nothing in ourselves can bring help. Spiritual death by famine, or the sword, must terminate the sinner's course, if he sits down contented in that state. Whereas, if grace entering the heart prompt him to go to JESUS with even the slenderest degree of faith, saying like these men, If JESUS kills, I can but die; then the poor creature finds a graciousness in the LORD, not only infinitely surpassing all deserts, but all expectations. Dear LORD! who shall describe the extensiveness of thy grace in receiving poor sinners, and eating with them! Luke 15:2.

2 KINGS 7:5-8

(5) And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was* no man there. (6) For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and

a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. (7) Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life. (8) And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it* ; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*.

How unexpected sometimes is the deliverance of the sinner! How surprised is the soul in the discovery of JESUS and his fulness! And do observe, Reader! how the LORD was pleased to act for the delivery of his people. What terrors and alarms did the Syrians feel, so as to be afraid where no fear was. The LORD had said that he would send the hornet among their enemies, and induce fear and alarm. And here we see it fulfilled. Deuteronomy 7:20.

2 KINGS 7:9-11

(9) Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household. (10) So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. (11) And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within.

When the sinner is brought by the HOLY GHOST, into the knowledge and enjoyment of the LORD JESUS, his mind is so engaged, that the treasures he finds he hides from all men's view. But when he calls to mind the perishing state of other sinners, he can no longer eat his morsel alone. His language is then altered, and he cries out under the influence of it; *Oh!*

come hither and hearken all ye that fear GOD, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul. Psalm 66:16.

2 KINGS 7:12

(12) ¶ And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

Observe how closely allied to one another are guilt and unbelief. The king of Israel knew how little he merited mercy from the LORD, and therefore he could not be led to hope, notwithstanding his servant the prophet had taught Israel to expect some great deliverance, that it would be bestowed. Reader! this is the case, more or less, with every sinner. Conscious that we merit not the LORD'S favor, and measuring GOD'S dealings by our own, we slight the declarations of his grace. JESUS sweetly, graciously, tenderly, tells us, that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. But alas! unbelief robs JESUS of his glory, and our souls of their happiness. And thus, like the poor king of Israel, to the very last we know not how to give the LORD the credit of his free grace and salvation!

2 KINGS 7:13-16

(13) And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see. (14) They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. (15) And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. (16) And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine

flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

With what caution and fear did the king of Israel and his poor besieged army proceed in this business! With what doubts and misgivings, do sinners, when first coming to the LORD JESUS, seek his face! Oh! for faith in full confidence, to come to the LORD JESUS, and cast the whole soul Upon him! the sale of the flour and the barley corresponding to the prophet's prediction, shows how the mercy was from the LORD, and how plentiful a mercy it was. A measure of flour was somewhat more than a peck. And a shekel was not much more in value than about two shillings of our money. Here, indeed, the subject of plenty to the famished, as it relates to the body, falls far short of the gospel fullness to famishing souls; for the grace which is imparted according to the measure of the gift of grace, is *without money and without price*.

2 KINGS 7:17-20

(17) And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him. (18) And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: (19) And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. (20) And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

The sad event in the death of this unbelieving lord, is very particularly related by the sacred historian, to show that no word of the LORD can fall to the ground. And it is a point of the most solemn consideration, that the very name JEHOVAH hath taken in the scriptures to show, that he is GOD in a

covenant way, carries with it the most decided assurance that the LORD must be as faithful to all the denunciations of his wrath, as to all the gracious promises of his love. Reader! do not overlook, or forget this! Read these solemn scriptures upon this point, and may the LORD suitably impress them upon our minds. Mark 16:16. John 3:36.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us in the view of this siege of Samaria behold a lively emblem of the soul's distressed state by reason of sin. Alas! what a famine, not of bread and of water, but of all spiritual comfort, ease, or satisfaction. In the contemplation of the unexpected deliverance is not JESUS and his great salvation beautifully represented! how graciously discovered! how unexpectedly found! the soul of the sinner, like the leprous man while going from one tent to another, in the discoveries of JESUS'S love can hardly be brought to think it real. How is it, LORD! he continually cries out, as he enters into the enjoyments of salvation, how is it dearest JESUS, that thou hast manifested thyself unto me and not unto the world.

But oh! Reader, let us also learn from the awful history of the unbelieving lord, what everlasting dangers sinners are exposed to, and what everlasting horrors they must ultimately fall in; when neither the gift of the FATHER in his dear Son, nor JESUS'S love in the free-gift of himself, can work upon the hardened heart to believe unto salvation. What aggravated misery will that be to the unawakened, unregenerated heart, to have lived under the sound of the gospel, but never regarded its gracious calls! to have seen, like this unbelieving lord, the plenty and fulness of redemption, but never to have partaken of it. Oh! dearest, blessed, precious JESUS! add a blessing to all thy finished work, and give me not only to see and to hear with the outward means, but to taste and enjoy

the blessed inward power of thy saving truth to the salvation of my soul!

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

The history of the Shunammite, which was in part given before, is prosecuted yet further in this chapter. Her land is restored to her. Here is also a short relation concerning Hazael, the Syrian. This chapter also contains an account of Jehoram's wicked reign, and of Ahaziah his successor in the kingdom.

2 KINGS 8:1-2

(1) ¶ Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. (2) And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

It should seem that this famine soon succeeded the siege of the enemy, which the foregoing chapter relates. *A fruitful land the LORD makes barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Psalm 107:34. That this famine was peculiar to Israel, seems evident from the prophet's commanding the Shunammite to seek for sustenance elsewhere. But Reader! how delightful is it to see the LORD providing for his secret ones when he brings his judgments upon others. Never doth the LORD more strikingly manifest himself than when he hides them.

2 KINGS 8:3-6

(3) And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. (4) And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done. (5) And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life. (6) And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

The history of this Shunammite, in having her land restored to her, is very interesting. But the spiritual improvement to be made of the passage is much more so. You and I, Reader, have left our settlement, lands, and property, for there is truly nothing valuable in the whole of them, when a leanness of soul is induced, and a famine of all spiritual blessings comes upon us by reason of the fall. But when JESUS our *Goel*, our kinsman-Redeemer, hath raised up the tabernacle of David which was fallen down, and made our dwelling place a *Bethlehem*, an house of bread for his people, then like this woman we may cry to our king for the restoration of our inheritance in and by JESUS. There is somewhat very striking in this passage respecting Gehazi, and his conference with the king at the moment the Shunammite came to claim her land. So, Reader, we may discover in numberless instances in common life, how the LORD, in his providence, overrules times and events to the promotion of his own glory and his people's comfort. But is there not another sweet thought arising from it also? Was the king of Israel so intent to listen to Gehazi's account of the deeds of Elisha; and shall we not be earnest to enquire after the wonders of JESUS?

2 KINGS 8:7-10

(7) ¶ And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. (8) And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? (9) So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? (10) And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

It is not very easy to ascertain at what time it was that Elisha paid this visit to Damascus. The LORD had commanded Elijah about 21 years before this period: See 1Kings 19:15. (that is, supposing, this visit of Elisha was as is here introduced, after the two years of famine before related) to go to the wilderness of Damascus, and anoint Hazael king of Syria; but when Elisha went to Damascus, or what the occasion of his visit there was for, is not easy to conjecture. But passing this by, there is one sweet spiritual improvement ariseth out of it, which is this. Even in those distant ages before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the visits of GOD'S faithful servants to the Gentile and Heathen portended the full salvation being one day preached to them. And though our dear LORD told the poor woman of Canaan that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet we find that he graciously included both Jew and Gentile in one fold, and told that very woman that such was her faith, that everything should be as she herself desired. Matthew 15:22-28. When we consider in what was related before (see chap. 6:8-14.) how Benhadad intended to have seized the prophet, it is somewhat singular that Elisha should venture his person in Damascus. And it is no less strange that the mind of Benhadad should have been so changed from hatred to reverence. But these things are all

plain to be understood, when we trace the hand of the LORD in it. GOD giveth his servants boldness, like a lion, and the same GOD turneth the hearts of his children's enemies to be at peace with them, when such things answer the sovereign purpose of his holy will. The answer which Elisha made to Hazael's question, whether the king his master should recover, seems at first reading ambiguous. He said, thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit ye shall surely die. But the sense seems to be very plainly this; the disorder under which thy master labours is not in itself mortal; of that disease he might certainly recover. But he shall surely die of a violent death. For thou wilt be his executioner. This the following verses prove.

2 KINGS 8:11-15

(11) And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept. (12) And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. (13) And Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD hath shewed me that thou *shalt be* king over Syria. (14) So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me *that* thou shouldest surely recover. (15) And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

I hardly know a passage in history, even if simply considered as an history, more strikingly interesting to the feelings than this interview, as here related between Hazael and the prophet. Figure to yourself the astonishment of the ambassador of Damascus when the man of GOD prophesied to him of his future greatness, and the bloody deeds of his life which would follow. Behold on the other hand the aged

servant of the LORD looking so fixedly upon the countenance of Hazael, until the tears burst in a flood before him to give vent to his distress of soul. But while we meditate on the passage simply as an interesting history, let us look at it with more awakened earnestness, as a solemn record in the word of GOD, and then we shall discover if so be the HOLY GHOST gives us a gracious apprehension of its important contents, that it opens to our view higher objects for instruction. Hazael is but the representative of human nature, universally speaking. All men like him may shudder at crimes in the cool hour of distance which in the after season of heated passion, and all things corresponding to accomplish, they may without remorse perform. Reader! do you know this? Do you believe it? Hath the HOLY GHOST by his divine teachings led you on so far in the knowledge of yourself, as to be brought to this complete conviction of sin? If you are, precious to your soul will be the knowledge of, and the rejoicing in, the LORD JESUS! but if not, depend upon it you possess but at the best a poor apprehension of your own dreadfully ruined and lost state; and of the vast and infinite value of that complete deliverance from sin which is found only in the LORD JESUS. The cruelty of Hazael, seems to have commenced from the moment of this interview, as the devil entered into the heart of Judas from the time in which JESUS gave him the sop, as a token of his being the traitor. John 13:26, 27. His return to his master opened with a lie. His next step was to stifle him in his bed. And his bloody deeds to Israel, as Elisha had foretold, we are informed of in the after part of his history. See chap. 13:22. Reader! pause over such a character, if it be only to look up with reverence, and all the warmth of affection and thankfulness, in the contemplation of the blessed effects of distinguishing grace: *Who hath made thee to differ from another?* Is an enquiry which every child of GOD should be unceasingly putting to his own soul. 1 Corinthians, 4:7.

2 KINGS 8:16-18

(16) ¶ And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. (17) Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. (18) And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

I would have the Reader remark with me on the character here given of pious Jehoshaphat's son, how dreadful it must have been to such a father to have so degenerate a son. Grace is not hereditary. Jehoshaphat could not give it to Joram. And it is to be feared, by what we read in the history, short as it is, that the good man did not take the likeliest means to obtain it. For he made, or suffered to be made, a dreadful alliance for him with Ahab's daughter. And add to this, he gave up the kingdom to him before his death, thereby feeding his pride and vanity. Reader! have you never remarked (I have), how frequently pious parents, from consulting natural feelings more than gracious ones, awfully indulge their children to their hurt, and thereby give displeasure to the LORD. What an awful reproof was that of GOD to Eli, 1 Samuel 2:27, &c.

2 KINGS 8:19

(19) Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, *and* to his children.

I pray the Reader not hastily to pass over this sweet verse. Judah must not, cannot indeed, be destroyed for JESUS'S sake. Our LORD sprang out of Judah. So that there is a blessing in it, and he that looketh on saith, *destroy it not*. Oh! precious, precious consideration! Isaiah 65:8, 9.

2 KINGS 8:20

(20) In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

The revolt of Edom demands our particular notice, because it was a confirmation of the dying patriarch Isaac's prophecy to his son Esau, who was the origin of Edom. Isaac had told his favorite son Esau, that the time should come when he should break Jacob's yoke from off his neck. And here we see it fulfilled after a servitude of more than 150 years from the days of David. Genesis 27:39, 40.

2 KINGS 8:21-24

(21) So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. (22) Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. (23) And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (24) And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Nothing further remarkable appears in the lives of these impious men but that they lived, transgressed, and died. Indeed, in the parallel history in the book of the Chronicles, we are told that this monarch died not much unlike the traitor Judas, for his bowels gushed out. And as he had lived most probably without being beloved, so he died unlamented. 2 Chronicles 21:18, 19.

2 KINGS 8:25-29

(25) ¶ In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. (26) Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. (27) And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the

house of Ahab. (28) And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. (29) And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

I bring all these verses within one point of view, as they only relate to us the short, but wicked reign, of another of Judah's kings. And I only detain the Reader with a single observation upon this man's history, that it was in mercy not suffered to be lengthened out to any great period. It was but a year. And oh! the sad thought to sinners when the year of grace is over, and all the years of iniquity, be they ever so many, consumed; what a dreadful barter have they made, if, though gaining the whole world, they have lost their own soul!

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over our review of this chapter, for many are the gospel instructions we may take home to our own hearts under the HOLY GHOST's gracious teachings. In the restoration of the *Shunammite's* land, let us recollect with holy joy that our JESUS hath effectually secured our inheritance, notwithstanding there hath been for many a seven year a famine and poverty indeed in our souls. JESUS our king will restore the whole, and infinitely more than we lost, by the apostacy of our first Father, Yes! thou dearest LORD, thou hast accomplished the redemption of all our mortgaged possession, and it is thou which will finally put us into the enjoyment of them again; thou art indeed thyself our inheritance, our portion, our joy forever.

In the account of Hazael, Reader, let us not overlook the general character of all men by the fall. That you and I

perpetrate not such crimes, is not from any difference in nature, but wholly from the preventing and restraining grace of our GOD. Oh! blessed JESUS, teach me by such views how to appreciate thy great salvation more and more, and with the greatest thankfulness of soul, give thee all the glory, that I am kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation. And Reader, let the view which the HOLY GHOST hath here given us in the character of Hazael, when by a change from an humble station to the highest, the seeds of iniquity were thus ripened, and brought forward to the production of its deadly fruit, Oh! let it teach us how much wiser and more gracious the LORD is than we are ourselves, in choosing the lowest stations for his people, to keep them from evil. Yes! dearest LORD, I thank thee for the very place thy wisdom hath appointed me. I know it must be the best because thou hast ordained it. Thy love, as well as thy wisdom, was in it. Bring me therefore, LORD, according to thy promise, as a poor, blind, ignorant creature, in a way that I knew not; leave me not to my own understanding, but give me grace to be always committing my ways unto the LORD, and to acknowledge thine hand in all; for thou hast said thou wilt direct my paths.

One thought more, Reader, before we quit this chapter, in that precious account which is given us concerning Judah, that *the LORD would not destroy Judah for David's sake*. Oh! the blessed thought! oh! the soul-reviving consideration, amidst all the discouragements of sin, and the feats of unbelief! Judah's LORD still lives, still reigns, and the efficacy of his blood and righteousness is of everlasting duration. Learn, my soul, henceforth to live out of thyself upon this covenant GOD in CHRIST. In him is all thy fullness and sufficiency. And in so improving and using CHRIST, according to GOD the FATHER's gift and design concerning him, all happiness and security must be found. In thy name, blessed

JESUS, would I rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness may my soul be exalted.

CHAPTER 9

CONTENTS

This chapter contains the anointing of Jehu: his slaughter of Joram: the death of Jezebel, and the relation of her being eaten by dogs.

2 KINGS 9:1-3

(1) ¶ And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramothgilead: (2) And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; (3) Then take the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

The only observation I would detain the Reader with on this passage, because it should seem to be of all others the most important, is the ceremony of anointing. When we behold how this service was uniformly appointed in the church from the beginning of its being formed in the wilderness, doth it not strike the Reader's mind that the HOLY GHOST evidently intended by it a matter of vast signification. The LORD JESUS himself was anointed with the HOLY GHOST; and all his people are said to have an unction from the Holy One. 1 John 2:20. Oh! thou blessed SPIRIT! graciously condescend to anoint me with all thy precious influences in the knowledge and enjoyment of the LORD JESUS! Let the holy oil of thy grace soften all my heart, and make the savor of his dear name be as ointment poured forth!

2 KINGS 9:4-6

(4) So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead. (5) And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. (6) And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel.

Is there not a sweet lesson veiled under this message and commission of the prophet? When the LORD sends his word to any individual, though he be in the midst of many, like Jehu among the captains, yet the call is personal, the grace is distinguishing, and the manifestation of it secret. The LORD spoke a word, it is said, in Samuel's ear. 1 Samuel 9:15. So here, the errand was to Jehu. Reader! be assured that it is a personal enjoyment of GOD'S calls, and his word, which make them precious. *The master is come and calleth for thee.* John 11:28.

2 KINGS 9:7-10

(7) And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. (8) For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel: (9) And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah: (10) And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her*. And he opened the door, and fled.

In the commission which Elisha had intrusted this servant among the prophets with, no doubt more was intimated to him than is related in the chapter, from the addition he made in this command, how Jehu should act in the destruction of the house of Ahab. Reader! remark in it, how sure GOD'S

judgments are. As an apostle hath said most assuredly will it be found, that the judgment of the unregenerate lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. 2 Peter 2:3.

2 KINGS 9:11-13

(11) ¶ Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is* all well? wherefore came this mad *fellow* to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication. (12) And they said, *It is* false; tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. (13) Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

It should seem from the manner in which the captains received Jehu on his return from the prophet, that they were not much disposed at first to treat the prophet, or his message, with respect. But probably from a divine power accompanying Jehu's account of his anointing him king, and seeing perhaps the traces of the holy oil upon his head, their hearts were wrought upon to cooperate with the LORD'S appointment in establishing Jehu to be king.

2 KINGS 9:14-20

(14) So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramothgilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria. (15) But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth *nor* escape out of the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel. (16) ¶ So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. (17) And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, *Is it* peace? (18) So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman

told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. (19) Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. (20) And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.

The whole design of this being from the LORD, we have only to remark how the various circumstances all concurred to insure the ruin of Ahab's house. From Ramoth-Gilead to Jezreel was no small distance, yet to prevent tidings getting there before Jehu, he hastens on to surprize Joram. And on the other hand, the alarm of Joram in sending out, upon the smallest appearance, messengers to enquire into the cause, shows the guilt of his conscience. *There is no peace, saith my GOD, to the wicked!* Isaiah 48:12.

2 KINGS 9:21-29

(21) And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. (22) And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so many?* (23) And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery, O Ahaziah.* (24) And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot. (25) Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; (26) Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to the word of the LORD. (27) But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu

followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there. (28) And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David. (29) And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

What a remarkable coincidence of circumstances must it have been to have brought those persons to the very spot of Naboth's vineyard! as if to remind Joram of the cause of his death, and his merited judgment. Reader! what greater testimony can a man require that the LORD'S hand is in that visitation, when the punishment ariseth out of the very crime itself, in the consequences which follow.

2 KINGS 9:30-37

(30) ¶ And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*, and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. (31) And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master? (32) And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three eunuchs. (33) And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. (34) And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's daughter. (35) And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands. (36) Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: (37) And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; *so* that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel.

The character of Jezebel is one of the most awful we meet with in history among women. So much so, that a false prophetess in the revelations, and probably by way of pointing out more emphatically her infamy, is called after her,

Jezebel. And when, in the same book, the final destruction of idolators, under the type of the great whore of Babylon and the mother of harlots, is spoken of in allusion to the same horrible crimes as Jezebel excelled in, it may serve to teach in some measure how very awful in the sight of GOD such characters are. Revelation 2:20. I only detain the Reader just to repeat how certain GOD'S judgments are. Jezebel had long triumphed; but a day of reckoning did at length come. So must it be with all. Oh! for grace to keep in view the sure events awaiting. *Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him.* Isaiah 3:10, 11.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what an awful view doth this chapter afford of the miserable end of Ahab's race! and how is the mind struck in the contemplation, that a family such as his was in all its branches, should sell themselves to work evil with greediness. It is hardly possible to go through the review of what is related in these histories of Ahab and Jezebel, and their household, without being again and again prompted, as we prosecute the history, to exclaim from whence arose such determined resolute impiety!

But we read the history of Ahab to very little profit if it doth not serve to lead the mind further than to the history of a single person or family, and not to behold in it the outlines of wicked and ungodly men in all ages. In the dreadful opposition Ahab made to the GOD of Israel and his prophets, do we not behold the representation of all the Ahabs of every age, in their avowed hatred and opposition of the blessed gospel of the LORD JESUS? Do not some of this description of men seem as if every faculty was in league against the LORD JESUS? Their hearts boiling with implacable bitterness; their

ears resolutely stopped to all the grace of the gospel; their voices uniformly raised against it. Despisers of divine things, haters of GOD and of his CHRIST! *Oh! my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united.*

But, Reader! how sweet to the view is JESUS after looking at human nature, and human wickedness, in such awful characters! and farther, how increasingly so is the view of JESUS under these considerations, when we are enabled to trace our preservation and upholding from such awful examples on ourselves! Yes! dearest, almighty JESUS! it is to thy preventing and restraining grace we cheerfully ascribe all the praise and the glory. Truly must I say (and, Reader, do you not the same?) by the grace of GOD I am what I am! that I have been, that I now am, and that I feel confidence for the future I shall be kept; on my bended knees, in transports of rejoicing, would I give the whole glory to the adorable Redeemer. It was JESUS who committed to his FATHER his church for this blessed purpose in the close of his ministry, and just before his death. And it is to this one source the preservation of his people must be everlastingly ascribed. *Keep* (said the gracious Redeemer as he placed his dearly purchased flock in the hands of the LORD) *keep, Holy FATHER, through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* And hence under the unquestionable evidence of this great truth, would I cry out with the apostle, and say, *Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten to this lively hope all his people, who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation.*

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

In following up the commission Jehu had received from the LORD for the destruction of Ahab's house, we are told in this chapter how he caused 70 of his sons to be beheaded. He destroyeth, the worshippers of Baal. But yet himself, the close of the chapter relates, departed not from the sins of Jeroboam.

2 KINGS 10:1-3

(1) ¶ And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's *children*, saying, (2) Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons *are* with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour; (3) Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

Reader! do not fail to connect with this view of the slaughter of Ahab's sons (or grandsons more likely) that solemn denunciation of God in the second commandment. Exodus 20:5. And recollect also, that as sin is the sad inheritance entailed upon our whole nature from the first wretched transgressor; so punishment is also connected with it. Romans 5:12. Oh! sweet is it to behold our inheritance in another Adam from the opposite holiness of his nature. Precious JESUS! how much more hath the grace of GOD, and the gift by grace which is by thee, abounded unto many. Romans 5:15-17.

2 KINGS 10:4-5

(4) But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? (5) And he that *was* over the house, and he that *was* over the city, the elders also,

and the bringers up *of the children*, sent to Jehu, saying, *We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.*

We may learn wisdom from men of the world, for our LORD tells us, *that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.* Oh! that we might learn from hence how vain and unprofitable all opposition to the LORD is, when neither the great, nor the mighty, among the kings of the earth can stand before him. See that striking Psalm 2d. Luke 16:8.

2 KINGS 10:6-7

(6) Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, *If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up.* (7) And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel.

It is well worthy the Reader's observation, that those very elders of Samaria had been the same time-serving creatures at the command of Jezebel respecting the murder of Naboth, when she sent letters in Ahab's name to procure Naboth's death, And as the punishment of the house of Ahab, the murder of Naboth is again and again mentioned as among the causes; who but would wish to connect in the review of the whole the awful finger of God. See 1 Kings 21:1-15.

2 KINGS 10:8-11

(8) And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, *They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning.* (9) And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, *Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?* (10) Know now

that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant Elijah. (11) So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

While we read in this account how Jehu waded through blood, I pray the reader to keep in view that he acted as the instrument of the LORD. The commission was from heaven. And when we take into the account how Ahab by his idolatry had been ruining the souls as well as the bodies of Israel, surely such daring impiety called for more than ordinary vengeance!

2 KINGS 10:12-14

(12) And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. *And* as he *was* at the shearing house in the way, (13) Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen. (14) And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left he any of them.

As these were of the family of Ahab, no doubt they were partakers of his idolatry, and justly therefore involved in the punishment.

2 KINGS 10:15

(15) ¶ And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

The honorable testimony the Holy Ghost hath given of this man in another part of sacred scripture, demands our attention. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of him in great commendation as the honored father of the house of the Rechabites at a period distant from this above 300 years. And when we behold him coming out of his retirement to thank Jehu for his services to the LORD; it may serve to leach us that in the worst of times the LORD hath a seed that serve him in the earth, See Jeremiah 35:19.

2 KINGS 10:16

(16) And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

Poor Jehu did not, it is plain, know the real motives of his heart when he said this; for the HOLY GHOST tells us in the same chapter, verse 29, that Jehu himself was an idolator. Reader! oh! that the blessed SPIRIT may teach us the truth of that solemn scripture; that *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*. Jeremiah 17:9. Blessed JESUS! how very precious art thou to my soul in the view of this. Cleanse, LORD, the thoughts of my heart, and wash it in thy blood.

2 KINGS 10:17-28

(17) And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah. (18) And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him much. (19) Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did *it* in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. (20) And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed *it*. (21) And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left

that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. (22) And he said unto him that *was* over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. (23) And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. (24) And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If* any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, *he that letteth him go*, his life *shall be* for the life of him. (25) And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. (26) And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. (27) And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. (28) Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

Jehu, as the LORD'S minister in the destruction of idols, is graciously upheld in this service. And, hence all the worshippers of Baal were blinded to their own destruction. But, Reader! do observe, for it is a sweet part of this history, how the LORD overruled this event for the preservation of his hidden ones. There were seven thousand of the seed of the faithful in Israel in Elijah's time, as the LORD told him, though he, poor man, thought himself the only one. And no doubt there were many at this time when Jehu accomplished the LORD'S purpose upon Baal. Reader! let it serve to teach us that the LORD knoweth how to preserve his people in times of visitation. His chambers of safety are opened for them when shut to others. And mark this; when GOD hides his people he surely manifests himself. 1 Kings 19:18.

2 KINGS 10:29

(29) ¶ Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that *were* in Bethel, and that *were* in Dan.

What a sad account is this! Though Jehu had grace to destroy Baal, he had not virtue to resist the golden calves of idolatry. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments! Oh! dearest LORD JESUS, where shall we look for perfection but to thee! Be thou my righteousness, wisdom, sanctification; for in thee I have all things.

2 KINGS 10:30-31

(30) And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.

(31) But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Jehu had done right in God's eyes in destroying the idols, and his reward was suited to it in temporal mercies to him and his children to the fourth generation. Here is nothing said in all this of any gracious act in the mind of Jehu, or of any gracious blessing from the Lord in consequence. Very evident, it is, from Jehu's following the sins of Jeroboam, that no act of grace had passed upon his heart. Many are blessed in the gifts of common providences, which are not made partakers of a saving change of heart. The Lord may, and the Lord doth bestow the nether springs of his bounty on the men of the earth. His upper springs of grace springs belong to his children.

2 KINGS 10:32-33

(32) In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; (33) From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

Here begins the melancholy history of Israel, leading to the Babylonish captivity. For though it was more than 300 years before that event took place, yet Israel's glory from this time began to grow dim. Idolatry prevailed: and the LORD visited their iniquities. This Elijah had foretold concerning Hazael. See chap. 8:12, 13.

2 KINGS 10:34-36

(34) Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (35) And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. (36) And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria *was* twenty and eight years.

Here is but a shot account of Jehu. He reigned 28 years, but how little is said of him. We are told in general of his might, but nothing of his love to GOD. Alas! what is the sum total, in the lives of thousands, more than this! *Oh! LORD! so teach me to number my days as to apply my heart unto wisdom.* Psalm 90:12.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause a moment over the perusal of this chapter, and, in the character of Jehu, mark the possibility of possessing great gifts, and great appearances of zeal for GOD's service, without any real possession of vital godliness. A man may cry out, as Jehu did, *Come, see my zeal for the*

LORD; but if that zeal be truly put to the test, it will be as Solomon saith; *as the fining pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise*. Let a man profess what he will, void of regeneration, yet all his performances spring from himself. A pool of water, when the rain descends plentifully, will swell and look large, but having no source, when the sun and the drought come on, it dries up. Oh! blessed JESUS! let all my zeal for thee and thy glory, arise from that well of water which thou hast promised, and which is from thyself, springing up unto everlasting life.

In the total overthrow of Ahab's family, mark, I beseech you, the sure termination of the ungodly. The LORD hath said in his covenant engagements, that he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him! Reader! do not forget; the same promise which becomes sure to the believer, because of the faithfulness of GOD, makes his threatenings to the unbeliever, equally sure and certain. The LORD is not slack (saith *an* apostle) concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. The day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night. Precious JESUS! where, in that tremendous day, would my soul find shelter, had I not thy righteousness to justify, and thy garment of salvation to cover me. Let a throne of grace witness for me, that now, even now I plead this, under all the accusations of conscience, the deceitfulness of a corrupt heart, the charges of Satan, and the threatenings of the broken law of GOD. And in that hour, when GOD shall arise to shake terribly the earth, then shall I plead it with full assurance of faith; nothing fearing any condemning sentence from my Judge, while standing secure in the justifying righteousness of GOD my Saviour, and triumphing in the covenant promises of my FATHER's sovereign grace. Lord JESUS! let the view of the treachery and deceitfulness of man's

heart, as in the instance of Jehu, lead me to be everlastingly suspecting my own. And let a perfect conviction that thou, and thou only, art the righteousness of thy people, make me more and more earnest to know thee, to love thee, to live to thee, to walk in thee, to act faith upon thee, and to rejoice in thee as my portion, in time and to all eternity. Precious, precious LORD JESUS! even so, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

The sacred historian in this chapter is relating the affairs of the kingdom of Judah. Athaliah destroys all the seed royal; one only escaped the general massacre, which is Jehoash. At six years of age Jehoida anoints him king. Athaliah is slain.

2 KINGS 11:1

(1) ¶ And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

The character of this woman is given by the HOLY GHOST in a short, but expressive manner: 2 Chronicles 27:7. Whether from a spirit of revenge, or from a spirit of cruelty, she perpetrated those wicked deeds, is not said. But we must look higher than the instrument. GOD had said to David, concerning the matter of Uriah, that the sword should not depart from his house. And, although the same GOD had graciously promised that the seed of David he would make to endure forever, because that CHRIST, after the flesh, was to be the offspring of David, yet many of David's branches were lopped off. 2 Samuel 12:10. Psalm 80:29.

2 KINGS 11:2-3

(2) But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons *which were* slain; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

(3) And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

Observe, Reader, for the fulfillment of GOD'S promise, how GOD in his providence preserved the seed of David! It is sweet to take notice of those things in the circumstances of our own private history. What numberless events might every man find in his own life, where JESUS is accomplishing his gracious promises by his gracious providences!

2 KINGS 11:4

(4) ¶ And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son.

It is probable that this Jehoida was high-priest, by whom the LORD was pleased to execute the purpose of his holy will. JESUS our High Priest, carries on all the grand councils and designs of JEHOVAH!

2 KINGS 11:5-12

(5) And he commanded them, saying, This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; (6) And a third part *shall be* at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down. (7) And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king. (8) And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in. (9) And the captains over the hundreds did according to all *things* that Jehoiada the

priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. (10) And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that *were* in the temple of the LORD. (11) And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple. (12) And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

Young as Joash was, no doubt the sight of him stirred up the minds of the people to love him. And young as he was, the priest took care that the ceremony should be observed the same in his coronation, and with respect to the convention of the people, as if he had arrived to the maturity and ripeness of age for government. He is crowned, anointed: the testimony of the word, even the law is put into his hand, agreeable to what the LORD commanded by Moses: Deuteronomy 17:18, 19. And the people ratify their approbation of his government in shouting, *God save the king*. But, Reader! doth not the view of this coronation, suggest to your mind one of an infinitely higher nature? When the LORD JESUS is brought forth from obscurity to the sinner's view; when we behold JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, anointed with the HOLY GHOST and with power, as King in Zion; when the law of his gospel is given to us in him, and by him; and when the Covenant of redemption is revealed to the poor sinner in his blood; oh! what a double coronation is here, when CHRIST is crowned King of his church, and King in the sinner's heart! Surely every knee of his people is made with holy joy to bend before him, and, every tongue is constrained to confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

2 KINGS 11:13-14

(13) ¶ And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard *and* of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD. (14) And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

The delusion of Athaliah to go unarmed, unprotected, unsupported, shows at once how desperate her case was.

2 KINGS 11:15-16

(15) But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. (16) And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

I beg the Reader not to overlook the constant care to preserve the temple unpolluted. No human sacrifice was ever to be offered there but one: and that only in the end of the world to put away sin. And though this offering was the offering of the *body* of JESUS CHRIST once for all, yet his GOD-head gave virtue and efficacy to the sacrifice. Blessed JESUS! how hast thou by that one offering, perfected forever them that are sanctified! Hebrews 10:14.

2 KINGS 11:17-21

(17) ¶ And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people. (18) And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD. (19) And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard

to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. (20)
And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet:
and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house.
(21) Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he began to reign.

Observe, in the death of Baal's priest, how human sacrifice suited their idol worship. For as Moses said, they sacrificed to devils, not to GOD. Deuteronomy 32:17.

REFLECTIONS

IT is delightful to observe how the LORD, in the worst of times, hath his servants ready to execute his gracious designs. He hath a Jehosheba to hide when matters render it necessary; and a Jehoida to bring forward his chosen according to the counsel of his own will. Reader! how truly profitable is it thus to trace the LORD'S hand in all his doings! And how encouraging, in all our intricate circumstances, to remember whose government we are under.

But, Reader! may you and I pass over the court of Judah in the history of Joash, and contemplate the LORD JESUS brought forth the lawful King of his people, against all the usurpation and tyranny of sin and Satan. Behold JESUS, showed to us as the King's Son, the rightful heir of all things, by whom JEHOVAH made the worlds. Behold him in the glories of his Person, being the brightness of his FATHER'S glory! Behold him as the great Covenant-head of his people set up from everlasting, although hidden, and his name secret through the several intermediate ages, until the fulness of time, appointed of the FATHER for his being revealed as a Saviour unto Israel. Contemplate him in all the Old Testament promises, types, and prophecies! See him in his convention with the FATHER for the purposes of redemption, when he stood up, like Joash, before the people and became our Covenant-head and King.

Trace him in his incarnation, life, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and glory! And what is he now? Surely he is the same. He stands in his temple as Joash stood by the pillar, as the manner was, to confirm the covenant, of which he himself is the whole sum and substance for his people, and to his people. He comes to us revealed in all his written word. He makes discovery of himself in his blessed gospel in all the suitableness of his precious offices, relations, and characters. He is JEHOVAH'S Standard and Ensign for his people, implying that he maketh war against all treasonable usurpations (like Athaliah's) for his people, and maketh them more than conquerors, through his grace and love, leading them on to victory! Hail! blessed, holy, gracious, all-powerful JESUS! my soul would shout aloud, and I would clap my hands in testimony of the greatest joy, that JESUS reigns. Be thou, dearest sovereign, LORD and Master, be thou my GOD and King; and let all enemies which would rise up in treasonable rebellion against thy princely government, like Athaliah, be laid hands upon, without the temple, and slain before his face. Amen Amen.

CHAPTER 12

CONTENTS

This chapter contains the history of Jehoash's reign and death. He governed well during the life of Jehoiada, but after was led away from his uprightness. His death was induced by the treachery of his servants.

2 KINGS 12:1

(1) ¶ In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba.

Whether the reign of Jehoash is reckoned from the seventh year of his life, when Jehoiada brought him forth to the people and anointed him king, is not said, but seems likely. And if so, he died in the prime of life, at the age of 47.

2 KINGS 12:2-3

(2) And Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him. (3) But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

The approbation of the LORD to his conduct, must be considered comparatively, for as idolatry was not totally abolished, this could not be pleasing to the LORD. How delightful is the account given in this indirect way concerning Jehoiada, whose influence was so beneficial to the king. Oh! how gracious is it in the LORD, when he giveth the experience and wisdom of age to guide youth!

2 KINGS 12:4-16

(4) ¶ And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, *even* the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD, (5) Let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found. (6) But it was *so, that* in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. (7) Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. (8) And the priests consented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house. (9) But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD. (10) And it

was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD. (11) And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD, (12) And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair *it*. (13) Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD: (14) But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD. (15) Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully. (16) The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

If the Reader will consult the parallel history, as it relates to Jehoash, (2 Chronicles 24) he will discover several things connected with it, which are here omitted. For brevity's sake I refer therefore to the chapter itself, without enlarging upon it. The injuries the temple had received may well be accounted for, when we consider, since the days of Solomon, what idolatries had crept in among the people. No doubt the house of GOD was sadly neglected. Reader! how precious is the thought that JESUS is our temple, concerning whom there can be nothing ruinous. LORD JESUS! do thou bless and keep the church, which is thy body, *the fulness of him which filleth all in all*. Ephesians 1:22, 23.

2 KINGS 12:17-18

(17) ¶ Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. (18) And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that

Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold *that was* found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.

Let the Reader recollect how the LORD had been gradually preparing the minds of his people for the desolation of Jerusalem, which had been long threatened. Hence Israel's kings are dispirited. Guilt breeds fear. While Israel loved the LORD, and feared the LORD, no enemy could dare insult the LORD'S people. But now enemies arise from every quarter. How strikingly was that scripture fulfilled; Deuteronomy 28:15, &c.

2 KINGS 12:19-21

(19) And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (20) And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla. (21) For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Here is but little account of Jehoash. How very different was the close of his life, to the promising appearance of it when crowned king. The Reader cannot but have remarked how his name is altered in the several parts of his history. His name was Joash originally. But at the coronation, and in the beginning of his reign he is called Jehoash. And in the close again it is, Joash. Perhaps the very honorable distinction prefixed to Joash, of the Je, was intended as a mark of the LORD'S favor. And as the termination of his life was dishonorable, particularly so in his conduct towards a prophet of the LORD, in the person of a son of his benefactor, Jehoiada; (see 2 Chronicles 24:17-25.) this prefixed honor to

his name was taken from him. We have a similar instance; Jeremiah 22:24, 28.

REFLECTIONS

READER I would wish for myself, and, if the LORD pleases, may he graciously make it profitable to you also, in the review of this character of Joash, to consider what instructions we may gather from it considered with an eye to gospel times, and to the blessed redemption believers have in the LORD JESUS. When we see what a sad conclusion the life of Joash had, to so promising a beginning, it ought to induce inquiry into the circumstances of spiritual declensions, and the sad cause why it is that some who seemingly set out fair for the kingdom, flag and tire by the way. The apostle Paul, as the penman of the HOLY GHOST, hath plainly assigned the reason in his third chapter to the Church of the Galatians; where he calls them foolish Galatians, because having begun in the Spirit, they afterwards thought to be made perfect by the flesh. When souls shift the foundation of their faith and hope, and leave their first love, leave JESUS, and seek a partial justification before GOD in their own works, they soon find leanness in their souls. Reader! I charge it upon you, if you know anything of CHRIST, desire to know nothing *but* CHRIST. Make him what he really is, the Alpha and Omega of your salvation; the Finisher as well as the Author of it; and you will do well. Did you not renounce everything of your own, and what was in yourself, when you first came to JESUS, and would you now take somewhat of your own to purchase CHRIST? Did JESUS give life to your soul at the first, when by his SPIRIT he quickened you; and must he not give life still? Having *begun* (saith the apostle) *in the Spirit are you so foolish as to seek to be made perfect in the flesh?* Oh! thou blessed, blessed Source of all our hopes and joys; thou precious JESUS, be thou

all in all to the souls of thy people! Here, LORD, I beg once for all totally to renounce myself, and as I first came to thee guilty, poor, and wretched; so, LORD, I would come still. Blessed be thy name, for that thou hast taught me to know the plague of my own heart, and to see and be convinced that in myself, after all thou hast bestowed upon me, I am no more worthy now, than when thou didst pass by and *beheld me in my blood, and bid me live*. Yes! dearest LORD, I desire to lie low in the dust before thee in token of my nothingness and unworthiness, while hanging upon thee the full assurance of my salvation. And, LORD, let it be my daily desire to exercise every act of faith upon thee, to undertake nothing but in thy strength, and to seek acceptance only in thy blood and righteousness. And oh! may I know thee with increasing joy under that blessed character whereby thou art revealed to thy people, *as the LORD our righteousness*; being convinced that thou art made of *GOD*, to us *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that all my glorying may be in the LORD*.

CHAPTER 13

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The most interesting part of this chapter is that which contains the death of the prophet Elisha. We have heard nothing of this man of God for some time. Here we are introduced to his history afresh, and the relation of his death. Here is also an account of the wicked reign of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. A remarkable circumstance is related of the revival of a dead man by being cast into the sepulchre of Elisha.

2 KINGS 13:1-2

(1) ¶ In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. (2) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

Reader! what a melancholy relation, for the most part, is the history of Israel under their *kings*. The outline of it is little more than that such an one began to reign at such a period, that he reigned so long, and that he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father had done before him. And is this the general history of man? How precious ought CHRIST to be, who came to do away sin by the sacrifice of himself!

2 KINGS 13:3

(3) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, *all their days*.

The relation in this verse is the natural consequence of sin; for *sin; when it is finished, bringeth forth death*.

2 KINGS 13:4-5

(4) And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. (5) (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime.

This is a sweet account in the midst of the narrative, as a beautiful spot of herbage amidst a barren heath. Observe how grace works; and how it brings forth GOD'S mercy!

2 KINGS 13:6-9

(6) Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.) (7) Neither did he leave of

the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing. (8) Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (9) And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

The best improvement to be made of the short account of this man's reign is, that GOD'S grace exceeded his undeservings. Sweetfis that scripture, the LORD delighteth in mercy. Micah 7:18.

2 KINGS 13:10-13

(10) ¶ In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. (11) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he walked therein. (12) And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (13) And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

What an awful character was Jeroboam! And what an awful monument, even to this hour, remains to his dreadful memory in the book of GOD! Reader! think what an aggravated state of guilt must that man be heaping to himself, whose transgressions operate after his death; the deadly fruit of whose iniquities, like a poisonous tree, kills for ages after he himself ceases to be!

2 KINGS 13:14

(14) Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

Our minds are relieved from the relation of such awful characters as we have lately been looking to, in the history of Jehoahaz and Joash, in the very mention of the name of Elisha, the man of GOD. And though we are now arrived to the period of his death in the history, yet, *precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints*. We are not told how old the prophet was, but we may pretty nearly gather the account, from the time in which he became a prophet to the time of his death. If the Reader looks back to the call of Elisha, he will discover that from the entrance on his prophetic office, which was when anointed by Elijah as his successor, (see 1 Kings 19:16) to this period, was little short of 66 years. So that however young he then was, his ministry proves him to have died tolerably aged. Indeed many years seem to have passed in retirement, towards the close of his life, for we have no account of him since his anointing Jehu king. The visit of Joash, and the lamentation he made over the prophet in the prospect of his death, is striking. He used the same words as Elisha himself had done on the departure of Elijah. As if he had said; now thou art departing, all the praying strength of Israel is departing with thee. Oh! how blessed is it to be thus in truth esteemed. Gracious, praying souls among GOD'S people are the salt of the earth, to preserve it from general putrefaction! They are the lights of the world, to prevent total darkness. LORD! I would take occasion to say, from this scene in the dying chamber of Elisha, LORD, raise up more Elishas, more faithful servants of our GOD, to stem the torrent of general corruption.

2 KINGS 13:15-19

(15) And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. (16) And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. (17) And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said,

Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed *them*. (18) And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. (19) And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice.

The prophet, though dying, had lost nothing of his prophetic spirit, nor of his faithfulness in GOD'S covenant promises. Like another Elijah, he gives intimations, even in death, of what should follow. The typical representation of the arrow, and of smiting, fully explains what the prophet's meanings were.

2 KINGS 13:20

(20) ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

Here is no account of the prophet's funeral, or of Israel's lamentation over him. Reader! doth not the death of the servants of our LORD always remind thee, and call forth holy joy in the heart, that though all die, yet JESUS the Master liveth forever! Sweet thought! And oh! the preciousness of the consolation. *Thou art forever the same*, blessed JESUS, *and thy years do not fail*. Hebrews 1:12. The invasion by the Moabites the same year as the prophet died, is remarkable. Not unfrequently, before the LORD brings on a judgment on a guilty land, he houseth his servants. Noah was taken into the ark before the flood. Lot sent out of Sodom before the overthrow.

2 KINGS 13:21

(21) And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band *of men*; and they cast the man into the

sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

This miracle perhaps, (for I do not presume to decide upon it positively) had a double signification. Probably it might be intended to imply that the doctrine Elisha had delivered, gave life to the souls of the faithful, after the prophet himself was no more. And yet perhaps, more probably, the thing itself was intended to lead the minds of the Old Testament saints to the belief and assurance of the resurrection, in and by the LORD JESUS. Elisha was himself an eminent type of CHRIST. And as such, was not the revival of this dead man, whose body was hastily put, through fear of the band of the Moabites, into the sepulchre of Elijah, an emblem that from believers being buried with CHRIST in the likeness of his death, they shall be also in his likeness in the resurrection? Romans 6:5. John. 11:25.

2 KINGS 13:22-25

(22) But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. (23) And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet. (24) So Hazael king of Syria died; and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. (25) And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

The chapter closes with a double aspect, Israel's unworthiness, and the LORD'S grace and favor. Oh! dearest JESUS! how doth thy great, thy glorious salvation shine more conspicuously blessed, when beheld over the view of man's undeservings! Surely everything in redemption-work loudly proclaims that sovereign truth, *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. Romans 5:20, 21.

REFLECTIONS

I PASS over every other consideration, which the perusal of this chapter affords, to take the larger, and more attentive review of the dying moments of the man of GOD, Elisha. No doubt the recollection of the wicked reign of Jehoahaz and Joash; the infinite clemency of a most gracious GOD, notwithstanding showed to such impious monarchs and their people, and the deliverances wrought out for them by the LORD; no doubt these contemplations would open a large door for improvement. And indeed, I pray the Reader not wholly to pass them by. May the HOLY GHOST sanctify them to the soul both of Writer and Reader. But I pass the more quickly over those things, to take a more deliberate view of the dying prophet, which this chapter records. And as with this chapter, the life and ministry of Elisha terminates, methinks I would gather up, from the fragments of a life so illustrious, and so highly honored, somewhat to contemplate to the honor of the saint, and yet infinitely more, to gather therefrom in reference to the Saviour.

And shall I, blessed SPIRIT of all truth, shall I humbly venture to ask, while lying low in the dust before thee, is there not somewhat in thy servant the prophet Elisha, which forms a resemblance, however imperfect and far short of the original, to the person, character, and offices of our LORD JESUS CHRIST? Didst thou, blessed SPIRIT, graciously design that thy church should be led to such a contemplation! Look then, my soul, while waiting the HOLY GHOST's teaching, look to Elisha, and see whether he was not intended to shadow forth somewhat of JESUS, in his life and ministry!

A double portion of the Spirit was promised Elisha at the river Jordan, when entering on his prophetic office, on the departure of Elijah. And was it not at the same river the HOLY GHOST descended on the Person of the LORD JESUS, at his entrance on his ministry, when *the SPIRIT was given to him without measure?* Did Elisha divide the waters hither and thither with the mantle of Elijah, in testimony that the LORD GOD of Elijah was with him: and are not the waters of death, and the depths of destruction dried up, and a passage made through Jordan for CHRIST's ransomed to pass over, by his robe of righteousness, which forms the justifying covering and mantle of all his people before the LORD JEHOVAH forever? Did Elisha work miracles; heal the waters, and cure the barren ground by the cruse of salt: and hath not our JESUS healed all the springs of bitterness in us and our corrupt nature, and by the salt of grace, and the covenant blessings, his precious and finished redemption work hath wrought in us, and for us; hath he not brought in such everlasting healing to the nations, that henceforth, JEHOVAH himself hath said, and confirmed it with an oath, *There shall be no more dearth, or barren land,* for in CHRIST JESUS *his people shall be saved with an everlasting righteousness, and shall be neither ashamed nor confounded, world without end!* Did Elisha multiply the pot of oil, raise the Shunammite's son; restore the poisoned food to wholesomeness; feed an hundred men with twenty loaves; cure Naaman, the Syrian, of his leprosy in mercy, and fasten it on Gehazi in punishment: and did he those great deeds in the name of the LORD? Yes! all these and many more, in confirmation of his commission, in whose name he acted; and, like another Moses, was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But as for thee, thou blessed JESUS, thou, as a Son over thine own house, and as the LORD and Sovereign of Elisha, to whom he, and all that went before, and all that

followed, ministered to thy coming; thou hast indeed in an endless perpetuity of miracles, not only during the days of thy flesh upon earth, but now in the everlasting possession and exercise of thy glory in heaven, still carrying on the same gracious and blessed designs in the accomplishment of thy redemption. The widow's oil which the prophet multiplied, might indeed shadow forth the oil of grace, which thou art dispensing, by thy SPIRIT, upon all thy people; but oh! how weak a representation of the fulness, by which thou art forever supplying the impoverished state of the insolvent, and the wretched. Elisha, by thy command, did raise the Shunammite's dead son. But thou, blessed JESUS, art raising millions of dead sinners to a new and spiritual life, which are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Elisha to manifest the power and grace of the GOD in whose name he acted, might be permitted to convert the poisoned broth into wholesome food. But thou, Almighty JESUS, in thine own power, and by thine own sovereign mercy, hast converted the very poison of sin into streams of salvation: by death thou hast destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and hast delivered them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. Hail! holy, blessed, precious, LORD JESUS! LAMB of GOD who hath all power in heaven and in earth. Not one or two only of widowed women, leprous Syrians, or famished men hath thy grace and mercy been manifested to by the ministry of thy servants, but millions of souls and bodies of thy redeemed, amidst all their poverty, leprosy, and famished state of endless ruin, but for thy gracious interposition, hast thou restored to life, and health, and joy, and liberty. *Men shall be blessed in thee, and all nations shall call thee blessed.* Here let me bow down before thee thou LORD GOD of the prophets, Elisha's GOD and Saviour, *in* whom, and *through* whom, and *for* whom, all his ministry was exercised. And in the view of his life, and indeed of all thy

servants who shadowed forth thy coming, may this one gracious truth be fully brought home to the soul, and made blessed both to him that writes, and him that reads, that to him, even to JESUS, gave all the prophets witness, that through thy name, dearest LORD JESUS, *whosoever believeth in thee, shall receive remission of sins.*

CHAPTER 14

CONTENTS

This chapter brings some consolation, to the mind in the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, in relating to us the good reign of Amaziah. He is slain, however, by a conspiracy; and is succeeded in the kingdom by Azariah. Here is an account also of the reign of Jeroboam king of Israel.

2 KINGS 14:1-22

(1) ¶ In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. (2) He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoadan of Jerusalem. (3) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did. (4) Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places. (5) And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father. (6) But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. (7) He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day. (8) ¶ Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel,

saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. (9) And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. (10) Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory *of this*, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee? (11) But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Bethshemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah. (12) And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents. (13) And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Bethshemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. (14) And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. (15) ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (16) And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead. (17) And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. (18) And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (19) Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. (20) And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. (21) And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. (22) He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

The twenty five years of Amaziah's reign may be brought into a narrow compass. His history, as is here related, consisted chiefly in restoring order in the temple service, by which it is

said he did right in the sight of the LORD, though not like David. The other parts are much like that of others in extending his authority, and in a wish to extend his conquests, in which, however, he was worsted. The parable of the thistle and cedar, which Jehoash made use of to correct Amaziah's folly, was well chosen. And the event corresponded to its figure. But what I would chiefly desire the Reader to remark while passing through these chapters, of war, and desolation, and the sword, is to view in them the sad consequences of a fallen state. Even in the history of Israel, the nation whom GOD chose for himself from all the earth, we see the same sad ruin by reason of sin. No man hath ever contemplated to the full, the dreadful situation to which our nature has been reduced by the fall. And never will it be fully ascertained in this life. And hence no one, not even the redeemed who feel the precious effects of regeneration, can ever while they remain in a body of sin and death calculate the glorious consequences of redemption by JESUS. Oh! thou blessed, gracious, dearest LORD JESUS! when shall I know to the full thy loveliness, and the immense mercies thou hast accomplished for thy people to the praise of thy FATHER'S grace, and the purchase of thy blood?

2 KINGS 14:23

(23) ¶ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years.

I cannot pass over this verse without remarking the name of this king of Israel. One should have thought that the name of Jeroboam was so detestable that it would have been shunned with horror. Was it in presumption, as if defying the LORD? Alas! to what a state of sin was Israel at this time reduced?

2 KINGS 14:24-29

(24) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. (25) He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of Gathhepher. (26) For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. (27) And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. (28) Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (29) And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

The most remarkable events here recorded are concerning the LORD'S preserving mercy to Israel, who though giving them up to their enemies, and about to suffer them when the time arrived to go into Babylon, yet would still preserve them a name. *Destroy it not*, said he that looked on, *for there is still a blessing in it*. JESUS, the promised seed, is in it. Oh! precious truth! Isaiah 65:8. And the ministry of the prophet Jonah is worth regarding in this place, for he exercised his ministry about this time. Though the book of his prophecy which the HOLY GHOST hath caused to be preserved in the church contains the account of his commission to Nineveh only, yet we find from this chapter Jonah ministered also to Israel. See Jonah Chap. 1 to the end. But I beg the Reader, in the perusal of this chapter, to mark the expression concerning Israel's misery. *The LORD saw the affliction of Israel that it was very great*. Yes! their affliction was very great. But observe, there is not a word said that their sorrow for sin, or their repentance for seeking pardon, was proportioned. Alas! alas! punishment, however extreme, or sorrow, however

aggravated, will leave the heart just where it found it, as hardened as ever, unless the LORD gives repentance to Israel and remission of sins. Oh! precious JESUS! thou, that art exalted *as a prince, and a Saviour*, bestow, LORD, those ascension-gifts upon my soul. Grant me that *true godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of*, and keep from me that *sorrow of the world which worketh death*. 2 Corinthians 7:10.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the ruined state of Israel, which this chapter presents to thy view, the sure consequence of sin and the evil thereof. Whoever hardened himself against GOD, and prospered?—Is this Israel whom the LORD brought out of Egypt; carried him on eagles wings; rained manna from heaven for his food, and gave water from the rock to his thirst; led him by a pillar of a cloud by day, and sheltered him in a pillar of fire by night? Is this the same? Alas? *how is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed!*

But behold also, may soul, the bowels of mercies of Israel's covenant GOD. The LORD saw the affliction of Israel. And will not the LORD send deliverance to his people? Yes! blessed be his name. The deliverance is only in him. He hath sent a Saviour, and a great one, and he hath delivered them. Oh! for grace to receive JESUS, to believe in him, to rest upon him, and on the bended knee, in transports of rejoicing, to bless GOD *for his unspeakable gift!*

CHAPTER 15

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The history of Israel and Judah is carried on through this chapter. And this is the period in which the prophets Hosea and Isaiah exercised their ministry. Here is a succession of several kings both in Israel and Judah.

2 KINGS 15:1-7

(1) ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. (2) Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. (3) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; (4) Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places. (5) And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the land. (6) And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (7) So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

The review of the parallel history in the 2nd book of the Chronicles, will form the best comment on the history of Azariah. Though it be said he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, it is intended by the expression only to imply that he did not abjure the worship of the LORD GOD of Israel and set up idols. It should seem that his name was more generally known by that of Uzziah, as he is uniformly called in the Chronicles; and the leprosy with which he was smitten is there more particularly recorded. See 2 Chronicles 26, throughout.

2 KINGS 15:8-37

(8) ¶ In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months. (9) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of

Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. (10) And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. (11) And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. (12) This *was* the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass. (13) Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. (14) For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. (15) And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. (16) Then Menahem smote Tiphseh, and all that *were* therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not *to him*, therefore he smote *it*; *and* all the women therein that were with child he ripped up. (17) In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. (18) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. (19) *And* Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. (20) And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land. (21) And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? (22) And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. (23) In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* two years. (24) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. (25) But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. (26) And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah,

and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. (27) In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. (28) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. (29) In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. (30) And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. (31) And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. (32) ¶ In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. (33) Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. (34) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. (35) Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD. (36) Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (37) In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah.

I bring the whole into this compass, not only for the sake of brevity, but because the observations which are suited to one reign more or less will suit them all. Short as this chapter is, the events of it include a period of near 70 years; in which we have a succession of monarchs short in their lives, short in their reign, and for the most part full of evil. If the Reader feels disposed to examine into the length of each, a short calculation will soon enable him to ascertain the whole. But what I would chiefly beg my Reader to remark on the occasion is, the goodness of the LORD in watching over Israel,

notwithstanding their rebellion, by the ministry of his servants the prophets. Hosea's whole volume is a succession of Sermons, delivered, as the title page tells us, in the days of Uzziah and Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash king of Israel. Hosea 1:1. Isaiah prophesied at much the same time. Joel and Amos were also contemporaries in this service. The LORD sent his servants rising early, and speaking, though they would not hear; and therefore he brought evil upon them in a progressive way, from one calamity to another, until the captivity of Babylon, which put a period to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. But Reader! one sweet thought ariseth to relieve the mind of the believer under all; and that is, the ruin of kingdoms, and monarchies, the putting down one and setting up another, was all intended as preparatory to that glorious event when He should come, whose kingdom should be an everlasting kingdom, and his empire, which should never be destroyed. When by events the most unpromising, and according to human ideas impossible, *the stone should be cut out of the mountain without hands*; and the God of heaven, even our FATHER, should raise up, in the house of David, his Son JESUS, and *send him to bless his people in turning away every one of them from their iniquities*. Hail, blessed JESUS! in thee we see that precious promise fulfilled; *In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the LORD of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance*. Daniel 2:44, 45. Acts 3:25, 26. Isaiah 19:24, 25.

2 KINGS 15:38

(38) And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

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READER! can you review the successive history of these kings without emotion! Is there not here enough to teach any man, and every man, the folly, emptiness, and unsatisfying nature of all human greatness void of the grace and favor of GOD? Is this all the history of greatness that these men were born, that they began at such a period to reign, that they reigned so long, did evil for the most part in the sight of the LORD, and at their death were succeeded by others! Alas, alas! if this be the only arithmetic of human greatness, who would covet the envied purple, or look with longing desires to be among the higher ranks of this life.

Blessed JESUS! how sweetly in this instance, as in every other review of the present circumstances of human life, doth thy person, and our interest and relationship in thee, appear. Allied to thee, dearest LORD, thy people are royal indeed; for they are begotten of GOD the FATHER, the king of heaven, and earth, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away: they are the children and brethren of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST; and by the HOLY GHOST made partakers of the divine nature, married to JESUS, and entitled by him to all the portions and revenues of royalty, and to a crown of glory hereafter that shall endure forever. Reader! pause and contemplate their privileges! Behold! See, even now, amidst all the disadvantages of their earthly state, though poor in outward circumstances, and the world owns them not, but their mother's children are angry with them; yet are they still but like the heirs of a kingdom in disguise, going home to glory, and each one of them bears the features, and resembles the children of a king. Their spiritual clothing, like the king's daughter, *is all glorious within*. The imputed righteousness of

their husband and their LORD, is royal apparel indeed. Their provision in spirituals is all heavenly, being the bread of GOD which came down from heaven, the flesh and blood of JESUS; they ride moreover in the royal chariot of the LORD JESUS, the pillows whereof are silver, the bottom thereof gold, *the covering of it of purple, and the midst thereof paved with love*. They have a royal guard also to attend and guard their persons, angels being their ministering servants, and the LORD himself their GOD, their glory.

Think, then, ye humble followers of the humble and lowly JESUS, think of your high privileges in him, and his lawful right, who is *the LORD your righteousness*. And if ye are indeed *a chosen generation, royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; show forth the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*. Live as children of the LORD. And seeing that *ye have received a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve GOD acceptably with reverence and godly fear*.

CHAPTER 16

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This chapter is wholly spent in recording the evil reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. The close of the chapter brings in a relief to the mind the introduction of his son Hezekiah, who succeeded him.

2 KINGS 16:1-4

(1) ¶ In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. (2) Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. (3) But he walked in the way

of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. (4) And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

What an awful account both the histories of Judah and Israel furnish! the succession of the kings, for the most part, is but a succession of evil. Idolatry, during the reign of Ahaz, seems to have been advanced to its height. The Reader will have a larger view of the impiety of Ahaz, if he consults and compares with what is related of him in the parallel history, in the 28th chapter of the 2d book of Chronicles.

2 KINGS 16:5-9

(5) ¶ Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*. (6) At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. (7) So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. (8) And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of Assyria. (9) And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of* it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

The prophet Isaiah, hath given us an account of this transaction in the 7th chapter of his prophecy. The Reader will do well, therefore, to consult the passage in Isaiah's writings. But what I would more particularly request the Reader to observe in that chapter of the prophet is, the very gracious message which the LORD at this time sent to Ahaz. Notwithstanding the daring impiety of this man, yet, as a branch of the house of David, the LORD sends to him a sign of

his mercy in the promise of the Messiah. How gracious was it in the LORD to treat any longer with such degenerate creatures! how increasingly gracious at such a time to point to the remedy for sin in the promise of a Redeemer! and how abundantly and astonishingly gracious thus to refresh the souls of the people with the outlines of JESUS'S person and character. Reader! I beseech you to turn to the account of it; Isaiah 7:10-16. And when you have read of GOD'S grace, go on to read of his sure judgments to the despisers of his mercy; verse 17 to the end.

2 KINGS 16:10-20

(10) ¶ And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. (11) And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus. (12) And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. (13) And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. (14) And he brought also the brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. (15) And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire *by*. (16) Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. (17) ¶ And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. (18) And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house

of the LORD for the king of Assyria. (19) Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (20) And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

I include the whole of the remainder of the life of Ahaz in one view, because it only leads the mind to discover the progress of his impiety until the measure of it was full. Reader! can we contemplate, without horror, the daring conduct of this man, after so gracious a message as he received from GOD, to go and take the copy of an idolatrous altar from among the heathen dunghill gods, of Damascus. We hardly meet with a parallel instance of wickedness among all the kings of Israel and Judah. And what a wretched, worthless, time-serving priest must have been this Urijah! Alas! As with, the people, so with the priest. As with the servant, so with his master; the land is utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled. Isaiah 24:2, &c. If the Reader will consult Isaiah's prophecy, in several places he will see how the prophet bewails the sad times of degeneracy in Ahaz's reign. Isaiah 14:24-28.

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*How painful a thought is it to behold in this history of Israel and Judah the sad proofs of a fallen state! whether we read of one king or another, the general features of all are the same; All have sinned and come short of GOD's glory! But with what increased distress do we behold in the priests of GOD, as in this awful character of Urijah, the dreadful apostacy of mankind! and in the end, what must be the awful consequence. *Begin at my sanctuary*, saith GOD in his judgments. And if judgment begin at the house of GOD, what must the end be of them that obey not the gospel of JESUS? For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the*

ungodly and the sinner appear? Ye ministers of JESUS, think of these things. And dare be zealous for GOD'S honour and glory, though it expose you to the hatred and anger of men.

But how is my soul relieved from contemplating such a king as Ahaz, and such an High Priest as Urijah, in calling to mind the prophet's commission when sent to Ahaz to proclaim to him the approach of that hour, when the LORD would fulfil that promise of raising up to himself a faithful priest, who should do according to what was in the heart of the LORD. Precious JESUS! thou art indeed a priest upon thy throne. And all the impiety of Ahaz, and the worthlessness of Urijah, I would lose sight of in thy faithfulness and truth. Thou art the very one which the LORD gave as a sign to Ahaz: thou art IMMANUEL, GOD with us, GOD in our nature, the hope of glory! Blessed assurance! for, as GOD the work of redemption is neither too great, nor too heavy, for thee; and as man, GOD dwelling with us, and being one in our nature, thou wilt be on our side, and both accomplish and render effectual the salvation thou hast undertaken. So that we may cry out, *If GOD be for us who shall be against us?* It is GOD that justifieth, who-is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of GOD. Nothing therefore shalt be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.

CHAPTER 17

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This chapter relates to the history of the kingdom of Israel. Hosea's wicked reign is recorded, and which terminates the

Israelitish kingdom; for the captivity takes place in the destruction of Samaria, after a period of about 260 years. A mixture of religions takes place also on the event of the captivity.

2 KINGS 17:1-6

(1) ¶ In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. (2) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. (3) Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. (4) And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. (5) Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. (6) In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

The Reader will do well, while reading this chapter, to keep in view what the prophets have said concerning the events recorded in those days. The prophets Isaiah and Hosea particularly merit our closest attention. The latter, in his first and second chapters, hath woefully described this unchurching of Israel; and at the same time comforted the chosen of the LORD with the sure prospects of their becoming a church again. GOD had indeed called them by the prophet, Lo-ammi, as being no longer his people; but he still promised that after he had brought them into the wilderness, and pleaded with them there, they should be again the Ammi, the beloved of the LORD. Let the Reader study those sweet chapters while looking at this history of Israel, and indeed the whole of Hosea's prophecy, all of which must have been delivered before the captivity. The siege of three years before Samaria was taken, seemed to speak GOD'S reluctance to give

them up; *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?* Hosea 11:8. if the Reader be not thoroughly acquainted with the history of this event of the captivity of Israel, it may not be amiss to observe, that the ten tribes which constituted the kingdom of Israel, were all carried away in this captivity; and though no doubt many of each tribe, as individuals, have been gathered from the general loss, yet never to this hour have they returned. They are, scattered, and perhaps dispersed in every country under heaven; yet a time is promised when *the deliverer shall arise from Zion*, and to whom, as the glorious Shiloh, *the gathering of the people shall be*. But from the period of this captivity all the tribes, except Judah and Levi, were taken away and unchurched. Let the Reader consult these precious scriptures which foretell their recovery: Hosea 3:4, 5, Romans 11:15, 26. Revelation 7:4, 8.

2 KINGS 17:7-23

(7) ¶ For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, (8) And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. (9) And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. (10) And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: (11) And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: (12) For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. (13) Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. (14) Notwithstanding they would not hear, but

hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. (15) And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. (16) And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. (17) And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. (18) Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. (19) Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. (20) And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. (21) For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. (22) For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; (23) Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

Though the LORD is not accountable to any of his creatures for what he doth; yet is he graciously pleased to manifest the equity of his dealings, and to prove, even to the conviction of the sinner himself, that the LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. He appeals, by his servants the prophets, to the minds of men, in proof of this. It was not the king of Assyria that could have ruined Israel, had not the LORD commissioned him. The Assyrian (as Isaiah saith) was the rod of his anger, and the staff in the Assyrian's hand was the indignation of the LORD. It was the LORD that sent the Assyrian against Israel, as an hypocritical nation; and it was the LORD

which gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers, against whom Israel had sinned. See Isaiah 10:5, 6. Isaiah 42:24, 25. Reader! while you peruse these solemn scriptures, and behold GOD'S just judgments executed upon his own people; read with trembling. Though GOD hath promised in covenant engagements by his dear son, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that the redeemed shall not be cast off forever; yet the seed of JESUS, if they break his laws, and keep not his commandments, the LORD will visit *their offences with a rod, and their sins with scourges*. Psalm 89:30-32. I do not find in the whole bible a promise to give encouragement to a loose and careless life. But on the contrary, though the church of CHRIST must stand and shall prevail against all opposition, yet that church may be taken from one spot to flourish more in another. The golden candlestick is a moveable thing in the LORD'S house. Revelation 2:5.

2 KINGS 17:24-41

(24) ¶ And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. (25) And *so* it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them. (26) Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. (27) Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. (28) Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD. (29) Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. (30) And the

men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, (31) And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. (32) So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. (33) They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. (34) Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; (35) With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: (36) But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. (37) And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. (38) And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. (39) But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. (40) Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner. (41) So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

See, Reader! the awful desolation of Samaria! Israel would not love her one true and most gracious GOD, and a GOD in covenant with her; therefore she shall here set up a multitude of dunghill gods, as Moses described them, that newly came up, whom their fathers feared not, and had existence before them. Reader! is it possible to behold the human mind capable of such a degradation, and not be convinced of the universal ruin and fall of our nature? Deuteronomy 32:17. Hosea 10:1-8,

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PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter, and behold the awful visitations of GOD upon his own people. Well may every truly awakened soul take part in what he reads here, and tremble lest, for the wickedness of our own land, the LORD should send similar judgments. Are we better than they? (saith the apostle upon an occasion not unlike this) No, in no wise. For he hath before concluded all under sin. And though from the relation GOD the FATHER stands in to his people in his dear Son; though from the ransom he hath received from our Almighty Surety, the everlasting welfare of the regenerate is secure; yet for the honour of his holy name, to prevent the abuse of his covenant-mercy, and for the holiness of his nature, GOD will correct (and to what extent who shall say) the unhumiliated state of his people in their sins and transgressions.

Reader! are you a real follower of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Hath the HOLY GHOST convinced you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? Hath he led you to the precious JESUS for the whole of your salvation? And if so; can you be unmoved in the view of the present state of the church in this highly favoured land, and behold the languishing condition of Zion among us, unconcerned. How did holy men of old feel on such occasions? *My flesh trembleth* (saith one of them) *for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments! for these things* (saith another) *weep, mine eyes run down with tears. When I heard* (saith a third) *my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered into my bones.* Are you unmoved! Oh! for grace from him who hath the residue of the SPIRIT, to be earnest in prayer with him for his sparing mercy!

Precious JESUS! where shall we flee, to whom shall we come, but to thee? We are indeed a guilty, sinful land, a wretched, unworthy people. We are sadly gone away from thee. We are a race of evildoers, children that are corrupters. We have sinned, what shall we say, O thou Preserver of men? But, LORD, help us to return, Let thy grace induce, in all ranks, a spirit of reform. Oh! thou exalted Prince and Saviour! pour out thine ascension gifts of repentance, and remission of sins. Bring us before thee, looking with an eye of faith to thy blood, beholding thee as the Lamb that hath been slain, and wearing thy Priesthood still. And oh! be thou very jealous for this land, and heal thy people. Come, gracious LORD, return to thy people with pardons to bless, with grace to purify, with love to allure; and draw our hearts unto thee. And let us hear those soul reviving words; *I am returned to the British Jerusalem in mercy.* Then may our souls answer to the words of thy grace, and say; *Who is a GOD like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage. The LORD will not retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again. He will have compassion upon us. He will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.*

CHAPTER 18

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This chapter contains the account of Hezekiah, and his good reign. His destruction of idolatry. A further account of the captivity of the people of Israel. The chapter, after this,

returns to the relation of the history of Hezekiah. Jerusalem is besieged by Sennacherib.

2 KINGS 18:1-7

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. (2) Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. (3) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. (4) He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. (5) He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. (6) For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. (7) And the LORD was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

The Reader should carefully keep in view, in order to have a clear apprehension of those historical parts of the Bible, that the history of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, is so incorporated in one and the same chapter, that, unless properly attended to, an ordinary Reader will find himself frequently at a loss to distinguish. In the preceding chapter we were called upon to notice the history of Israel, and there we read the end of it, as a kingdom, in Samaria being taken, and the people carried away captive. We are now led to the history of Judah, and Hezekiah, the good king, is brought before us in the account of his reign. One of the most interesting remarks in the opening of his history is, that notwithstanding the worthlessness of his fathers, Ahaz, and Urijah, the piety of Hezekiah felt no check. The HOLY GHOST places him in the highest rank. No king in Judah ever equaled

him. But while we pay all due respect to so illustrious a character, let us not fail to keep in view the cause. Is it not GOD that worketh in his people, both to will and to do of his good pleasure? HOLY SPIRIT! to thee, would I look, as the first predisposing cause of all grace. We bless thee, LORD, for the gift. And we bless thee that thou hast given us to discover thy gracious hand in it. And we desire that all the glory may be thine. The destruction of the brazen serpent, may perhaps need some little explanation. It was Moses that erected it: it was of divine appointment: and it had a blessed reference to JESUS. See Numbers 21:7-9. compared with John 3:14, 15. But I refer the Reader for observations on this to the Commentary on the 21st of Numbers. In process of time, the children of Israel, forgetting that it was only typical, and as a commemoration of mercies, made it an idol of worship. Hezekiah, therefore, brake it in pieces, proving thereby, that it was *Nehushtan*, that is nothing but brass.—How delightful an account that is; *the LORD was with Hezekiah, and prospered him*. Blessed JESUS! remember thy sweet promise of being always with thy people. Oh! what a cluster of promises to this effect, hast thou given in those words. Reader, pray turn to them: Matthew 28:20. John 14:23, 26.

2 KINGS 18:8-12

(8) He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. (9) ¶ And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. (10) And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. (11) And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: (12) Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

This is a kind of parenthesis to what went before, and what follows: for it repeats what the former chapter related, the capture of Samaria; and is no further connected with the history of Judah, than as it shows, from the success the king of Assyria had obtained over Israel, it opened, as he thought, an easier way to the destruction of Judah.

2 KINGS 18:13-16

(13) Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. (14) And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. (15) And Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house. (16) At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

This Sennacherib must have been the successor to Shalmaneser. And perhaps his victory over Samaria prompted him to suppose, that he should be conqueror of Jerusalem. And though it is said the LORD prospered Hezekiah whithersoever he went, yet we find the LORD was pleased; in the opening of this siege, to give Sennacherib a temporary triumph, with a view to a more signal display of his own Almighty power, in the salvation of his servant, and his people. Reader! it is one of the LORD'S usual plans of mercy, for the exercise of his peoples faith, and for the manifestation of his own grace and love, to let us see what poor creatures we are, and should forever remain, but for him. Poor Hezekiah needed this lesson, it seems; for when the LORD permitted this enemy to triumph a little, instead of looking to the LORD, he made a pitiful compromise, and bought off the foe with a present. Alas! what poor creatures we are!

2 KINGS 18:17-25

(17) ¶ And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the highway of the fuller's field. (18) And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. (19) And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this wherein thou trustest? (20) Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain words,) *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? (21) Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, *even* upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. (22) But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem? (23) Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. (24) How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? (25) Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

Hezekiah is soon taught what a base wretch he had to do with, who not only took Hezekiah's gold, and then turned against him, with more force, in the perfidy of his heart, but even charged Hezekiah with robbery, for taking the gold to give him from the house of the LORD. The Reader will do no violence to the scripture of this history, if he spiritualizes the whole of this blasphemer's speech, as the language of the devil, in his temptations of our poor nature. Doth he not in effect say the same thing, and pretend, when he transforms

himself into an angel of light, that he hath his commission from the LORD?

2 KINGS 18:26-35

(26) Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand *it*: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that *are* on the wall. (27) But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? (28) Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: (29) Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: (30) Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (31) Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me by a present, and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern: (32) Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. (33) Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (34) Where *are* the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? (35) Who *are* they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

The modest request of Hezekiah's servants to speak in the Syrian language, meeting with such contempt, may serve to teach us how confident of success the blasphemer was. And it only serves to heighten the triumph of Hezekiah the more. It is hardly possible to determine whether this second speech of

Rab-shakeh exceeded most in lies or blasphemy. He might perhaps, with truth, laugh at the king of Judah's military preparation, or his dependence upon Egypt. An arm of flesh is a poor security, at the best of times. But his trust in the GOD of the armies of heaven, for this impious wretch to defy! what an awful instance of the most arrant blasphemy was this! And to charge Hezekiah with destroying the altars of GOD, when in truth, the pious king had been only throwing down the altars of idolatry, in honor of the true GOD, was as base a falsehood. But Reader! what awful characters do such men afford, who come forward to oppose GOD, and his people. Here was a new Pharaoh started up, to the terror of GOD's people, for a season, but principally, and finally for the display of GOD's glory. Pause in like manner over all the temporary triumphs of the ungodly. Upon every occasion of this sort whether as it refers to your own history, or to the circumstances of the church of JESUS, I love to read the 37th Psalm.

2 KINGS 18:36-37

(36) But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

(37) Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

How delightful it is to do as the servants of Hezekiah did upon various trials; keep silence. *In your patience* (saith our dear LORD) *possess ye your souls*. The rented garment and the sprinkled ashes, were tokens of real sorrow. In the gospel it is the broken and the contrite heart, sprinkled with the blood of CHRIST.

REFLECTIONS

THERE are many improving observations which arise out of this chapter. In the first place, I would call upon the Reader to remark with me, that though Hezekiah is said to have been the best of all the kings of Judah, yet Hezekiah was not without his afflictions. We see in the very midst of attempting the reformation of the people, and the abolishing of idols, the LORD permits an idolatrous prince not only to come against him, but for a time to succeed. Reader! it is so, it must be so, in the life of grace. Faith must be exercised, that it may be more precious than gold that perisheth, JESUS saith, as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. LORD! I would say in answer, spare not thy rebukes, nor suffer thy child to be spoiled for want of the rod, when thy wisdom seeth it necessary. But oh thou, most blessed LORD, give me the penetrating eye to discover, under all the frowns of thy providence, the sweet smiles of thy love. And let my faith be always alive, in full exercise, to be looking forward to that happy period, when thy child shall leave the school of learning, to rest in thy bosom in the full enjoyment of the knowledge and perfect love of thee, forever.

I would learn, in the next place, from the trial of good king Hezekiah, that, as this world is not the believer's home, so his security from trial is never over, until he arrives safe at his FATHER's house. My soul, was it not a precious mercy in the LORD, to take off Hezekiah's mind from all confidence in creatures, when he was thus feelingly taught to put no confidence in princes? Poor Hezekiah thought to buy the friendship of the king of Assyria with a present, and therefore sent him the silver and the gold which he had for this purpose. It is very true the children of GOD consider, or ought to consider, gold, silver, and precious stones, as objects of no value; and would gladly part with them, if this would make

carnal men less angry. But, the LORD will not allow any temporizing. How often would my soul have purchased peace with the wicked at almost any rate, if I might enjoy JESUS unmolested! But this is the believers motto: *If any will live godly in CHRIST JESUS he shall suffer persecution.* This should wave in the standard of the Christian in his holy war. Dearest, blessed JESUS! hast thou said; *in the world ye shall have tribulation?* And hath my foolish heart, in order to stand fair with the world, sought a shelter from it? Oh! my LORD, henceforth let the world frown, so thou but smile: let the Rabshakehs of the present hour utter their reproaches, and pour forth all their contempt, so thou but grant me that unspeakable blessing: *In me ye shall have peace.* By faith in thee I shall overcome the world; and from confidence in thee I shall rejoice; and my joy no man take from me.

In the last place, Reader, let you and I learn from this interesting chapter, to hold our peace, and in our patience to possess our souls, when for a moment the ungodly seem to triumph. It is but a *seeming* triumph, and like the crackling of thorns under the pot. Yes! blessed JESUS! my soul would wait at thy footstool in silence, and in patient waiting would I be found. I know there is One at the mercy-seat, whom the FATHER heareth alway. There I rest my ground of acceptance only in JESUS. He will plead my cause, and bring me forth in the path of righteousness, for his name's sake. Oh! the relief my soul feels, even in the waiting. Heavenly LORD thou hast fulfilled, thou wilt fulfil that promise: *He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.*

CHAPTER 19

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This chapter relates the effect Rab-shakeh's blasphemy had upon the mind of Hezekiah, when it was reported to him. He sends to desire an interest in the prayers of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's answer. Sennacherib sends a renewed message of insolence to Hezekiah. The king goes up into the house of the LORD, lays it before the LORD, and prayeth. The LORD, by his servant Isaiah, comforts him, and sends an angel to the destruction of the Assyrians. Sennacherib is slain by his sons.

2 KINGS 19:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

If the Reader will turn to the parallel history of this memorable event, as it is rehearsed, in the 2d book of the Chronicles chap. 32:1-8. he will there find that Hezekiah has been consulting with an arm of flesh, and taking counsel with his princes, how to counteract the stratagem of the king of Assyria. But here we find the pious king got back to the right path of duty, and of safety. He is here beautifully represented as going to the LORD. Reader! mark it down. If we begin with the LORD, and his strength, and his Arm, which is JESUS, then the LORD will bless instruments to our deliverance, and safety. But if, like Hezekiah, we first begin in the flesh, it is a mercy if the LORD strips us of all our hopes, in order to show us where our strength lies. Sweetly dearest LORD, dost thou teach our poor nature these precious things. Isaiah 27:5.

2 KINGS 19:2-4

(2) And he sent Eliakim, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. (3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. (4) It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that are left.

Nothing can be more interesting than this view of Hezekiah and his court. He sends his servants to seek an interest in the prayers of the prophet. But he goes himself to the LORD. Ministers, faithful ministers may be helpful with their prayers, and those of the church; but the poor soul hastens away himself also to JESUS. There is another great beauty in the subject of the prayer desired. *Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.* Ten tribes of Jacob were already in captivity, and Judah was in imminent danger. Reader! such is the church of JESUS. A remnant according to grace. Oh! for fervent, earnest, Jacob-like wrestling with our GOD in prayer, for the remnant of the LORD'S heritage now! Why, LORD, should thine heritage be put to confusion?

2 KINGS 19:5-7

(5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. (6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. (7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

Observe how gracious the LORD is. No sooner do his people call, but the LORD answers! And the LORD not only promises deliverance to his servant, but destruction to his enemy. Oh!

for grace to see and believe this sure event, as it concerns salvation by JESUS! His church shall not only be blessed with everlasting joy; but the accursed enemy shall be condemned in everlasting ruin. So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. Judges 5:31.

2 KINGS 19:8-9

(8) ¶ So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. (9) And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

The LORD was pleased to cause a little pause in the proud attempts of Sennacherib and his general, by diverting his attention elsewhere, both for the more complete destruction of this idolatrous prince, and for the better exercise of his servant's faith. Very gracious are the LORD'S dealings with his people upon these occasions, could we but exercise faith always in the view of them: but alas! we lose the enjoyment of a thousand mercies, for want of eying them in this point of view.

2 KINGS 19:10-13

(10) Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. (11) Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? (12) Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; *as* Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in Thelasar? (13) Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

The same blasphemy is made use of by the master, as by the servant. It only riseth a little higher. He charges GOD with deceiving Hezekiah and bids him beware of it. Whereas Rabshakeh only begged Hezekiah not to deceive himself. Reader! to what a desperate state of horrible impiety is the mind of men capable of being carried! Is it not enough to make one tremble, when we consider that all men are alike by nature Oh! dearest LORD JESUS! what do I owe thee, thou dear LORD, and what is the everlasting love I ought to pay thee for thy distinguishing grace!

2 KINGS 19:14-19

(14) And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. (15) And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou art the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. (16) LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God. (17) Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, (18) And have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. (19) Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.

See, Reader, see how sweet and precious the blessed effects of grace! And, LORD, so do thou cause me to do by all the letters, and threats, and messages, and temptations of the devil, and all his party. Give me grace and wisdom to copy Hezekiah; to spread the whole before thee. Never to send answers in my own way. Never to combat in my own strength. But oh! let me fly to thee, thou blessed JESUS; do thou undertake for me; thou shalt answer for me, O LORD my

GOD. Reader! let me beg of you to remark the sweetness, and strength of Hezekiah's prayer. He prays for deliverance because the LORD'S honor was concerned in it; GOD'S faithfulness and covenant promises. Like another Joshua; *What wilt thou do (saith he) for thy great name, O LORD GOD, if Israel turn their backs upon their enemies?* See Joshua 7:8, 9. As if he had said, it matters not what becomes of us, if our death and our destruction were all the consequences of the triumph of the foe. But it is of the highest importance that the faithfulness of a Covenant GOD, and his honor be taken care of, in his promises to his people, that they be not destroyed by the enemy. Reader! think of this statement of the argument whenever the enemy oppresseth you, as it concerns GOD'S faithfulness in CHRIST. Oh! what a volume, of the most unanswerable arguments in prayer doth that one pleading in JESUS afford, when we come before the high throne in the name and righteousness of the LORD JESUS. The grace, the word, the faithfulness, the promise, the oath of the FATHER; and the blood and righteousness, and covenant salvation of JESUS: What poor soul can go with these pleas to a mercy seat, and go in vain!

2 KINGS 19:20-34

(20) ¶ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. (21) This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. (22) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy *One* of Israel. (23) By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, *and* into the forest of his Carmel. (24) I

have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places. (25) Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps. (26) Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up. (27) But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. (28) Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. (29) And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. (30) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. (31) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this. (32) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. (33) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD. (34) For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

What a multitude of most rich and precious things appear in these verses. Observe, Reader! how long an answer the LORD returns to a short prayer. GOD is not only more ready to hear than we to pray; but will infinitely out-go all our desires, and our expectations. The LORD, in this answer, graciously condescends to explain the causes why bad men are permitted to exercise a temporary triumph; and in a most beautiful representation, as the daughter of Zion, describes how his people shall sooner or later laugh all her enemies to scorn. Observe, moreover, that what this proud, insolent tyrant directed, in his threats, against Hezekiah, the LORD took

to himself. Sweet thought! JESUS considers the attack of all his people in this point of view. Who toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. Is not this enough at all times to support and bear up under the trials of his people. But what I would have the Reader particularly to notice in this answer of the LORD is, that he here decidedly shows, that the actions of men, however undesigned on their part, are all under his appointment, and direction. *The deceiver and the deceived are his.* Although they mean not so, neither did their heart intend it; yet are they carrying on all GOD'S designs, and doing the very thing which they intend not to do, but which the LORD appoints for his ultimate glory, the joy of his people, and the ruin of his enemies. What illustrious instances do the scriptures afford in proof of this. When the sons of Jacob sold Joseph, how little did they intend Joseph's glory, and their own preservation from famine. When Haman envied Mordecai, and went forth to his destruction, how little did he see the gallows he was building thereby for himself? Nay, above all these, and every other instance that can ever be thought of; when the Jews nailed our adorable JESUS to the cross, how far distant from their thoughts was it, that this cross would be for the everlasting salvation of the sinner. Reader! pause over these things, and look up at all times with the most awakened attention to that Sovereign Hand who ruleth among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth! And how very gracious was the answer of the LORD to the prayer of Hezekiah, as it concerned the deliverance of Jerusalem! How unpromising, indeed, were the things the LORD had assured Hezekiah! The siege had made a famine: The LORD promiseth plenty. How shall it be produced? Not by planting and by sowing; but the earth shall bring forth of itself. But this is not all. Out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant! By what means? Jerusalem is now closely blockaded! The king of Assyria will raze the walls of

Jerusalem, he declares. No, saith JEHOVAH, so far from razing the walls, he shall not shoot a single arrow! Here was room for the exercise of faith. And no doubt Hezekiah found it so. But observe, Reader, the cause of all these promised mercies. Not for Hezekiah's righteousness; nor for the peoples worth and obedience: But for the LORD'S own sake in the covenant promises; and for his servant David's sake, to whom he had promised his sure mercies. But oh! how infinitely heightened, and increasingly precious doth this history appear, read through the medium of gospel mercies, and secured to believers in the covenant faithfulness of GOD the FATHER, and the blood and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The church of CHRIST, like Jerusalem, is closely besieged day by day. The enemy saith I will pursue: I will overtake. I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be gratified upon her. Hitherto, saith the LORD, shalt thou come, and no further. No weapon formed against the church of JESUS shall prosper. The church is the gift of the FATHER, the purchase of CHRIST, and the object of the SPIRIT'S favor forever. GOD will defend it, and it shall be a praise in the earth, the perfection of beauty in JESUS throughout all ages!

2 KINGS 19:35-37

(35) ¶ And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. (36) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. (37) And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

We have here not only the fulfillment of GOD'S promises in the salvation of his people; but the pouring out of his anger in the destruction of his enemies. Sennacherib himself, though

saved, was only saved to have a more painful destruction. His own children shall be his executioners; and he shall die unpitied, even by those who from the ties of nature ought to have loved him. Some have thought that the 76th Psalm was composed upon this occasion. If so, it is strongly expressed in token of the divine love to his people. And what a blessed issue to the troubles of Hezekiah and his people. But, Reader! think what a glorious display will that be, and what a final issue to all the afflictions of the church of JESUS, when he shall come with all his holy angels to be glorified in his saints, and to punish with swift destruction the enemies of his church from his presence forever. All nations shall wail because of him, while his people shall shout with holy joy, crying out, Even so, come LORD JESUS. Revelation 1:7.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the opening of this chapter we take part with Hezekiah in his affliction, and feel the commiseration of the believer in the view of his sorrows, and desolate circumstances. Behold him in the close of it, and how doth the faithful soul rejoice in the LORD'S deliverance of him out of all. And is it not, dearest JESUS, in all the circumstances of thy people. Without thee, and beheld, only as they are in themselves, what poor, defenseless, oppressed, persecuted creatures are they, bent down under the hand of every foe. But when JESUS appears in their cause, oh! how precious is it to behold their strength in the LORD, and in the power of his might.

What an awful character is this impious monster, this Assyrian monarch! And yet what is he more than all the haters of GOD, and his people. Satan reigns in their hearts; they are scoffers, despisers, blasphemers, sworn foes to GOD and his CHRIST. And their name is legion, for they are many.

Blessed JESUS! how sweet is it to be taught of thee! How precious thy salvation! How great thy mercy in gathering sinners from the service of Satan to thy kingdom. LORD! grant that, like Hezekiah, trouble may lead my heart to thee; in all my afflictions to cast my burden upon the LORD, who hath promised, to sustain me. I would spread all before thee, O LORD, and wait in faith thy deliverance, for thou art my strength, and my song, and art become my salvation.

CHAPTER 20

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This chapter prosecutes the history of Hezekiah. He is visited by sickness; he seeks to GOD in his affliction: receives a gracious answer in the lengthening of his life. His prayer: the LORD'S answer. His death; and successor in the kingdom.

2 KINGS 20:1

(1) ¶ In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

It appears by the calculation of Hezekiah's life, that this sickness followed soon after his deliverance from Sennacherib. So quick is the transition from joy to sorrow in this world. The chambers of both are very near each other. Observe how gracious the LORD is in sending him notice of his approaching end. It was an earnest prayer of David that he might be taught to number his days, and to know their length. Psalm 39:4.

2 KINGS 20:2-3

(2) Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, (3) I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Hezekiah had learnt by experience the efficacy of prayer, and he therefore hath recourse to it again. But what I wish the Reader to notice with me in this prayer of the king of Judah is, that he turned towards the wall. He could not go up to the temple, to the mercy-seat, but like another Jonah he looked towards it. JESUS was all along typified by the mercy-seat in the Old Testament scripture, and by the temple. And the church, in reference to views of JESUS saith, he looketh from behind the wall, showing himself through the lattice. Song Of Solomon 2:9. Jonah 2:4. What a delightful thought it is, that the same precious faith in CHRIST marked all the Old Testament saints. Some have thought that Hezekiah dreaded death. But certainly there is nothing in the prayer which implies as much. Neither doth the king pray for life or death. The subject of his petition is for GOD'S remembrance of him. And the argument he makes use of is, not taking pride in his integrity, but humbly begging to be remembered for his faith in GOD'S covenant grace and mercy, and what is that but redemption in CHRIST?

2 KINGS 20:4-6

(4) And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, (5) Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. (6) And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

How delightful are those gracious answers of a most gracious GOD! not that there was any change in the divine mind, but that the LORD, having in his providence induced a state which, under grace, shall lead his people to pray, he prepares their minds by this for his fore-determined answers of mercy. And observe how the LORD exceeds in gift what Hezekiah asked in prayer. He desired but to be *remembered*. And the LORD not only spares him from the effect of this sickness, but adds fifteen years to his life. Hence I have often thought that the apostle Paul intended to encourage wrestling petitioners at a throne of grace to ask for somewhat more than the promise seems to hold forth, as if a believer could never get to the bottom of the promise, when he said, *Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*. Philippians 3:20.

2 KINGS 20:7-11

(7) And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered. (8) And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? (9) And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? (10) And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. (11) And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

We can hardly say on this occasion which to admire most, the want of faith in Hezekiah, in asking a sign, or the abundant grace of the LORD in granting one by way of confirming his sacred word. Surely, Hezekiah, it was enough that the LORD promised. But, alas are we not all incredulous and unbelieving upon a thousand less occasions? I stay not to attempt explaining how this sign was accomplished. Subjects of mere

curiosity, or amusement, come not within the design of this humble Commentary. I venture, however, to tell the Reader that the 15 Songs of degrees, as they are stiled, which we meet with in the book of the Psalms from the 120th to 134th, have been conjectured, by some to have reference to the degrees in the sun's shade on this occasion and the lengthening the king's life. But I only mention it; I presume not to add a single thought upon the subject.

2 KINGS 20:12-13

(12) ¶ At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. (13) And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *a//* the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

It is conjectured by some that as the Babylonians worshipped the sun, the respect paid Hezekiah in the going back of the sun fifteen degrees, as before related, (for either they had heard of it or seen it) made the king of Babylon conceive very highly of Hezekiah. But be the motive whatsoever it might, how poor a figure did Hezekiah in truth make, however he might seem in the eyes of idolaters in his foolish ostentation of his treasures. Had he told them of his wonderful and miraculous cure, had he preached to them of the GOD of his fathers;—had he showed them the word of GOD, and the miracles shown his people, this would have been suitable indeed, and highly becoming. But Reader! pause and enquire are there not many vain characters like Hezekiah, even among the people of JESUS! What parlor shall we go in, among those who profess godliness where JESUS and his salvation is made the topic of discourse! How is it, Reader, that there should be a culpable shyness even among gracious

souls in speaking of the best things one with another, or in awakened souls in telling to the unawakened, like these Babylonians, of the wonders of salvation by JESUS!

2 KINGS 20:14-19

(14) Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. (15) And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All *the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. (16) And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. (17) Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. (18) And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (19) Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good *is* the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, *Is it* not *good*, if peace and truth be in my days?

Reader! observe how men's punishments rise out of their very sins. *Thy backslidings shall correct thee*. How little did Hezekiah think that such events should follow. Oh! with what caution ought we to walk through this mutable state of things around us! If the Reader wishes to see the accomplishment of this prophecy of Isaiah, let him turn to the history of the Babylonish captivity about 100 years after. Daniel 1:2, 3, &c.

2 KINGS 20:20-21

(20) And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (21) And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Here we arrive to the conclusion of Hezekiah's history and his life together. This indeed makes the sum total in the arithmetic of every man's life. In the 2d book of the Chronicles, indeed, we have a much more circumstantial account of Hezekiah. I refer the Reader therefore to the whole of what is there contained in the 29th and three following chapters.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what a series of delightful instructions open to our view, in looking at Hezekiah on his supposed death-bed. The greatest favorites of heaven are exposed, in common with others, to the humiliation of the grave. But oh! how different their state! and who is it hath made it so, Even thee, thou blessed, blessed JESUS. It is thou which hast converted the chambers of the grave into chambers of peace and safety. By thy death thou hast overcome death. And by thy finished salvation thou hast delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Hail! O thou glorious, great I AM, who art the resurrection and the life.

Reader! let you and I listen to the sweet, swan-like note of the dying Hezekiah. He laments that he shall see the LORD no more in the land of the living; that he shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. But Reader! you and I know that, when believers exchange by death the outward courts of GOD's house for the inner temple of his glory, we shall see JESUS as he is; we shall awake up after his likeness, and be with him forever. We leave, indeed, the inhabitants of the world when we drop off this earthly tabernacle. But is this matter of regret, to exchange this world for the upper; earth for heaven; sinners for saints; and evil men for angels and the spirits of just men made perfect? Chiefly, thou precious LORD JESUS, independent of every other, and indeed to the

exclusion of every other, thy presence alone is better than life itself. Thy person, thy salvation, thy glory, and the heaven of heavens, thou givest to the souls of thy people; what a happy exchange do they make that die in thee, O LORD JESUS? Oh! for faith in lively exercise, when thou shall give the signal for my departure; when that solemn, glorious hour shall come, and I hear thy precious voice; *The master is come and calleth for thee.* Oh! for faith to mount up with holy joy and rapture inconceivable, and like the patriarch of old, may the last and most precious word that shall hang upon my dying lips be JESUS, as I utter the same words as he did; *Into thine hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, thou GOD of truth.*

CHAPTER 21

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The reign of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, is contained in this chapter; and an awful reign of sin it is. He is succeeded by Amon his son, such another awful character as the father. His death is also recorded, and Josiah his son succeeds him in the kingdom.

2 KINGS 21:1-18

(1) ¶ Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hephzibah. (2) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. (3) For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. (4) And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. (5) And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of

the LORD. (6) And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger. (7) And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: (8) Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. (9) But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel. (10) ¶ And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, (11) Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: (12) Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. (13) And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. (14) And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; (15) Because they have done *that which was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. (16) Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD. (17) Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (18) And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

I bring the whole of a life so flagitious as that of Manasseh within one point of view, both for the sake of shortness, and for gathering all the instruction it affords before the Reader at

once. But as the HOLY GHOST hath been graciously pleased to give the church further particulars concerning Manasseh than what is here said of him in the 2nd book of the Chronicles, chapter 33. I very earnestly beg the Reader to read the whole of what is there said of Manasseh at the time he peruseth this chapter. And the more so, indeed, because here we only learn his worthlessness. There we discover the penitence he manifested in affliction. And by comparing both parts of his history together, we learn, under the teaching of the blessed SPIRIT, as illustrious an example of the triumphs of grace in his recovery, as we behold the most woeful instance of the fall of man in his vileness. So that blended in one and the same point of view, we behold the truth of what the apostle was commissioned to tell the church, that *where sin abounded grace doth much more abound: that as sin reigneth unto death so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD.* Romans 5:20, 21. I cannot refrain stopping the Reader in the perusal of this passage to remark the graciousness of GOD in his determined punishment of Jerusalem. The LORD saith that *he will wipe it as a man wipeth a dish, turning it upside down.* Do, Reader, observe those expressions. Jerusalem shall be wiped, not broken, not east away, not destroyed; but wiped. It shall be much tossed about, indeed, from the highest to the lowest fairly upside down; but nevertheless all this is with a view to cleansing. It is all in mercy, all in love, all in tenderness. The LORD saith in the after age; *I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies.* Zechariah 1:16. And he hath opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a fountain for sin and for uncleanness. Zechariah 13:1. And where is this but in thy blood, precious JESUS! thou art the LAMB of GOD that takest away sin. And thou art the mercy promised. Luke 1:72.

2 KINGS 21:19-26

(19) ¶ Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. (20) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. (21) And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: (22) And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD. (23) And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. (24) And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. (25) Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (26) And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

We have here the short but distressing account of Amon's reign. And in the parallel passage in the 2d book of the Chronicles, there is nothing to soften it as in the instance of his father; but on the contrary, we are told that he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father had done. Alas! sin only tends to harden more and more, unless almighty grace subdue. As Amon was succeeded by his son Josiah, concerning whom the HOLY GHOST hath given a gracious record: the next chapter will be a relief from the sad circumstances related in this. 2 Chronicles 33:23.

REFLECTIONS

READER! mark, I beseech you, in the character of Manasseh, the evident truth of GOD'S holy word, that the father shall not bear the iniquity of the son. Grace descends not from father to son by natural generation. But what a gracious GOD had Manasseh to do with! Oh! how lovely and encouraging is it to poor sinners, to behold such monuments of mercy placed in the church, as if to tell men that there is mercy with GOD that

he might be feared. Yes! precious JESUS! thou art the FATHER of mercies; and thou art the mercy promised; thou art indeed, and ever wilt be, JESUS. In that lovely name all mercy is contained. Thou art the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof.

But Reader! while we look at Amon the son of Manasseh, in the very moment our souls feel all possible encouragement in the grace vouchsafed the father, is there not enough to induce trembling, when we behold the hardened state of the son. Like the two thieves on the cross. Who can contemplate that sight without a mixture of joy and terror: Both so near JESUS, and yet the one as unconscious as the dead; while the other manifests forth so illustrious an evidence of the highest faith and truest repentance. Oh! thou, blessed author and finisher of our faith and salvation, grant, if it be thy blessed will, both to Writer and Reader, suited grace to profit by such striking examples. Let everything tend to lead our hearts to thee, for of thee cometh our salvation. LORD open our eyes, unstop our ears, that we may no longer be uncircumcised in heart and spirit; but make us altogether what thou wouldest have us to be, and *work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleasure.*

CHAPTER 22

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We are brought acquainted in this chapter with Josiah, the good king. Many of his pious deeds are recounted. The book of the law is found by Hilkiah. Shaphan reads in it before the king. Josiah's pious weeping in the rehearsal. He sendeth with humbleness to inquire of the LORD. The LORD'S answer.

2 KINGS 22:1-2

(1) ¶ Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. (2) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

The most interesting circumstances for a gospel Reader to mark in those verses are the wonderful properties of grace. Josiah could derive nothing from his wicked father, either in precept or example, but what was evil. And yet we find in his early days tokens of grace. Oh! Reader! how sure and certain is it, that grace springs wholly from the sovereign pleasure and appointment of JEHOVAH. It ariseth from thee fountain head of everlasting love. *Even so*, FATHER (as our dearest JESUS explained it) *for so it seemed good in thy sight*. This is the sole cause. And therefore here must be ascribed the sole glory. Matthew 11:26.

2 KINGS 22:3-7

(3) And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, (4) Go up to Hilkiyah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: (5) And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, (6) Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. (7) Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

If the Reader will read the parallel history of this pious king, as it is more largely recorded in the book of the Chronicles, 2 Chronicles 34. he will there find that in the eighth year of his

reign, which was the sixteenth of his life, he began to seek after the GOD of David his FATHER. Oh! how lovely is early piety. There is another beautiful account to be noticed in those verses; I mean the faithfulness of the workman. No reckoning, it is said, was made with them, because they dealt faithfully. When labourers act in their worldly concerns as under the eye of the LORD, how very lovely and graceful is the sight. How exceedingly to be wished it is that gospel-times furnished out continual instances of this kind. And when piety is blended with honesty, and men are gracious as well as conscientious, oh! how blessed is the sight! We have a beautiful example of this in the workmen of Boaz. The LORD be with you, said Boaz to his reapers. The LORD bless thee, was the answer they returned. Ruth 2:4.

2 KINGS 22:8

(8) And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

This is a most interesting verse. It should seem very plain that during the long period that idolatry had prevailed in the land, not only the temple had been suffered to fall into ruins; but the very word of GOD had been so disregarded, that not a copy of it was among the people. It was GOD'S command by Moses, that every king should himself write out a copy of it: Deuteronomy 17:18. And there was a further command, beside that which concerned the person of the king in studying the law of GOD himself; it was to be publicly read every seventh year: Deuteronomy 31:10-13. Reader! to what a deplorable state was the children of Israel reduced at this time, when so far from reading in the word of GOD; the very sacred book itself they had lost. Oh! ye that disregard your bibles, that pass by the reverence ye owe to the holy word of GOD. Behold here the dreadful effects of it. My soul! doth

GOD'S sacred word contain the words of eternal life, even JESUS and his great salvation? And is this precious treasure disregarded, slighted, overlooked by me? Do I suffer that holy word which is able to make me wise unto salvation; do I suffer if from Sabbath to sabbath to lie by on the shelf, until my sentence of everlasting condemnation might be, written upon the dust of it which lies upon the cover! Reader! I pray, GOD that this may never be your case nor mine. But what a mercy was it in GOD, to cause this copy which Hilkiyah found to be secured during the whole reign of idolatry. Whose blessed hand was it that was thus commissioned of the LORD to put it in so secure a place in the temple? Let his memory be ever blessed. Some have thought that it was Moses, because we read that he commanded Joshua after he had finally read to the people the book of the law, to put it in the side of the ark as a witness for after ages, Deuteronomy 31:24-27. But Reader! let it have been whom it may, have you thought of the mercy you and I have derived from it? Certain it is, that had this copy not been found, the hand that now writes; and the eye that reads those observations upon it, would never have known the one nor the other. Oh! blessed GOD! how evident from hence is it, even if there were no other testimonies, how evident from hence is it, that thou hast given us those scriptures of truth, from thy graciously watching over it! Oh! LORD, how gracious art thou, that so long a period of idolatry did not wear out thy long-suffering and patience! Oh! LORD, grant that I may esteem thy precious word more than my necessary food, and that it may be my study all the day. And let mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may be occupied in thy word, I cannot help detaining the Reader with one observation more on this interesting verse, just to remark the distinguishing mercy of the LORD towards Hilkiyah, that he should be the highly favored one to discover this hidden treasure. Reader! is not that

minister of JESUS peculiarly blessed, whom the LORD honors with his secrets, and whom our JESUS commissions to bring out of his treasury things new and old for his household's use? Think, Reader! what joy the discovery of this blessed book must have given to Hilkiyah, when he cried out in holy transport, 'I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD'. And let that soul describe his joy, for no language of another can express it, when from the word of GOD he can say, I have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, JESUS of Nazareth! John 1:45, Reader! where was this book found? Was it not in the temple? Where shall you and I find JESUS, but in his ordinances, his word, his house of prayer!

2 KINGS 22:9-11

(9) And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD. (10) And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. (11) ¶ And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

What an interesting account this is! What a wonderful effect must have been wrought upon the minds of all the people, in the discovery of this inestimable treasure? How lovely a representation is given of Josiah? Surely all the people must have followed his example. Oh! LORD! what cause is there now that our hearts should be rent, in the dreadful views of sin which the world affords, and the awful threatenings thy word holds forth as the sure consequence of it.

2 KINGS 22:12-13

(12) And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, (13) Go ye,

enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

How gracious an enquiry. Josiah compared the threatenings of GOD's law with the magnitude of the sins of the people, and he felt the dreaded punishment as already at the door. These are sure signs of a work of grace, when the inquiry goes forth in earnestness, What must I do to be saved! And when that enquiry is accompanied with what the LORD himself calls, *accepting the punishment of our iniquity*. Leviticus 26:41. Reader! are you desirous to know whether a real work of grace is begun in your heart? Answer the question by these marks: Do you feel sin as exceeding sinful? And do you from your heart confess that while you seek mercy, you know yourself to be totally undeserving of it! These are precious tokens, because they lead to all precious JESUS. For surely, LORD, thou wilt be precious when I am brought to see that I am for ever lost and undone without thee!

2 KINGS 22:14-17

(14) So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her. (15) And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, (16) Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: (17) Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

According to the dates of the prophets, *Jeremiah* had been preaching his sermons for five years before this event took place; and *Zephaniah* ministered much about the same time; yet *Huldah*, like another *Deborah*, was chosen of the LORD to be his servant on this business. And what a solemn strain is her answer delivered in. Nothing complimentary; nothing to soften the truth, though it be delivered to the pious Josiah. *Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, Tell the man that sent you.* Oh! for faithfulness in the ministers of the LORD JESUS. Most awful must it be in such, to accommodate themselves to the time-serving age of corruption, and prophecy smooth things to sinners, whatever their worldly rank may be.

2 KINGS 22:18-20

(18) But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard; (19) Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD. (20) Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

How delightful are personal mercies, when the Lord separates between the precious and the vile; when the word of the gospel comes with distinguishing direction like a letter, to you is the word of this salvation sent. Josiah must have felt peculiar pleasure in this, to allay the grief, of his mind, in the prospect of the general evil coming upon his people. Reader! do not forget this one thing. As religion is a personal thing, until we have a conscious sense of a personal interest in it, and a personal enjoyment of it, the clearest views of divine things will bring no comfort. Balaam could, and did say

concerning Christ, I shall see him; but then he adds that dreadful close to it, but not nigh. Oh! look to it that the word be an ingrafted word, for this alone will prove the salvation of the soul in Jesus. James 1:21.

REFLECTIONS

READER! are you young in years! behold the loveliness of early piety. What can afford a more interesting sight than to see our youths in the first days of their strength, asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, to join themselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant which cannot be broken, and like Josiah, of whom it is said, *that while he was yet young he began to seek after the GOD of his Father.*

Reader! are you aged, or advancing towards the middle of life, and yet unacquainted with salvation, living without a saving knowledge of the LORD JESUS! Oh! that GOD the SPIRIT, from your reading this delightful account of Josiah, may awaken your heart, and open your eyes to the love and glory of the Person and righteousness of JESUS, that now today, while it is called today, you may seek the LORD GOD of your fathers, before the night cometh when no man can work.

Precious JESUS! let the same impressions of grace which wrought upon the mind of Josiah, be in me. LORD, make my heart tender; give me to humble myself before thee: let my soul be bowed down in the dust in the contemplation of my own vileness, and the iniquity of the land, that when thou comest forth in judgment, thou mayest, blessed JESUS, be my strength, and the security of thy people in the day of visitation. And oh! LORD, grant that in thy blood and righteousness my soul may find an everlasting hiding place, both from the afflictions of this life and the terrors of the world to come. Yes! precious JESUS! on thee do I call, to thee will I come, by

thee shall I be saved, for thou art my strength, and my song, and art become my salvation.

CHAPTER 23

CONTENTS

Josiah conveneth all Judah to the hearing of the book of the law of GOD, which Hilkiah had found in the temple. This chapter relates the circumstances of this solemnity. The King reneweth the covenant of the LORD, and prosecuteth the destruction of idolatry.

2 KINGS 23:1-2

(1) ¶ And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. (2) And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

There is a wonderful degree of beauty in this chapter, as well as a great degree of humble reverence manifested by Josiah upon the occasion, in thus convening all Judah to hear GOD's sacred word. Josiah had been told that GOD's decree for the punishment of Israel was gone forth, and could not be altered. Yet Josiah still prosecutes the service of learning himself, and causing Israel to hear and observe the law of GOD. Not content with causing the blessed book to be read, it should seem he read it to the people himself. Perhaps, in obedience to that precept, Deuteronomy 17:18, 19.

2 KINGS 23:3

(3) And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his

commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

The covenant here spoken of means the renewal of that gracious one the LORD had vouchsafed in times past, when he formed Israel into a church; in which GOD graciously said, I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. Implying the people's hearty and joyful consent to have GOD for their GOD in a covenant way, as the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Exodus 19:5, 6.

2 KINGS 23:4-15

(4) ¶ And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel. (5) And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. (6) And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. (7) And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove. (8) And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were* in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. (9) Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. (10) And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass

through the fire to Molech. (11) And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. (12) And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. (13) And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. (14) And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men. (15) Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the grove.

When the king had finished reading the words of GOD'S holy law, he proceeded with an holy zeal to bear testimony to GOD'S truth, in the destruction of all that GOD'S holy law had forbidden. And what a blessed work was here wrought. Reader! are you not astonished to behold, and read the account! How was it possible for the great enemy of souls to have kept up his cursed empire in the heart, and even in the midst of GOD'S own people, from generation to generation, in this manner! Reader! do you wonder at it? Look within! See what a body of sin and death, even in the midst of grace, (if in mercy the LORD the SPIRIT hath regenerated you) you carry about with you! if we recollect, moreover, that Josiah had sat upon the throne, at the time that this great work was done, about eighteen years; during which time he had set his people a good example, it is not a little wonderful that, under the blessings of such a reign, idolatry should have held out to

such an extent. Reader! what will example do? nay, what will even reading the sacred word of GOD do, unless that reading of GOD'S own word be accompanied with his own power? It is hardly possible to read this account of what Josiah destroyed, but with fear and trembling. There were vessels of Baal even in the temple of the LORD: there were idolatrous priests who, at the command of the former kings, had dared to burn incense in the high places: there were even houses for the transaction of such abominable filthiness and unnatural uncleanness, as are not to be once named among us, as becometh saints. And all these not merely in the suburbs of Judea; not near the cloisters of GOD'S church; but in the very church itself. There were horses given to the sun, that were, as it should seem, kept for the worshipping of the sun by them. Perhaps, as some have thought, at sun-rising the idolaters went forth on them, to make exercises in honor of this creature of GOD, the sun. And strange to think, the stables of these beasts were in the very temple itself. And the image of Moloch, in the valley of Tophet, was among the horrible services of the people, where they committed these unnatural and unfeeling crimes, to make their own children, in honor of this dunghill-god, pass through fire. Reader! pause as you read, and let our souls be humbled to the dust in the view of such a state of degradation to which, by sin, the human mind is capable of being brought. Let us never lose sight of one unquestionable truth, as we read the awful account, namely, that by the fall of man, all men are by nature the same. What one man, or one nation is capable of doing, all are equally prone to. It is grace, free, sovereign, distinguishing grace which maketh all the difference. And therefore think, Reader, (and oh! my soul, do thou never, never for a moment lose sight of it) what unspeakable, what endless mercies do we owe to JESUS, who, in the fulness of grace and truth, came to repair the desolations of many

generations, and to raise up the ruins of David which were fallen down. Oh! thou precious, blessed, adorable Redeemer! Hail! thou glorious, gracious Benefactor of mankind! Amos 9:11.

2 KINGS 23:16-18

(16) And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. (17) Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. (18) And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

There is somewhat particularly interesting in the history to which these verses refer, and I would beg the Reader to mark it with me. If he will turn to the thirteenth chapter of the first book of the kings, he will read the history of those events, which the LORD, by the prophet there spoken of, predicted that Josiah himself should fulfil. And although it was at a distance of no less than 350 years from the time of the prediction to the accomplishment, yet so exact, and so particular was the correspondence of one to the other, as if it had been recorded in one and the same day. Reader! doth it not warm your heart, the very thought of it? Oh! how delightful is this doctrine, considered as to the great object of all doctrine, the salvation by our LORD JESUS. He was set up from everlasting. And Paul tells us that the church also was chosen in him before the foundation of the world. See those precious scriptures to this effect: Proverbs 8:22-31 Micah 5:2. Ephesians 1:4. 2 Timothy 1:9. In addition to the observations made in the Commentary, on this history of the

prophet, 1 Kings 13, I would only here add, that though the LORD was pleased, by way of example to the church, to punish that prophet's disobedience with temporary death; yet you observe here the LORD watched over his dust; and amidst the burning of the bones of others, his lay secure. It is a part of the covenant to inflict the rod, by way of chastisement, for sin, but the everlasting salvation of the LORD'S heritage is secured, from the LORD'S righteousness. Psalm 89:30-36. What the old lying prophet proposed to himself, in being laid in the same sepulchre, I know not, but like another lying prophet, he thought, perhaps, the very dust of GOD'S Israel a gracious preservative. Numbers 23:10. Reader! think of this! And be assured no goldsmith ever prized the precious dust of the golden ore, equal to what JESUS doth the very ashes of his people. However, to your view, or my view, this may seem lost, and scattered, and mingled amidst the rubbish of the earth, or the bodies of the carnal, JESUS beholds every particle of his whole mystical body; and when he cometh to make up his jewels, will as easily gather them altogether, and reanimate, and cause them to rise up a glorified body, as he first called them out of the dust of the earth, when he breathed in their nostrils the breath of life. Sweet thought. Oh! my soul, cherish it. *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.* Psalm 116:15.

2 KINGS 23:19-23

(19) And all the houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke *the LORD* to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. (20) And he slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem. (21) And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant. (22) Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days

of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; (23) But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

What a delightful view of Josiah is here given? He first sets his heart to cleanse the temple; and next offers himself and his people to the LORD. And as this passover was typical of CHRIST, no doubt Josiah and his people had an eye to JESUS in it. And what a delightful testimony the HOLY GHOST hath given of it. Surely there never was holden such a passover through all the periods of the history of Canaan. How is Josiah's memory blessed in this view!

2 KINGS 23:24-25

(24) Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. (25) ¶ And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him.

When we consider the youth of this good king, it serves to teach young persons of all ranks, how grateful in the LORD'S sight is early piety.

2 KINGS 23:26-27

(26) Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. (27) And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

Reader! we learn from hence these most solemn truths. The word of the LORD is unalterable. He hath proclaimed the sure wages of sin to be death. And rather than this law shall be altered, his only begotten Son shall die. Oh! how solemn a consideration in the very moment while we bless GOD for the mercy. We rejoice indeed; but we rejoice with trembling.

2 KINGS 23:28-30

(28) Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (29) In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. (30) And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

No character among the sons of men is free from imperfection. The best pictures have their shade. Of none but he who is the brightness of his FATHER's glory, and fairer than the children of men, could it ever be said that in his mouth was found no guile. None but thee, thou blessed JESUS, was altogether holy, harmless, undefiled; separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens! Josiah, we see in this instance, lost his confidence in the LORD. What though Pharaoh went up against the king of Assyria, what was that to Josiah? Was he afraid that in so doing, he might come too nigh to Judah? And if so, why did he not consult the LORD? Beside, as we read in the parallel history, (2 Chronicles 35:20, 21) the king of Egypt told him that he was acting under the authority of GOD, Yet Josiah slighted all these things, and the consequence was fatal. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments! Oh! dearest LORD JESUS, how glorious to the view is it, in my soul's

esteem, that thy righteousness is complete, by which the poor sinner is justified.

2 KINGS 23:31-37

(31) ¶ Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. (32) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. (33) And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. (34) And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there. (35) And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give *it* unto Pharaohnechoh. (36) Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. (37) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

We are hastening now to the period of Judah's history, as a kingdom. Three short months Jehoahaz reigned; and then was made a prisoner. The prophet Ezekiel laments him under the similitude of a young lion. Ezekiel 19:1-3. And Jeremiah, who taught the people to mourn over Josiah, (2 Chronicles 35:25) lamented the obstinacy and disobedience of his son. Jeremiah 22:10-12. Another of Josiah's children was made king, when Jehoahaz was carried away captive. But neither the captivity of his brother, nor the poverty of himself, under the tyranny of the king of Egypt, induced any reform. We read of nothing but evil; and Judah ripening for God's Judgments. Alas! when God's milder chastisements will not

reclaim; is it wonderful, nay, is it not gracious, that severer ones are adopted!

REFLECTIONS

How interesting to good Josiah appeared the law of GOD! With what peculiar delight did he convene all the people to attend the reading of it! And with what holy joy did he celebrate the passover, and renew the covenant GOD had made with their fathers. Think, Reader! I charge you what should be your joy and mine in receiving the gospel, the precious, blessed gospel of the ever blessed GOD! How should we delight to attend the public assemblies, and gather others to attend also! And if the mere celebration of the paschal feast in commemoration was so interesting, which after all was but a type of better things, founded upon better promises, how should our joy burst forth at the feast of CHRIST our Passover, and with what holy rapture should we attend JESUS at his supper! Oh! thou LAMB of GOD! oh! thou who art both the Passover, the sacrifice, the High Priest, and the golden Altar on which the sacrifice was offered! Be thou my joy, my sacrifice, my righteousness, the whole of the covenant, and my all in all. Let it be said indeed, that surely there never was holden such a passover, as when CHRIST was sacrificed for his people. And never was my soul really, and truly feasted, until by happy faith, I ate of his flesh, and drank of his blood, by which I have eternal life abiding in me.

Let us not take our farewell of Josiah without gathering one improvement more from the view the HOLY GHOST is pleased to give of him. Though it be not always becoming to cull out the shades of good men, yet if the soul be led to improve such views as show the universal imperfection of nature, in

order to lead to JESUS, then we may not only with safety do it, but also derive much advantage from it. Yes, blessed LORD JESUS! wherever I look, to whomsoever I direct my attention, I find frailty and imperfection mark them all. But in thee I behold all perfection, all glory. Oh, then! on thee let my soul unceasingly look. Let me behold thee as GOD my FATHER beholds thee; and as far as a poor finite creature can imitate infinite delight, let my ravished soul say in humble breathings, this is my beloved JESUS in whom I am well pleased for salvation. I count all things else but dung and dross that I may know thee. Be thou my joy and my portion forever.

CHAPTER 24

CONTENTS

The ruin of Judah is nearly arrived. Jehoiakim rebelling against the king of Babylon, to whom he had been tributary three years, is ruined. Jerusalem is taken. Some account of the evil reign of Zedekiah.

2 KINGS 24:1

(1) ¶ In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

If the Reader will be careful to connect the last of the history of the kings of Judah, with the first of the Babylonish captivity, he should begin the close of the one with the opening of the other at this chapter. For here we first meet with that character of whom Daniel speaks so much, Nebuchadnezzar. Alas! such a character would never have been noticed in the Church but for the Church's backsliding.

Satan would have never made the figure he doth had not our nature sinned.

2 KINGS 24:2-7

(2) And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. (3) Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; (4) And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. (5) Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? (6) So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. (7) And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

I pray the Reader to observe the hand of GOD in all this. Evil men are but instruments for the accomplishment of the divine will. Judah must be removed, as Israel had been before. It is, for the most part, by sorrow and chastisement the stout hearts of obstinate sinners are brought low.

2 KINGS 24:8-16

(8) ¶ Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. (9) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. (10) At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. (11) And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. (12) And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

(13) And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. (14) And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. (15) And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. (16) And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

This may be really considered the close of the kingdom of Israel and Judah. For though there was a nominal king after Jehoiachim, yet as the king of Babylon made him king, he might be considered more as the creature of the king of Babylon, than possessing any kingly power. Here therefore we have the conquest of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people. Besides the multitude which the conqueror carried away to Babylon, we find from other parts of scripture an account of several remarkable characters. Ezekiel was among the captives. Ezekiel 1:1, 2. Mordecai was also in the number. See Esther 2:6.

2 KINGS 24:17-20

(17) And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. (18) Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. (19) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. (20) For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Reader! is it not awful, when we see that neither kindness nor severity will operate upon some minds. Zedekiah had seen the ruin of his kingdom by reason of sin; and yet he sinned more. Oh! how certain is it, that nothing but grace can change the heart. Dearest LORD, (I would say for myself and Reader), take not, oh! take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from us!

REFLECTIONS

WHAT an awful representation is made in this chapter, and, indeed, in the whole history; (for all the world is but one and the same volume) of sinners! Could one suppose it possible, was it not ascertained by fact, that men should brave the divine power, and, as it were, defy the Lord by the most determined perseverance in sin. See, my soul, in the destruction of Jerusalem, the sure and inevitable consequence! The wages of sin is, and must be, death, Oh! Lord Jesus, cause me, in the view of it, to flee to thee for refuge, and let me hear thy voice saying, Oh! Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found.

Reader, behold Jerusalem thus ruined! see the people carried away captives. See how the Lord permitted the very heathens of the earth to scourge his people! Who, after this, will take confidence while in sin. O Lord! be gracious to thy land. For Jesus sake be not wroth very sore, neither do thou remember our iniquities forever; but be jealous for thy land, and heal her backslidings, we beseech thee.

CHAPTER 25

CONTENTS

Jerusalem is again besieged. Zedekiah is taken, his sons slain and his eyes put out. The close of the chapter relates that Jehoiachin, who had been long captive in Babylon, was brought out of prison by the kindness of the king, and set at his table.

2 KINGS 25:1-3

(1) ¶ And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. (2) And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. (3) And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

As we read in the foregoing chapter that Jerusalem was taken, and here that it was besieged, we should remember in order to have a clear apprehension of the history, that though Jerusalem had been conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, yet it was not totally subdued as a kingdom, because the conqueror appointed a king to govern it. But here we find a total ruin. And what made the approach and siege of Jerusalem now yet more terrible was, GOD'S judgments were upon it. A famine joined with the sword to avenge GOD'S quarrel with his people for their sin. Alas! to what a state will sin reduce any and every man! I wish the Reader, while attending to the history of the total overthrow of Jerusalem, would read the prophecy of Jeremiah, and especially the book of Lamentations, all of which relate to this occasion. It should seem, from what Jeremiah told Zedekiah, that he had it in commission from the LORD to point out yet a method of deliverance, but Zedekiah rejected the counsel of GOD, as sinners still do against their own souls. See Jeremiah chap. 37, 38, 39.

2 KINGS 25:4-7

(4) And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the king* went the way toward the plain. (5) And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. (6) So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. (7) And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

The history in this place is but shortly related, just to manifest GOD'S certain judgments: but very long and painful must have been the process of them in their execution. Jeremiah had been long preaching of them, and was much opposed, as faithful ministers are, more or less, in all ages in this service. Hannaniah the lying prophet, had daringly opposed him, and was as awfully cut off. But yet these judgments left no lasting effect upon the minds of the people. See Jeremiah 28.

2 KINGS 25:8-10

(8) ¶ And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, which *is* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: (9) And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire. (10) And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

Pause, Reader! over the perusal of these verses. Behold the very temple of the LORD amidst the general ruins. And now Zion is plowed as a field, as the prophet Micah had foretold; Micah 3:12. which prophecy the prophet Jeremiah quotes in confirmation of his own. See Jeremiah 26:18. Thus the temple of Solomon, which had stood the ornament of the whole world for more than 420 years, was now rased to the ground.

Jeremiah most pathetically laments over this in his book of Lamentations chap. 2:1-9. 4:12. It hath been said by historians, (and I believe they gathered the account from Josephus) that in the after ages of the church, when, as our LORD predicted Jerusalem should the second time be destroyed by the Romans, as here it was by the Chaldeans, both events were accomplished on the very same day of the month.

2 KINGS 25:11-21

(11) Now the rest of the people *that were* left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away. (12) But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land *to be* vinedressers and husbandmen. (13) And the pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that *was* in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. (14) And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. (15) And the firepans, and the bowls, *and* such things as *were* of gold, *in* gold, and of silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took away. (16) The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight. (17) The height of the one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it *was* brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work. (18) And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: (19) And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land *that were* found in the city: (20) And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah: (21) And the king of

Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

Here we have the final account of Judah as a kingdom. So that from Joshua's days, in which it began to be formed, to the last of its kings, Zedeciah, it stood about 850 or 860 years. And the church's history now begins from the Babylonish captivity. Daniel and Ezekiel were the two prophets, whose ministry was exercised in Babylon during the 70 years which the LORD had determined for its desolation. See Jeremiah 25:8-13, and Chap. 29:10-14. See also Isaiah, Chap. 23:15

2 KINGS 25:22-26

(22) ¶ And *as for* the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. (23) And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. (24) And Gedaliah swore to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you. (25) But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. (26) And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

Jeremiah had told Baruch that his life should be given for a prey, and here we find certain of the people were preserved, Jeremiah 45:5. It was the mercy of God, in the midst of judgment, to incline the King of Babylon to preserve some of the people, and to have Gedaliah, a faithful man, made

Governor. And no doubt many of the faithful availed themselves of his mild government. But yet we see, even in the midst of judgments, as in the case of Ishmael, how evil men will exercise their dreadful purposes. What became of those who upon this event fled to Egypt, is not said. Perhaps the LORD had some gracious design in the permission. See Isaiah in that sweet prophecy, Isaiah 19:18-25.

2 KINGS 25:27-30

(27) And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; (28) And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon; (29) And changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. (30) And his allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

It is hardly possible to read the wonderful change in the circumstances of Jehoiachin, who, after so long a period as thirty-seven years lying in a prison, is brought forth to liberty, and to the king's table, without having our minds led out in the contemplation, how wonderful the changes sometimes are in human life. But oh! what a change is that in grace, when from the prison of death and sin, the soul is brought forth to the light and liberty of the gospel. When JESUS opens the door in conversion, and calls forth the captives of Satan from the prison-house! When by the blood of his Covenant, JEHOVAH sends forth his prisoners of hope from the pit in which is no water. Zechariah 9:11. And Reader! carry on the idea, and think if it be possible, what everlasting freedom that will be, when death itself shall, at the voice of JESUS, give up his dead, and all the children of JESUS shall sit down at his table, to go out no more! Precious thought! may it warm my heart amidst

all the changeable events in the providences of my GOD and Saviour, during the whole of this life, and amidst the revolutions of all things here below: may it be the portion of both Writer and Reader to live on an unchangeable GOD in CHRIST JESUS, who is now the peace of his people, and will be their glory for evermore!

REFLECTIONS

READER! we are brought to the final close of Judah's history as a kingdom in this Chapter; and therefore let us pause over the subject, and in beholding the desolated state of Zion as a church, take up the lamentation of the mournful prophet and say, *How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed!*

And as we pause and behold the desolation, let us look back at her former felicity, and ask the cause of her present ruin. Beautiful for situation, (said one of old) the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion. Here was not only the royal city of David, but the holy city of our GOD, even David's LORD. It was the LORD that founded Zion, (saith one that answereth the messengers of the nation) and the poor of his people shall trust in it. But where is she now? The LORD hath cast down Zion in the day of his fierce anger.

And wherefore hath the LORD done this to Zion? Alas! alas! because Zion hath forsaken her GOD, therefore is she gone into captivity, and her kings and priests with her. But will the LORD cast off forever? Will he be no more intreated? Is his mercy clean gone forever? And will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure?

Reader! connect with this view the precious redemption by JESUS. Behold him who came for the recovery of Zion, not

merely from the captivity of Babylon, but from the more dreadful captivity of sin and death. Look at JESUS in the accomplishment of redemption, opening the doors of confinement: bringing the prisoners from the prison, and them that sat in darkness out of the prison-house. Yes, blessed JESUS the SPIRIT of the LORD was upon thee, and thou hast come to make a thorough change in all the circumstances of thy people; and not merely to bring thy captives, like Jehoiachin, from the prison to thy table, but to exchange their prison-garments to the robes of salvation and glory. Thou wilt bring them all home to thy house; thou wilt raise up the tabernacles of David that are fallen down, for according to thy promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, even the new Jerusalem, *wherein righteousness shall dwell forever*. Hail! thou holy, blessed, LORD JESUS! Hail thou Almighty conqueror of all the foes of our salvation! Shortly thou wilt come to take all thy banished ones home, and the ransomed of Zion shall return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Even so, come LORD JESUS. Amen.

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE FIRST BOOK OF *THE* *CHRONICLES*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE penman of this Book of GOD is generally supposed to have been *Ezra*, the scribe. *And if so, it must have been written after the return of Israel from the Babylonish captivity; at a period of somewhat more than 500 years before the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

The records here made are very extensive, leading back the Reader to the time of Adam, and treasuring up the several heads of families, in a direct line from our first parent unto David and his descendants, by way of ascertaining the lineage of JESUS; and carrying on the history of the church long after the captivity, including upon the whole, a period of about 3600 years.

This part of the sacred writings, seems to have been written with an eye to the preservation, in the minds of the people of GOD, of the promised seed of the woman, in whom all

blessings were to be centered. The HOLY GHOST hath been graciously pleased also to record in this book, several interesting particulars referring to the church, which had either been omitted in former histories, or but in part noticed. As the Gospel of the beloved apostle, John, which was supplementary to the other memoirs of the blessed JESUS, contains many most precious things of CHRIST, which the other Evangelists had not noticed: so the Chronicles may be considered supplementary to the foregoing records of the church; and, over and above, several precious observations are set down, which the former writers had but slightly regarded, or wholly passed by.

But what I would most earnestly press upon the Reader's mind, as I have indeed in every book of GOD we have already gone through the review of, is the looking out for JESUS. It may happen, from such distant periods of the church as the opening of the Chronicles refers to, we may not be able to make such full discoveries, as the history nearer to Gospel-times may furnish: yet this, methinks, should be only made an occasion for greater and closer investigation, that we may not overlook the LORD JESUS in any part of his word, conscious that He is in and through the whole. Reader! let me charge it upon your heart, and may the HOLY GHOST sweetly influence the same earnestness in my own, that our minds may be led out to seek for JESUS in every page and every chapter of this, as well as all the other books of GOD. And, as we are commanded by our LORD himself, to search the scriptures, because they testify of him; let us never overlook a single passage. The book of Chronicles will be found, not simply the record of endless genealogies, but a faithful account of generations, wholly with an eye to Him, who was made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power

of an endless life. Blessed Author of this divine treasury! give both to Writer and Reader, as they prosecute the holy volume, increasing views of Him, to whom the whole Bible ministers; that, in whatever part we traverse, being graciously guided by thy blessed illumination, we may be sweetly instructed in his knowledge; and truly possess and enjoy that *life eternal*, which consisteth *in knowing GOD the FATHER, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent.* Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

The genealogy of families, from Adam to Abraham, forms the contents of this chapter, containing a period of nearly 2000 years.

1 CHRONICLES 1:1

(1) ¶ Adam, Sheth, Enosh,

I detain the Reader in the very opening of the Book of the Chronicles, to call his attention to that feature of it, for which the Chronicles themselves are valuable; namely, to direct the Reader's observation to the pedigree of the LORD JESUS. Here is no mention of Cain Or Abel, the two first sons of Adam, because neither of them is in the genealogy of CHRIST. Abel died childless, and Cain belonged to a very different stock. The seed of the woman was the great promise of the Bible. From Adam to Seth, therefore, the tracing of that seed is to be made.

1 CHRONICLES 1:2-4

(2) Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, (3) Henoah, Methuselah, Lamech,

(4) Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Observe how careful the sacred genealogy is, in its progress from Adam to Noah.

1 CHRONICLES 1:5-7

(5) The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. (6) And the sons of Gomer; Ashchenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. (7) And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

The sons of *Japheth*, which gave rise to the Gentile church, are first mentioned, perhaps because, as in the after ages, they became interested in CHRIST, though not in the line of his genealogy; honorable mention is made of them in the record.

1 CHRONICLES 1:8-16

(8) The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. (9) And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. (10) And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be mighty upon the earth. (11) And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, (12) And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (of whom came the Philistines,) and Caphthorim. (13) And Canaan begat Zidon his firstborn, and Heth, (14) The Jebusite also, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, (15) And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, (16) And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

The genealogy of *Ham* is also introduced before that of *Shem*, that, perhaps, the sacred Writer having dispatched the two sons of Noah and their race, from whom the Messiah was *not* to spring, he might carry on the genealogy in the line of *Shem*, the other son of Noah, from whom after the flesh the Messiah *was* to spring.

1 CHRONICLES 1:17-27

(17) The sons of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech. (18) And Arphaxad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber. (19) And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one *was* Peleg; because in his days the earth was divided: and his brother's name *was* Joktan. (20) And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, (21) Hadoram also, and Uzal, and Diklah, (22) And Ebal, and Abimael, and Sheba, (23) And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan. (24) Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, (25) Eber, Peleg, Reu, (26) Serug, Nahor, Terah, (27) Abram; the same *is* Abraham.

It is truly interesting to observe, how faithfully the record of the genealogy from Adam to Abraham is preserved. What nation, beside the Jewish, can boast of so ancient and so correct a record? And Reader! think how lost to all sense of truth, as well as gratitude, must have been the Jews, who, with this record in their hand, could venture to say concerning our LORD JESUS CHRIST, when appearing before them, as the descendant of Abraham after the flesh, *As far fellow, we know not whence he is*. John 9:29. I would desire the Reader to pause, and contemplate with me, one thought in the review which ariseth out of these verses. How many ages are comprised in a little compass! Here is a period of nearly 2000 years, and it is contained in only seven and twenty short verses!

1 CHRONICLES 1:28-33

(28) ¶ The sons of Abraham; Isaac, and Ishmael. (29) These *are* their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, (30) Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema, (31) Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael. (32) Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba,

and Dedan. (33) And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Henoah, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these *are* the sons of Keturah.

I beg the Reader, to observe with me, that the great object in the Chronicles being to preserve in the mind the lineal descent from Adam to CHRIST, the sacred Writer, in this instance, as in the instance before in the race of Noah, first dismisses in a short way the stock of Abraham, after the ordinary course of nature, to dwell more largely hereafter on the seed according to grace. Hence the children of Ishmael, are taken notice of before those of Isaac.

1 CHRONICLES 1:34-54

(34) And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel. (35) The sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. (36) The sons of Eliphaz; Teman, and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek. (37) The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. (38) And the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan. (39) And the sons of Lotan; Hori, and Homam: and Timna *was* Lotan's sister. (40) The sons of Shobal; Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon; Aiah, and Anah. (41) The sons of Anah; Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. (42) The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, *and* Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran. (43) Now these *are* the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before *any* king reigned over the children of Israel; Bela the son of Beor: and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah. (44) And when Bela was dead, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. (45) And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead. (46) And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Avith. (47) And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. (48) And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. (49) And when Shaul was dead, Baalhanan the son of Achbor

reigned in his stead. (50) And when Baalhanan was dead, Hadad reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Pai; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. (51) Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke Aliah, duke Jetheth, (52) Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, (53) Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, (54) Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. These *are* the dukes of Edom.

Here again, after mentioning the sons of Isaac, Esau, and Israel, the sacred Historian takes up in a short view Esau's posterity before that he enters upon that of Israel, and therefore reserves the history of the seed of Israel, for the subject of the next chapter. It is well worthy the earnest attention of the Reader, that as the promise was to be established in Isaac and his seed, and the son of the bond-woman was not to be heir with the son of the free-woman, hence the posterity of Ishmael and of Esau, are just set down to show the faithfulness of GOD'S promise to Abraham, and his love to Isaac, in the accomplishment of temporal blessings to them; but the grand subject of the whole genealogy carried on in a regular progression from Adam to Israel, through all the intermediate generations, which followed in the common order of nature. Genesis 17:20. 25:5, 6. Galatians 4:28-31.

REFLECTIONS

READER! pause over this chapter, and mark the several important instructions it contains. What a subject of wonder, of humiliation, and of praise, is here! What *wonder is* opened to our contemplation in the astonishing succession of so many generations! What multitudes have sprung from one stock! And what an immense and incalculable congregation will it be, that shall; at length, be brought to stand before the

judgment-seat of CHRIST, when not one, from Adam to the consummation of all things, shall be found wanting. What *humiliation* also, is in the subject of the genealogy of mankind, when we call to mind, that the whole race is alike polluted and fallen: *All have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD. There is none that doeth good, no not one.* And what a subject of *praise* doth this furnish, in beholding the long-suffering and patience of the LORD, in preserving the race of men from father to son, notwithstanding the universal depravity of all!

But, chiefly and above all, while we admire and adore the divine goodness and mercy in his condescension to the sons of men, think, Reader, of the everlasting love of GOD to our nature, in the provision made for the recovery of man from the fall, by the gracious interposition, benignity, and love of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! Oh! how highly ought we to prize the genealogy of Him, after the flesh, who came *in the fulness of time, to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore perfect order among all the works of GOD.* Hail, thou holy, blessed, precious JESUS! Thou wast indeed free from the taint of the fallen race thou camest to redeem. Thou wast *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.* And how precious the thought, that thy righteousness, and thy blood, are the effectual source and cause of all our mercy. Blessed be our JESUS, that amidst all the dying circumstances of all generations, *thy throne, O GOD, is for ever and ever.* Though all things perish, *yet thou remainest:* and though we all *wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture are we changed, yet thou art the same, and thy years do not fail.* Give us, precious JESUS, to rejoice in the everlasting duration of thyself and thy kingdom, and to look beyond the grave with this assured hope, that because *thou*

livest, thy people shall live also. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

The former chapter having, in a short and cursory way, dispatched the history of all ages before Israel; this chapter gives us the relation of what the Book of Chronicles hath chiefly in view, the history of the children of Israel leading to CHRIST. The genealogy in this chapter is carried down as far as the time of David.

1 CHRONICLES 2:1-2

(1) ¶ These *are* the sons of Israel; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, (2) Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

Here are the twelve sons of Jacob enumerated, that illustrious family whose history forms so interesting a subject in the church of GOD.

1 CHRONICLES 2:3

(3) The sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah: *which* three were born unto him of the daughter of Shua the Canaanitess. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of the LORD; and he slew him.

Observe how Judah takes the lead, because that *our LORD sprang out of Judah*. And let the Reader remember, that the whole course of this register is to show the pedigree of CHRIST *after the flesh*. So infinitely important is this one thing. Hebrews 7:14.

1 CHRONICLES 2:4-14

(4) And Tamar his daughter in law bare him Pharez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were* five. (5) The sons of Pharez; Hezron, and Hamul. (6) And the sons of Zerah; Zimri, and Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara: five of them in all. (7) And the sons of Carmi; Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed. (8) And the sons of Ethan; Azariah. (9) The sons also of Hezron, that were born unto him; Jerahmeel, and Ram, and Chelubai. (10) And Ram begat Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah; (11) And Nahshon begat Salma, and Salma begat Boaz, (12) And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, (13) And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third, (14) Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth,

Observe how fast the strides are made to get on to David, in order, still to the same end, to lead to David's LORD, *the Rod that was to arise out of the stem of Jesse*. Isaiah 11:1.

1 CHRONICLES 2:15-55

(15) Ozem the sixth, David the seventh: (16) Whose sisters *were* Zeruah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three. (17) And Abigail bare Amasa: and the father of Amasa *was* Jether the Ishmeelite. (18) ¶ And Caleb the son of Hezron begat *children* of Azubah *his* wife, and of Jerioth: her sons *are* these; Jeshur, and Shobab, and Ardon. (19) And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him Ephrath, which bare him Hur. (20) And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat Bezaleel. (21) And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he *was* threescore years old; and she bare him Segub. (22) And Segub begat Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead. (23) And he took Geshur, and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them, with Kenath, and the towns thereof, *even* threescore cities. All these *belonged to* the sons of Machir the father of Gilead. (24) And after that Hezron was dead in Calebphratah, then Abiah Hezron's wife bare him Ashur the father of Tekoa. (25) And the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were, Ram the firstborn, and Bunah, and Oren,

and Ozem, *and* Ahijah. (26) Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name *was* Atarah; she *was* the mother of Onam. (27) And the sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel were, Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker. (28) And the sons of Onam were, Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai; Nadab, and Abishur. (29) And the name of the wife of Abishur *was* Abihail, and she bare him Ahban, and Molid. (30) And the sons of Nadab; Seled, and Appaim: but Seled died without children. (31) And the sons of Appaim; Ishi. And the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. And the children of Sheshan; Ahlai. (32) And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai; Jether, and Jonathan: and Jether died without children. (33) And the sons of Jonathan; Peleth, and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel. (34) Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Jarha. (35) And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife; and she bare him Attai. (36) And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat Zabad, (37) And Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat Obed, (38) And Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat Azariah, (39) And Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat Eleasah, (40) And Eleasah begat Sisamai, and Sisamai begat Shallum, (41) And Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begat Elishama. (42) Now the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel *were*, Mesha his firstborn, which was the father of Ziph; and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. (43) And the sons of Hebron; Korah, and Tappuah, and Rekem, and Shema. (44) And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkoam: and Rekem begat Shammai. (45) And the son of Shammai *was* Maon: and Maon *was* the father of Bethzur. (46) And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez: and Haran begat Gazez. (47) And the sons of Jahdai; Regem, and Jotham, and Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph. (48) Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber, and Tirhanah. (49) She bare also Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah, and the father of Gibeaz: and the daughter of Caleb *was* Achsah. (50) These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrath; Shobal the father of Kirjathjearim, (51) Salma the father of Bethlehem, Hareph the father of Bethgader. (52) And Shobal the father of Kirjathjearim had sons; Haroeh, *and* half of the Manahethites. (53) And the families of Kirjathjearim; the Ithrites, and the Puhites, and the

Shumathites, and the Mishraitcs; of them came the Zareathites, and the Eshtaulites. (54) The sons of Salma; Bethlehem, and the Netophathites, Ataroth, the house of Joab, and half of the Manahethites, the Zorites. (55) And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* Suchathites. These *are* the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.

If the Reader be desirous to attend to the history of *some of* the persons here registered, he will find an account of them elsewhere in the Bible. But many of them are only mentioned in this record, and that only with a view to preserve the genealogy of their family. *Bezaleel* is honourably spoken of, Exodus 31:2. *Hezron* was one of the threescore and ten souls of Jacob's household that went down into Egypt. Genesis 46:10. *Jair* we have an account of; Numbers 32:41. But, it should seem, that the great object here intended from their enumeration is, as the Book of Chronicles implies, to preserve the register of their families.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the quick succession of persons and families, as recorded in this Chapter, how feelingly are we taught the littleness, and even nothingness, of human nature. So that at every verse we are prompted, in the language of the Prophet, to exclaim, *Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?* But oh! how precious amidst all this is it, to behold JESUS, *who is the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*

But again, how is the mind humbled in the consideration, that though the several generations this Chapter records lived but as it were a day, yet in that day how numerous their

transgressions? Though this stock of Judah was at length to produce the holy seed, and in the intermediate state was to possess, in several branches of them, both royal and priestly honours; yet we find they all partook of the same common stock of a fallen nature, of whom it is with truth said, *there is none holy, no not one*. And wherefore were they preserved, why are their names recorded with such precision and exactness? Was it not, blessed JESUS, because they all pointed to thee, ministered to thee, and in thee fulfilled the purposes of their generation? Did not the LORD JEHOVAH, concerning every one of them, say, *Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it*. There is life in the root; salvation in the stock; even JESUS folded up in the seed, in whom all the family should be blessed? Oh, grace! oh, mercy! oh, wisdom! *How unsearchable are thy judgments, O LORD; and thy ways past finding out.*

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

In this Chapter the genealogy proceeds in relation in the family of David. Here are recorded an account of his sons, of his successors in the kingdom, and of the descendants in his family after the captivity.

1 CHRONICLES 3:1-8

(1) ¶ Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess: (2) The third, Absalom the son of Maachah the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur: the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith: (3) The fifth, Shephatiah of Abital: the sixth, Ithream by Eglah his wife. (4)

These six were born unto him in Hebron; and there he reigned seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years. (5) And these were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bathshua the daughter of Ammiel: (6) Ibhar also, and Elishama, and Eliphelet, (7) And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia, (8) And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine.

The race of David was considered so important to register, that the HOLY GHOST before numbered them, and called them by their names. 2 Samuel 3:2-5. And elsewhere we find, that both on the reputed father's side, and on the mother's, after the flesh, JESUS sprung from the seed of David. Matthew 1:6. Luke 3:31. 2 Timothy 2:8.

1 CHRONICLES 3:9

(9) *These were* all the sons of David, beside the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister.

Observe, that as the HOLY GHOST is only careful to preserve the lineal descent of David's family in a faithful register, with an eye to JESUS, no mention is made of the names of David's children by his concubines.

1 CHRONICLES 3:10-24

(10) ¶ And Solomon's son *was* Rehoboam, Abia his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, (11) Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, (12) Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, (13) Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, (14) Amon his son, Josiah his son. (15) And the sons of Josiah *were*, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. (16) And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. (17) And the sons of Jeconiah; Assir, Salathiel his son, (18) Malchiram also, and Pedaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. (19) And the sons of Pedaiah *were*, Zerubbabel, and Shimei: and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister: (20) And

Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushabhesed, five. (21) And the sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah, and Jesaiah: the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shechaniah. (22) And the sons of Shechaniah; Shemaiah: and the sons of Shemaiah; Hattush, and Igeal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six. (23) And the sons of Neariah; Elioenai, and Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three. (24) And the sons of Elioenai *were*, Hodaiah, and Eliashib, and Pelaiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Dalaiah, and Anani, seven.

The register from Solomon is here made in a correct succession, even to the time beyond the captivity. And it is remarkable how long, David's race, the sceptre continued in his family. It was broken in upon, indeed, at the captivity; but I believe not before *seventeen* kings had sprung from him in a regular succession from father to son. The childish tradition of the Jews, that *Anani*, which is the last-mentioned name in this Chapter, meant the king Messiah, because the Prophet Daniel hath a similar expression when he saith, *one like the Son of Man came in Anani* (the clouds of heaven) Daniel 7:13, I should not have noticed, but with this view, only to show how much alive the Jews were in all ages of the church to the expectation of this king Messiah. And as this *Anani* was after the period of the captivity, doth it not imply that then it was the Jews looked for the coming of the LORD JESUS? Alas! what blindness must have happened to Israel, in rejecting *the LORD of life and glory*. Reader! what a sweet thought is that, when JESUS *came unto his own, and his own received him not; to as many as received him* (mark that, for doth it not include both Writer and Reader?) *gave he power to become the sons of GOD, even to them that believe on his name*. And pray observe further; *which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man but of GOD*. Precious, precious consideration to every true believer in CHRIST. Surely, Reader!

if the LORD hath given to you and to me to believe in his dear name, we may by happy faith say as the disciple did for himself and his few faithful brethren; *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.* John 1:11-14.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is hardly possible to read the genealogy of David's race without connecting with it our recollection of David's sorrow in his children. What a grief were many of his branches! Well might he say, *Although my house be not so with GOD!* And what is the relief to a sorrowful parent in the contemplation of the degeneracy and impiety of his offspring but what David found; GOD'S covenant love in JESUS. Oh, my brother! if you and I can say as he did, then Shall we find the supporting consolation he found! *Yet (saith he) hath the LORD made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*

Reader! let us indulge one sweet thought more over this Chapter. We behold here the succession of David's children, and we know that that succession led to JESUS after the flesh. Oh! then, let the recollection direct our thoughts and our affections to him, (in whom the genealogy of David centered) even to all precious JESUS. *To thee, thou blessed LORD JESUS, would my soul direct all her contemplation! On thee would I fix my longing eyes! In thee shall I find the sum and substance of all desire. With thee would I eternally dwell; and from thee draw all my joy. Thou art both the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.* And while

the SPIRIT and the Bride say, Come; and all the pressing invitations of thy holy word call upon me to come unto thee, do thou, blessed JESUS, add thine own gracious call, saying, *Surely, I come quickly*; then will my soul echo to thy voice, and with an holy fervor of desire answer, *Even so, come* LORD JESUS. *Amen.*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

The history of the genealogy is prosecuted in this Chapter. Here is the posterity of Judah registered, which forms the most illustrious, as well as the most numerous, of all the tribes of Israel. There is an interruption in the register to introduce the prayer of Jabez, which though forming a chasm in the genealogy, yet makes the Chapter itself the more interesting.

1 CHRONICLES 4:1-8

(1) ¶ The sons of Judah; Pharez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal. (2) And Reaiah the son of Shobal begat Jahath; and Jahath begat Ahumai, and Lahad. These *are* the families of the Zorathites. (3) And these *were of* the father of Etam; Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash: and the name of their sister *was* Hazeleponi: (4) And Penuel the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These *are* the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Bethlehem. (5) And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. (6) And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and Hopher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These *were* the sons of Naarah. (7) And the sons of Helah *were*, Zereth, and Jezoar, and Ethnan. (8) And Coz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

The tribe of Judah was, on several accounts, the most illustrious in Israel. It formed a separate kingdom, including Levi, Simeon and Benjamin. And when the other tribes appeared to have been scattered, and almost lost, in the Assyrian conquests, this of Judah, when returning from captivity, became conspicuously great and flourishing. But Judah derived its eminence still more from the appointment that our LORD should spring from it. And hence we find Judah placed first in point of rank, in the list of Israel's sons, when blessed. See Revelation 7:5. Hebrews 7:14.

1 CHRONICLES 4:9-10

(9) And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. (10) And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep *me* from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Jabez being so remarkably spoken of, and his prayer so recorded, and the LORD'S gracious answer to it in granting it so striking, demands a more particular attention. Though the birth of Jabez was attended with more than ordinary sorrow to his mother, yet neither is her name, or his father's name, recorded, He is declared to be *more honourable than his brethren*. And his prayer is evidently a proof of his great piety, for it is a prayer founded in GOD'S covenant love, as the GOD of Israel. Will it be a violence to truth, or an improper indulgence to fancy, if we consider him as somewhat typical of the LORD JESUS? Was not our JESUS more honourable than his brethren? Was not that Holy One most eminent indeed for piety, who spent whole nights in prayer to his FATHER? And was not JESUS'S desire for the enlargement of his coast, when

the heathen by decree were given unto him for an inheritance, and the utmost part of the earth for his possession? Oh, thou sweet and gracious Saviour! why should not every person, and everything, which hath the most distant allusion, by shadow or by word, to thine unequalled glory and honor, be made the means of leading my heart to thee? While I read the history of men, even the most honourable men, I behold nothing perfect, nothing satisfying. But thou, dearest JESUS, hath said, *I will cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.* Proverbs 8:21.

1 CHRONICLES 4:11-23

(11) ¶ And Chelub the brother of Shuah begat Mehir, which *was* the father of Eshton. (12) And Eshton begat Bethrapha, and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Irnahash. These *are* the men of Rechah. (13) And the sons of Kenaz; Othniel, and Seraiah: and the sons of Othniel; Hathath. (14) And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the valley of Charashim; for they were craftsmen. (15) And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh; Iru, Elah, and Naam: and the sons of Elah, even Kenaz. (16) And the sons of Jehaleleel; Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel. (17) And the sons of Ezra *were*, Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon: and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. (18) And his wife Jehudijah bare Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these *are* the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took. (19) And the sons of *his* wife Hodiah the sister of Naham, the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite. (20) And the sons of Shimon *were*, Amnon, and Rinnah, Benhanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi *were*, Zoheth, and Benzoheth. (21) The sons of Shelah the son of Judah *were*, Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea, (22) And Jokim, and the men of Chozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubilehem. And *these are* ancient

things. (23) These *were* the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.

Very honourable testimony is here given to the descendants of Judah, who excelled in different handicrafts and mechanical arts.

1 CHRONICLES 4:24-43

(24) ¶ The sons of Simeon *were*, Nemuel, and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul: (25) Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. (26) And the sons of Mishma; Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, Shimei his son. (27) And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply, like to the children of Judah. (28) And they dwelt at Beersheba, and Moladah, and Hazarshual, (29) And at Bilhah, and at Ezem, and at Tolad, (30) And at Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at Ziklag, (31) And at Bethmarcaboth, and Hazarsusim, and at Bethbirei, and at Shaaraim. These *were* their cities unto the reign of David. (32) And their villages *were*, Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities: (33) And all their villages that *were* round about the same cities, unto Baal. These *were* their habitations, and their genealogy. (34) And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah, (35) And Joel, and Jehu the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, (36) And Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Adiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah, (37) And Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah; (38) These mentioned by *their* names *were* princes in their families: and the house of their fathers increased greatly. (39) And they went to the entrance of Gedor, *even* unto the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. (40) And they found fat pasture and good, and the land *was* wide, and quiet, and peaceable; for *they* of Ham had dwelt there of old. (41) And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms: because *there was* pasture there for their flocks. (42) And *some* of them, *even* of the

sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. (43) And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day.

The descendants of Simeon occupy the history of these verses with an account of the places of their settlement. The genealogy of this tribe was considered of sufficient importance in the register of families, to be faithfully preserved. For though our LORD did not spring from Simeon; yet perhaps to avoid contention in this tribe, it was highly proper to settle it in this manner.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is a sweet thought, in the contemplation of what is here recorded of the tribes of Judah and of Simeon, to recollect that GOD is the GOD of all the families of Israel, both then, and now, and forever. Yes, blessed LORD GOD, JEHOVAH, thou hast loved with an everlasting love, and thou changest not; therefore it is, the sons of Jacob are not consumed. And oh! how glorious is it, to see the eternal security of this love founded in the person, and established in the perfect obedience, righteousness, and salvation of thy dear Son, the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Reader! let us in the character and conduct of Jabez, learn those sweet lessons which, in a gospel sense, and with an eye to JESUS, are afforded us in his example. It is but little that is said of Jabez: but that little opens vast improvement. Though more honourable than his brethren, though so remarkable for his piety, so steadfast in his trust on a covenant GOD: yet how short a relation is made of him among men? How delightful the thought in the breast of the believer, whose life is hid with

CHRIST in GOD! *However unknown, unobserved, unnoticed, by the world, yet eternally secure, and eternally happy in JESUS! Jabez prayed not to an unknown GOD; not to one uncertain to hear, and uncertain to answer; but to Israel's GOD, a GOD in covenant with his chosen from everlasting. And what was the burden of Jabez's prayer, Oh! that thou wouldst bless me (said he) indeed: that thou wouldst enlarge my coast; that thine hand might be with me; to keep use from evil, that it might not grieve me. And is not this a gospel prayer in JESUS? What is it to be blest indeed, but to have our sins cancelled in the blood of CHRIST: for how can I be blest indeed until my sins are forgiven, and till I have redemption in JESUS'S blood, according to the riches of GOD'S grace? How will my coast be enlarged, until that CHRIST hath made me free, and enlarged my heart, and mouth, and lips, to the praises of his name? And how shall I be kept and secured everlastingly in this freedom, unless He that pardons still upholds, He that redeems continues still to preserve, and He that sanctifies still shines in upon me, and takes not his HOLY SPIRIT from me? Oh LORD! thou that didst hear and answer the prayer of Jabez, hear me, and grant my request, for all these spiritual blessings in JESUS! Bless me, my GOD, and make me truly happy indeed, by making me all that thou wouldst have me to be in JESUS; that He may be my portion, my hope, my joy, my life, my salvation, in time and to all eternity.*

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

The genealogies of Israel in the tribe of Reuben, and also in the tribe of Gad, form the principal subjects of this chapter.

1 CHRONICLES 5:1-2

(1) ¶ Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he *was* the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. (2) For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him *came* the chief ruler; but the birthright *was* Joseph's:)

These verses are too important and interesting to be hastily passed by. Reuben, the eldest of Jacob's sons, having forfeited the birth-right by reason of his incest, had the sentence of his father put in execution: see Genesis 49:4. Joseph, therefore, had his and his own portion conferred upon him; for the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, which sprung from Joseph, both of them had each a portion. So the dying patriarch blessed them by faith in the promised seed. Hebrews 11:21. But Joseph had not the whole, for Judah yet more eminently, on account of the promised seed, took precedence of both. So declared Jacob by the spirit of prophecy, when dying: *The sceptre was not to depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come.* And this was literally the case in the royal line going on with Judah, until that JESUS came. Genesis 49:10. And when CHRIST came the Jews themselves confessed to Pilate, *that they had no king but Caesar.* John 19:15.

1 CHRONICLES 5:3-10

(3) The sons, *I say*, of Reuben the firstborn of Israel *were*, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. (4) The sons of Joel; Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, (5) Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son, (6) Beerah his son, whom Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria carried away *captive*: he *was* prince of the Reubenites. (7) And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned, *were* the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, (8) And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of

Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo and Baalmeon: (9) And eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates: because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead. (10) And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east *land* of Gilead.

The names and settlements of the Reubenites, are here particularly marked. But what a sad proof of degeneracy this tribe afforded, in setting up their residence, the other side of the land of promise. Numbers 32:1-5.

1 CHRONICLES 5:11-17

(11) And the children of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of Bashan unto Salchah: (12) Joel the chief, and Shapham the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan. (13) And their brethren of the house of their fathers *were*, Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven. (14) These *are* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; (15) Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers. (16) And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan, and in her towns, and in all the suburbs of Sharon, upon their borders. (17) All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

The tribe of Gad very properly comes in, to be noticed in their genealogy, after that of Reuben; for this tribe also joined with Reuben in the wish of settlement.

1 CHRONICLES 5:18-24

(18) ¶ The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war. (19) And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and

Nephish, and Nodab. (20) And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in him. (21) And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand. (22) For there fell down many slain, because the war *was* of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity. (23) And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land: they increased from Bashan unto Baalhermon and Senir, and unto mount Hermon. (24) And these *were* the heads of the house of their fathers, even Ephraim, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous men, *and* heads of the house of their fathers.

We have here a short account of the blessing of GOD upon the Reubenites and the Gadites. How undeserving soever in themselves, the *LORD* accepted them in the covenant, and wrought deliverance for them, for his great name's sake.

1 CHRONICLES 5:25-26

(25) And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them. (26) And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

We have here also an account of their punishment for their departure from the LORD. Though GOD be true to his covenant engagements in JESUS, yet his own honor will bring forth chastisements to his children. So the LORD hath said: and so the LORD's people find it in all ages. Psalm 89:30, 35.

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not hastily pass by the view which this chapter affords of distinguishing grace, in the removal of the honor of birthright from Reuben to transfer it to Joseph, and placing Judah above all his Father's household. Evidently here was fulfilled the dying Patriarch's blessing, when he said, Judah! thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, and thy father's children shall bow down before thee. But oh! how sweet and precious is this view of Israel's family, when beheld with an eye to CHRIST. Truly, thou blessed JESUS, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; for every knee shall bow before thee, and every tongue confess that thou art LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

Reader! let you and I seek for grace, that we may not, like the Reubenites and the Gadites, set up our rest on this side Jordan. No! dearest LORD JESUS, it is thou that art the rest, wherewith thou wilt cause the weary to rest, and thou art our only refreshment. Be thou, LORD, my rest, my joy, and my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 6

CONTENTS

Prosecuting the genealogy of Israel's son, the tribe of Levi is made the subject of this chapter, and particularly with an eye to the priesthood, in the person of Aaron and his sons.

1 CHRONICLES 6:1

(1) ¶ The sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

The tribe of Levi, in point of rank and importance, stood very high, for GOD set it apart, on account of the priesthood, for himself. Perhaps it is for this reason, the relation of this tribe, in the registry of it, is more minutely attended to. If the Reader will consult the book of Ezra chap. 2:62, 63, he will perceive how very tenacious Israel was, concerning the relationship among the priests.

1 CHRONICLES 6:2-30

(2) And the sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. (3) And the children of Amram; Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. (4) Eleazar begat Phinehas, Phinehas begat Abishua, (5) And Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi, (6) And Uzzi begat Zerariah, and Zerariah begat Meraioth, (7) Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub, (8) And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Ahimaaz, (9) And Ahimaaz begat Azariah, and Azariah begat Johanan, (10) And Johanan begat Azariah, (he *it is* that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem:) (11) And Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub, (12) And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Shallum, (13) And Shallum begat Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah, (14) And Azariah begat Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak, (15) And Jehozadak went *into captivity*, when the LORD carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. (16) The sons of Levi; Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. (17) And these *be* the names of the sons of Gershom; Libni, and Shimei. (18) And the sons of Kohath *were*, Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel. (19) The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. And these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers. (20) Of Gershom; Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, (21) Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Jeaterai his son. (22) The sons of Kohath; Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, (23) Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son, (24) Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uziah his son, and Shaul his son. (25) And the sons of Elkanah; Amasai, and Ahimoth. (26) *As for* Elkanah: the sons of Elkanah; Zophai his son,

and Nahath his son, (27) Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. (28) And the sons of Samuel; the firstborn Vashni, and Abiah. (29) The sons of Merari; Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son, (30) Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

I include the whole of this register under one point of view for the sake of shortness, for it contains nothing more than a register, and, no doubt, a very trite one: but it opens nothing for improvement separately considered. If indeed we take it altogether, it serves to show the defective and fluctuating state of the priesthood under the law; for *they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death*. And how doth such a view serve to heighten and endear Him, who *because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood*. Precious JESUS, thou Great High Priest! how refreshing to thy people is the thought, *that thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck!* Hebrews 7:4-24.

1 CHRONICLES 6:31-48

(31) ¶ And these *are they* whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ark had rest. (32) And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem: and *then* they waited on their office according to their order. (33) And these *are* they that waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel, (34) The son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah, (35) The son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, (36) The son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, (37) The son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, (38) The son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. (39) And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, *even* Asaph the son of

Berachiah, the son of Shimea, (40) The son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah, (41) The son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, (42) The son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, (43) The son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi. (44) And their brethren the sons of Merari *stood* on the left hand: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, (45) The son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, (46) The son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer, (47) The son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi. (48) Their brethren also the Levites *were* appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

These verses give us the relation of the order respecting the psalmody in the house of the *LORD*. David himself is stiled, *the sweet Psalmist of Israel*: and it appears, from what is here said, that he presided in the choir of singers, and gave them their several stations. Some of the characters here mentioned, are noticed in the book of Psalms. *Heman's* name stands at the head of the 88th Psalm. *Ethan* at the 89th Psalm. *Asaph* at several, Psalms 73 to 83.

1 CHRONICLES 6:49-53

(49) But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of the burnt offering, and on the altar of incense, *and were appointed* for all the work of the *place* most holy, and to make an atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. (50) And these *are* the sons of Aaron; Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, (51) Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, (52) Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, (53) Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.

Reader! do remark, with what peculiar dignity and honor Aaron is spoken of, in this sacred service of the sacrifice. Singing, no doubt, formed a very interesting part of the temple worship: but nothing compared to the ministry of

sacrifices, to which Aaron and his sons were called. As all sacrifices pointed to the One Great Sacrifice: so all the priests typified that One Almighty High priest, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, whom both the altar, sacrifice, and priest shadowed forth and represented.

1 CHRONICLES 6:54-81

(54) ¶ Now these *are* their dwelling places throughout their castles in their coasts, of the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites: for theirs was the lot. (55) And they gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof round about it. (56) But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. (57) And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, *namely*, Hebron, *the city* of refuge, and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir, and Eshtemoa, with their suburbs, (58) And Hilen with her suburbs, Debir with her suburbs, (59) And Ashan with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs: (60) And out of the tribe of Benjamin; Geba with her suburbs, and Alemeth with her suburbs, and Anathoth with her suburbs. All their cities throughout their families *were* thirteen cities. (61) And unto the sons of Kohath, *which were* left of the family of that tribe, *were cities given* out of the half tribe, *namely, out of the half tribe* of Manasseh, by lot, ten cities. (62) And to the sons of Gershom throughout their families out of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities. (63) Unto the sons of Merari *were given* by lot, throughout their families, out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities. (64) And the children of Israel gave to the Levites *these* cities with their suburbs. (65) And they gave by lot out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, and out of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, these cities, which are called by *their* names. (66) And *the residue* of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their coasts out of the tribe of Ephraim. (67) And they gave unto them, *of the cities* of refuge, Shechem in mount Ephraim with her suburbs; *they gave* also Gezer with her suburbs, (68) And Jokmeam with her suburbs,

and Bethhoron with her suburbs, (69) And Aijalon with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs: (70) And out of the half tribe of Manasseh; Aner with her suburbs, and Bileam with her suburbs, for the family of the remnant of the sons of Kohath. (71) Unto the sons of Gershom *were given* out of the family of the half tribe of Manasseh, Golan in Bashan with her suburbs, and Ashtaroth with her suburbs: (72) And out of the tribe of Issachar; Kedesh with her suburbs, Daberath with her suburbs, (73) And Ramoth with her suburbs, and Anem with her suburbs: (74) And out of the tribe of Asher; Mashal with her suburbs, and Abdon with her suburbs, (75) And Hukok with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs: (76) And out of the tribe of Naphtali; Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, and Hammon with her suburbs, and Kirjathaim with her suburbs. (77) Unto the rest of the children of Merari *were given* out of the tribe of Zebulun, Rimmon with her suburbs, Tabor with her suburbs: (78) And on the other side Jordan by Jericho, on the east side of Jordan, *were given them* out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the wilderness with her suburbs, and Jahzah with her suburbs, (79) Kedemoth also with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs: (80) And out of the tribe of Gad; Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, and Mahanaim with her suburbs, (81) And Heshbon with her suburbs, and Jazer with her suburbs.

The sacred Scripture, having given a faithful register of the Levites names, in those verses relates their dwelling-places. Jacob, when dying, foretold that *Levi should be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel*. And here we find his prophecy accomplished. Genesis 49:7.

REFLECTIONS

Who can ever read a portion of scripture concerning the priesthood, without having his heart secretly and sweetly led forth to contemplate the LORD JESUS in his priestly office? Who can behold the sons of Levi, as offering to the LORD an offering in righteousness, without connecting with it the

glorious representation of Him, who made his soul an offering for sin, that his people might be made the righteousness of God in him? Who could look at Levi or any of his order in their priestly garments, and overlook JESUS there represented: who *wears a vesture dipped in blood, and ever liveth to make intercession for his people.* Hail! Almighty Priest of a *better covenant, established upon better promises.* We see in them that *the law made men high priests which had infirmity:* But thou, O blessed JESUS, wert consecrated with an oath, *by Him that sware and will not repent, that thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* LORD, help me to come under thy censer, to be interested in thine offering, thy blood, thy sacrifice. Take, blessed JESUS, my cause, my person, my poor offering, all that I have, and all that I am, into thine own gracious hands, and let me be presented in thy most precious offering. Sure I am that I shall be eternally and everlastingly safe, because thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners; and sure I am, that thou canst, and thou wilt, save all that come to GOD by thee, since thou hast, by the one offering of thyself once offered, *for ever perfected them that are sanctified.*

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

The same subject is prosecuted through this chapter, namley, the genealogy of Israel. Here is contained the register of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, and Ephraim.

1 CHRONICLES 7:1-5

(1) ¶ Now the sons of Issachar *were*, Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and

Shimron, four. (2) And the sons of Tola; Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, *to wit*, of Tola: *they were* valiant men of might in their generations; whose number *was* in the days of David two and twenty thousand and six hundred. (3) And the sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah: and the sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five: all of them chief men. (4) And with them, by their generations, after the house of their fathers, *were* bands of soldiers for war, six and thirty thousand *men*: for they had many wives and sons. (5) And their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* valiant men of might, reckoned in all by their genealogies fourscore and seven thousand.

The genealogy of Issachar is here rehearsed, and the number of their soldiery and brethren; by which, it should seem, that Jacob's prophecy concerning this tribe was fulfilled, when the Patriarch compared it to that of *a strong ass couching between two burthens*. Genesis 49:14.

1 CHRONICLES 7:6-12

(6) *The sons* of Benjamin; Bela, and Becher, and Jediael, three. (7) And the sons of Bela; Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of the house of *their* fathers, mighty men of valour; and were reckoned by their genealogies twenty and two thousand and thirty and four. (8) And the sons of Becher; Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alameth. All these *are* the sons of Becher. (9) And the number of them, after their genealogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *was* twenty thousand and two hundred. (10) The sons also of Jediael; Bilhan: and the sons of Bilhan; Jeush, and Benjamin, and Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Ahishahar. (11) All these the sons of Jediael, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *were* seventeen thousand and two hundred *soldiers*, fit to go out for war *and* battle. (12) Shuppim also, and Huppim, the children of Ir, *and* Hushim, the sons of Aher.

The genealogy of Benjamin next comes to be registered! but it is only in part set down in this place. In the next chapter we find a further enumeration. Benjamin, as a tribe, seems to have been pointed out as a warlike people by their father Jacob, who described Benjamin, *ravening as a wolf*. Genesis 49:27.

1 CHRONICLES 7:13

(13) The sons of Naphtali; Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

We have but a short account of this tribe of Naphtali: Perhaps on account of its not being interesting in the genealogy of the LORD JESUS Christ.

1 CHRONICLES 7:14-18

(14) The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel, whom she bare: (*but* his concubine the Aramitess bare Machir the father of Gilead: (15) And Machir took to wife *the sister* of Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name *was* Maachah;) and the name of the second *was* Zelophehad: and Zelophehad had daughters. (16) And Maachah the wife of Machir bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother *was* Sheresh; and his sons *were* Ulam and Rakem. (17) And the sons of Ulam; Bedan. These *were* the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. (18) And his sister Hammoleketh bare Ishod, and Abiezer, and Mahalah.

The Reader will remember that we had the register of the half-tribe of Manasseh, which dwelt in the land of Canaan, before, chap. 5:23. What is here recorded of Manasseh, means the other half-tribe which remained on the other side of Jordan.

1 CHRONICLES 7:19-29

(19) And the sons of Shemida were, Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam. (20) ¶ And the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah, and

Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son, (21) And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath *that were* born in *that* land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. (22) And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. (23) And when he went in to his wife, she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house. (24) (And his daughter *was* Sherah, who built Bethhoron the nether, and the upper, and Uzzensherah.) (25) And Rephah *was* his son, also Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son, (26) Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, (27) Non his son, Jehoshua his son. (28) And their possessions and habitations *were*, Bethel and the towns thereof, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer, with the towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof, unto Gaza and the towns thereof: (29) And by the borders of the children of Manasseh, Bethshean and her towns, Taanach and her towns, Megiddo and her towns, Dor and her towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel.

The tribe of Ephraim had but a small beginning, and, as appears from the relation in this place, under very discouraging circumstances. Yet the father of Ephraim prophesied on his death-bed, that this tribe should be a multitude of nations. Genesis 48:19. And so it proved in the end. Joshua, the son of Nun, was of this tribe, and his conquests we are well acquainted with. And if we look through the historical part of it to the contemplation of the spiritual, as Joshua both by name and office was a lively type of the LORD JESUS, here we see Ephraim, indeed, a multitude of nations; for in JESUS *all the nations of the earth are blessed*.

1 CHRONICLES 7:30-40

(30) The sons of Asher; Imnah, and Isuah, and Ishuai, and Beriah, and Serah their sister. (31) And the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel, who *is* the father of Birzavith. (32) And Heber begat Japhlet, and Shomer, and Hotham, and Shua their sister. (33) And

the sons of Japhlet; Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath. These *are* the children of Japhlet. (34) And the sons of Shamer; Ahi, and Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram. (35) And the sons of his brother Helem; Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal. (36) The sons of Zophah; Suah, and Harnepher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah, (37) Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and Ithran, and Beera. (38) And the sons of Jether; Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara. (39) And the sons of Ulla; Arah, and Haniel, and Rezia. (40) All these *were* the children of Asher, heads of *their* father's house, choice *and* mighty men of valour, chief of the princes. And the number throughout the genealogy of them that were apt to the war *and* to battle *was* twenty and six thousand men.

The tribe of Asher; Jacob said, should be *fat, and yield royal dainties*. And from the mighty men of valour which belonged to this tribe, we see the prediction fulfilled; for *from the blood of the slain, and the fat of the mighty*, like the bow of Jonathan, Asher derived his royal dainties, no doubt. Genesis 49:20.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to trace the subject of the genealogy of men, in the succession of fathers and sons, through so many generations, without feeling the mind drawn out and exercised in the contemplation of the insignificance of man in all his boasted strength and power. Well may every one exclaim with the apostle, in the view of it, *for what is your life? it is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away!*

But, Reader, is there no relief to the mind under the exercise of such humiliating views of human life? Is there no resource, no comfort, no asylum, or house of mercy, to take shelter in, from the universal wreck of our poor dying and dead nature?

Oh thou, precious, ever-living, and life-giving JESUS! Oh! thou who hast proclaimed thyself, and proved thyself to be *the resurrection and the life*; who hast said, and confirmed it also by the most palpable evidence, that *he who believeth thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in thee, shall never die*: dost thou ask me, dearest JESUS, as thou didst the sorrowful sister, whether I believe this? Yes yes? thou Almighty LORD, *I do, I do believe!* Blessed be thy name, it is thou which hast given me to believe. And do thou at all times *help mine unbelief*. The consciousness that thou livest, and that because thou livest all thy people shall live also, bears up my soul above all the dying circumstances of myself, and a world around me. Though this body of mine goeth daily down to the grave, yet in thee, my soul for ever liveth, and shall never die. Thou art the Author of life, the Restorer and Maintainer of my spiritual life, and thou wilt, by and by, be the Perfecter of my eternal life, both soul and body together. Hail then, thou glorious, gracious, lovely, and loving LORD JESUS! *Thy love is better than wine*. For though wine may comfort the heavy heart, yet no wine can raise the dead: but thy love hath done both. And when flesh, and heart, and all things shall fail, *thou wilt be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever*.

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

This chapter takes up the subject of the genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin. In the preceding chapter, we had the introduction to this register of the Benjamites. Here it is again prosecuted and completed.

1 CHRONICLES 8:1-2

(1) ¶ Now Benjamin begat Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third, (2) Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth.

Wherefore the sacred writer had it in commission, to re-assume the subject of the genealogy of Benjamin in this chapter, and to employ a whole chapter in it, I cannot presume to speak. But it is worthy of remark, that after we had gone through the register of the Benjamites, nearly equal in point of length to that of some other of the tribes of Israel, that we should be called to it again. Perhaps, as the numeration of the different tribes is now nearly finished, and we are approaching to the historical part of the Chronicles, as the house of Benjamin furnished the first king in Israel, in the person of Saul, it might be on this account.

1 CHRONICLES 8:3-40

(3) And the sons of Bela were, Addar, and Gera, and Abihud, (4) And Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah, (5) And Gera, and Shephuphan, and Hiram. (6) And these *are* the sons of Ehud: these are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba, and they removed them to Manahath: (7) And Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera, he removed them, and begat Uzza, and Ahihud. (8) And Shaharaim begat *children* in the country of Moab, after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara *were* his wives. (9) And he begat of Hodesh his wife, Jobab, and Zibia, and Mesha, and Malcham, (10) And Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirma. These *were* his sons, heads of the fathers. (11) And of Hushim he begat Abitub, and Elpaal. (12) The sons of Elpaal; Eber, and Misham, and Shamed, who built Ono, and Lod, with the towns thereof: (13) Beriah also, and Shema, who *were* heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who drove away the inhabitants of Gath: (14) And Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth, (15) And Zebadiah, and Arad, and Ader, (16) And Michael, and Ispah, and Joha, the sons of Beriah; (17) And Zebadiah, and Meshullam, and Hezeki, and Heber, (18) Ishmerai also, and Jezliah, and Jobab, the sons of

Elpaal; (19) And Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi, (20) And Elienai, and Zilthai, and Eliel, (21) And Adaiah, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of Shimhi; (22) And Ishpan, and Heber, and Eliel, (23) And Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan, (24) And Hananiah, and Elam, and Antothijah, (25) And Iphedeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak; (26) And Shamsherai, and Shehariah, and Athaliah, (27) And Jaresiah, and Eliah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham. (28) These *were* heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief *men*. These dwelt in Jerusalem. (29) And at Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon; whose wife's name *was* Maachah: (30) And his firstborn son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab, (31) And Gedor, and Ahio, and Zacher. (32) And Mikloth begat Shimeah. And these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them. (33) ¶ And Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul, and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and Eshbaal. (34) And the son of Jonathan *was* Meribbaal; and Meribbaal begat Micah. (35) And the sons of Micah *were*, Pithon, and Melech, and Tarea, and Ahaz. (36) And Ahaz begat Jehoadah; and Jehoadah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza, (37) And Moza begat Binea: Rapha *was* his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son: (38) And Azel had six sons, whose names *are* these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these *were* the sons of Azel. (39) And the sons of Eshek his brother *were*, Ulam his firstborn, Jehush the second, and Eliphelet the third. (40) And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers, and had many sons, and sons' sons, an hundred and fifty. All these *are* of the sons of Benjamin.

I see no cause for interruption in the catalogue of the Benjamites, from the beginning of the chapter to the end, and therefore have made none. One of two general observations are all that seem to present themselves from the whole, and therefore may as well be made in the close, as in the body of the chapter. The Reader of curiosity who compares this register of the Benjamites, with some other detached views of their Chronicles, as they are occasionally introduced in other parts of scripture, may be led to conceive, that there are

mistakes somewhere from the different names by which some of the descendants of Benjamin are recorded. But I conceive that such an idea will be entirely done away in every unprejudiced mind, from the consideration, that many men as well as places, even now in our day, from various causes are distinguished by different names. The one grand object of a Chronicle in the register of families, is certainly to identify the persons of it.

And if this be but accurate, the whole of everything important is answered. There is a much more interesting consideration, for the pious Reader to have his mind exercised with, in the perusal of this account of the Benjamites, and that is, to remark how the *LORD* graciously peopled Benjamin again, after they were reduced to about 600 men, for the iniquity of Gibeah. When the *LORD* restored Benjamin to his favor, he restored to him his privileges. And therefore we find here, that Benjamin stands as high in numbers as any of his brethren. Judges 20:15. 46, 47. 21:1.

REFLECTIONS

IT forms no small improvement in the perusal of this chapter, and indeed in the review of the whole registry of Israel, to remark with what honour the illustrious tribes of Israel, are handed down to us in the word of God. Here are names with whom, by frequent reading, we may become familiar, who lived and died in ages so remote from the present, while thousands and tens of thousands among the great ones of the earth, who made splendid appearances in their day, no doubt, *their very memorial is perished with them*. Think, Reader! what a succession of men and monarchies have passed on through the world, of whose remembrance not a

vestige remains. While those families, even the least and most inconsiderable, because they were the Israel of GOD, are had in everlasting remembrance.

But chiefly, Reader, from this view, let you and I be led to consider the vast importance of having our names written *in the book of life*. Think, Sir, of that awful day, at the audit of GOD, which John describes as he saw it in vision; and which will one day certainly be realized: therein he tells us he saw, *the dead both small and great, stand before GOD. And the sea gave up her dead, and death and hell delivered up their dead. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* Revelation 20:12-15. Oh! precious, precious JESUS, that last delivered thy people from the wrath to come; give me, dearest LORD, to rejoice in the pleasing, glorious hope, that my name, worthless as it is, is written in heaven.

CHAPTER 9

CONTENTS

This chapter sums up the subject of the registry of Israel. The Levites are taken notice of. And particular mention is made of Saul and Jonathan's stock.

1 CHRONICLES 9:1

(1) ¶ So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they *were* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, *who* were carried away to Babylon for their transgression.

By all Israel being reckoned, must be meant all that were in this register. For the Reader will not, I hope, have overlooked

that in the foregoing Chapters of the genealogy of Israel, there is no account of the tribes of *Zebulun* and of *Dan*. Perhaps *Ezra*, who seems to have been the Compiler of this account of Israel, did not find mention of either of these tribes in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, after their return from the Babylonish captivity. I cannot account for the omission any other way. But there is a more alarming omission in the book of the Revelations, on what ground I presume not to explain. *Dan* is not among the number of the sealed of Israel by the angel. Revelation 7:1-8. Let the Reader in the perusal of this verse take notice how the sacred Writer dwells upon the cause of Israel's being carried away to Babylon. It is sin which is the sad cause of every man's sorrow. Romans 5:12.

1 CHRONICLES 9:2-34

(2) Now the first inhabitants that *dwelt* in their possessions in their cities *were*, the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims. (3) And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh; (4) Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children of Pharez the son of Judah. (5) And of the Shilonites; Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons. (6) And of the sons of Zerah; Jeuel, and their brethren, six hundred and ninety. (7) And of the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah, (8) And Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephathiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; (9) And their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty and six. All these men *were* chief of the fathers in the house of their fathers. (10) And of the priests; Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, and Jachin, (11) And Azariah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God; (12) And Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the

son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; (13) And their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; very able men for the work of the service of the house of God. (14) ¶ And of the Levites; Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; (15) And Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph; (16) And Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netophathites. (17) And the porters *were*, Shallum, and Akkub, and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their brethren: Shallum *was* the chief; (18) Who hitherto *waited* in the king's gate eastward: they *were* porters in the companies of the children of Levi. (19) And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites, *were* over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, *being* over the host of the LORD, *were* keepers of the entry. (20) And Phinehas the son of Eleazar *was* the ruler over them in time past, *and* the LORD *was* with him. (21) *And* Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah *was* porter of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (22) All these *which were* chosen to be porters in the gates *were* two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office. (23) So they and their children *had* the oversight of the gates of the house of the LORD, *namely*, the house of the tabernacle, by wards. (24) In four quarters were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south. (25) And their brethren, *which were* in their villages, *were* to come after seven days from time to time with them. (26) For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in *their* set office, and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. (27) And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge *was* upon them, and the opening thereof every morning *pertained* to them. (28) *And certain* of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale. (29) *Some* of them also *were* appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and

the spices. (30) And *some* of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices. (31) And Mattithiah, *one* of the Levites, who *was* the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the set office over the things that were made in the pans. (32) And *other* of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, *were* over the shewbread, to prepare *it* every sabbath. (33) And these *are* the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, *who remaining* in the chambers *were* free: for they were employed in *that* work day and night. (34) These chief fathers of the Levites *were* chief throughout their generations; these dwelt at Jerusalem.

This forms a very interesting account in the history of the church, if it be remembered that this takes up the relation in the captives of Israel being now returned from Babylon. They found their temple, the beautiful temple of Solomon, destroyed. The people, therefore, had only a moveable tabernacle to repair to. But yet the whole nation of the captives which returned set about the service of the sanctuary with earnestness; the *LORD* stirring up their minds to the employment; so that every one in his separate office used diligence. Let the Reader remark, that among the first inhabitants the priests and Levites are taken notice of. Sweetly the prophet calls upon such to be foremost. Watchmen upon the walls of Zion are demanded never *to hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence; and give him no rest till he establish; and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.* Isaiah 62:6, 7.

1 CHRONICLES 9:35-44

(35) ¶ And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name *was* Maachah: (36) And his firstborn son Abdon, then Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab, (37) And Gedor, and Ahio, and Zechariah, and Mikloth. (38) And Mikloth begat Shimeam. And they also dwelt with their brethren at Jerusalem,

over against their brethren. (39) And Ner begat Kish; and Kish begat Saul; and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and Eshbaal. (40) And the son of Jonathan *was* Meribbaal: and Meribbaal begat Micah. (41) And the sons of Micah *were*, Pithon, and Melech, and Tahrea, *and* Ahaz. (42) And Ahaz begat Jarah; and Jarah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza; (43) And Moza begat Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. (44) And Azel had six sons, whose names *are* these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan: these *were* the sons of Azel.

It is remarkable that these verses should be again inserted in this place, since we had them before in the preceding Chapter, from verse 29 to 38. There it finished with the register of Benjamin, and here it is introductory to what follows, in the history of Saul.

REFLECTIONS

It is impossible to read this Chapter, and connect with it, in our remembrance, that this opens a new history of the Church after the desolation of the Babylonish captivity, but with very interesting feelings. Let the Reader figure to himself the desolated view of Jerusalem and Zion plowed as a field. The people returned to their beloved city, and finding the whole in ruins. The Prophet Jeremiah, the mournful Prophet, only in contemplation of what it would be, cried out, *How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow that was great among the nations!*

Reader! Pause over the sad picture! See what sin was capable of effecting. And if GOD so punished Israel, what security hath any other nation? If GOD spared not the natural branches, what shall a grafted instock expect in rebellion?

Blessed JESUS! thou glorious, all-prevailing Intercessor, be gracious, LORD, we beseech thee to our land. Say, LORD, concerning us, *I am returned to Jerusalem in mercies*. And when thou returnest to bless a land, thou comest with grace to pardon, grace to sanctify, grace to bless, grace to deliver, grace to renew, grace to heal, all our diseases. Oh, then, blessed JESUS, come with all thy quickening, reviving, comforting presence, and say unto us, *Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be any more termed Desolate; but let the nations of the earth call us the Holy People; the redeemed of the LORD. And let us be called, Sought out; a city not forsaken.*

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

The history of the genealogy of Israel being finished, the book of Chronicles now enters upon the history of Israel as a people. In this Chapter we are carried back to that part of Saul's history which terminated with his death, with the events that followed, from the men of Jabesh-gilead.

1 CHRONICLES 10:1-7

(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 after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. (3) And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers. (4) Then said Saul to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. (5) And when his

armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died. (6) So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together. (7) And when all the men of Israel that *were* in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled: and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

I shall desire the Reader once for all, while over going such parts in the book of the Chronicles as we have already reviewed in the former books of Samuel or the Kings, to consult what hath been already offered in that part of our humble Commentary. It would swell this little work unnecessarily to enlarge upon such portions as are only the duplicates of the history. Whatever opens to a new thought, or affords, a new occasion to spiritualize the passage, in such instances I shall beg to detain the Reader. All that is related in these verses will be found in substance the same in I Samuel 31 to which I therefore refer.

1 CHRONICLES 10:8-12

(8) ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa. (9) And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people. (10) And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. (11) And when all Jabeshgilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, (12) They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

What an humbling lesson is here read to great men! The body of Saul, the first king of Israel, and who had slain his thousands, as the Song of Israel proclaimed, to be thus made

a spectacle of derision to men, and the subject of song himself to a contemptible dunghill god of the Philistines!

1 CHRONICLES 10:13-14

(13) So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel of one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire *of it*; (14) And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

Observe, Reader! the melancholy close of Saul's history; and mark what an awful lesson he holds forth to great sinners. Alas! that any man should leave GOD to consult with the workers of darkness! The Philistines make war upon me, said Saul. That would have been nothing: But when he added, and GOD *is departed from me!* this gave the finishing stroke to human misery! header! think of what vast importance that prayer, Oh, LORD, *take not thine HOLY SPIRIT from me*, 1 Samuel 28:15. Psalm 51:11.

REFLECTIONS

WHO can read the history of Saul, and behold the dreadful end of such men, but with trembling! How dark the night of so promising a morning! But what must the termination of such conduct be, which in direct defiance of better knowledge, against conscience, against all the feelings of honour, justice, and humanity, rushes on the most desperate deeds, what must the end be but darkness and despair? He who murdered the priests of the LORD is deserted by the LORD, and dies by the murder of his own hands! He who abandoned his dearest friend, who fought his battles and saved his crown, is himself abandoned by all friends, and his very

carcass stripped and insulted by his open enemies. My soul rejoice with trembling! Look wholly to JESUS. Fear to thyself on any occasion. Be jealous of every earthly honour, lest like Saul's, it should be unsanctified. Oh! precious Redeemer! keep me near thyself, keep me humble, keep me low, keep me, *LORD*, lest I fall; for they only are safe who are *kept by thy power, through faith, unto salvation*.

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

As the preceding Chapter related to us the account of the death of Saul, this takes up the immediate part which follows in that history, in the elevation of David to the throne. The Chapter closeth with an account of the names of David's worthies.

1 CHRONICLES 11:1-9

(1) ¶ Then all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh. (2) And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou *wast* he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel. (3) Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel. (4) And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which *is* Jebus; where the Jebusites *were*, the inhabitants of the land. (5) And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which *is* the city of David. (6) And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief. (7) And David dwelt in the castle; therefore

they called it the city of David. (8) And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. (9) So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts *was* with him.

I refer the Reader to the parallel history, 2 Samuel 5:1-10, and to the Commentary upon it in that Chapter. But in addition to the observations there, I would call upon the Reader to remark with me, what the LORD GOD had said to David in times past concerning this kingdom to which he was now to be advanced on the death of Saul. *The LORD thy GOD said to thee, thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt rule over them.* Reader! do you not behold David in this a type of David's LORD? Did not GOD the FATHER promise to his son, that he should both reign and feed his people? And doth not JESUS do this in the present hour? Is he not *the Lamb in the midst of the throne* above, leading the Church triumphant to fountains of waters, and feeding them eternally? And is he not the portion of his church militant below, *in coming down into his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.* Song of Solomon 6:2. Revelation 7:17.

1 CHRONICLES 11:10-14

(10) ¶ These also *are* the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, *and* with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. (11) And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains: he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain *by him* at one time. (12) And after him *was* Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighties. (13) He was with David at Pasdammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines. (14) And they set themselves in the midst of *that* parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the LORD saved *them* by a great deliverance.

If the Reader consults the 23d chapter of the 2nd book of Samuel, he will find the names of those worthies already registered. Their being again preserved in the record of the Chronicles, serves to show that they were highly esteemed. But Reader! think how infinitely higher the honour is, for the worthies of JESUS in his army of Apostles, and Prophets, and Martyrs, to have their name recorded in the book of life?

1 CHRONICLES 11:15-47

(15) Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim. (16) And David *was* then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison *was* then at Bethlehem. (17) And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that *is* at the gate! (18) And the three 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: but David would not drink *of* it, but poured it out to the LORD, (19) And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with *the jeopardy of* their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest. (20) And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew *them*, and had a name among the three. (21) Of the three, he was more honourable than the two; for he was their captain: howbeit he attained not to the *first* three. (22) 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: also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day. (23) And he slew an Egyptian, a man of *great* stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand *was* a spear like a weaver's beam; and 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. (24) These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among the three mighties. (25) Behold, he was honourable among the thirty, but attained not to the *first* three: and David set him over

his guard. (26) Also the valiant men of the armies *were*, Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, (27) Shammoth the Hararite, Helez the Pelonite, (28) Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Antothite, (29) Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, (30) Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, (31) Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah, *that pertained* to the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite, (32) Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, (33) Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, (34) The sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite, (35) Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphal the son of Ur, (36) Hephher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, (37) Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai, (38) Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Haggeri, (39) Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armourbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah, (40) Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, (41) Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai, (42) Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, (43) Hanan the son of Maachah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, (44) Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite, (45) Jediahel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, (46) Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, (47) Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.

We know not which to admire most, the bravery of those men, or the piety of David, in the instance concerning the water of Bethlehem here recorded. With what boldness did they enter the host of the Philistines with their lives in their hands, for the assuaging David's thirst? And how truly noble the conduct of David, in refusing the gratification, when he thought upon the peril with which it was purchased. Oh, gracious JESUS! how much to be prized are thy mercies, when the price with which they were obtained is considered. Be thou to me, dear *LORD*, a well of water in my soul, that I thirst after nothing but thee, and salvation in thee, for in thee I have all things.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us pause over the view which this Chapter affords, of the exaltation of David to the throne, and see whether we do not behold in it a figure of the exaltation of CHRIST to the right hand of power, when he had by himself purged our sins, and when forever be sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Doth not your heart say to JESUS; as the men of Israel did to David, *Thou shalt feed thy people, and thou shalt be Lord over them.* And do you not also say so from a consciousness of the same cause, that you are of CHRIST'S bone, and of his flesh. Oh! how doubly delightful is it, *first* to see JESUS reign, and *next* to consider our relationship in him. And wilt thou not, blessed JESUS; say to thy people as is recorded in thy words, *to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my FATHER in his throne.*

In the contemplation of the worthies of David, I would pray for grace to become the worthy follower of the Lamb, in the regeneration, that when the Son of GOD shall come encircled with his holy army I may have grace, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. LORD make me the patient follower of them, *who now through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

CHAPTER 12

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This Chapter, in prosecuting David's history, treats of the

companies that came to join David, and the augmentation of his army.

1 CHRONICLES 12:1-15

(1) ¶ Now these *are* they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers of the war. (2) *They were* armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows out of a bow, *even* of Saul's brethren of Benjamin. (3) The chief *was* Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Berachah, and Jehu the Antothite, (4) And Ismaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad the Gederathite, (5) Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite, (6) Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites, (7) And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor. (8) And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, *and* men of war *fit* for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* as swift as the roes upon the mountains; (9) Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, (10) Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, (11) Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, (12) Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, (13) Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh. (14) These *were* of the sons of Gad, captains of the host: one of the least *was* over an hundred, and the greatest over a thousand. (15) These *are* they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all *them* of the valleys, *both* toward the east, and toward the west.

The continued accumulation of David's forces, serves to remind us of the wonderful accession of converts to the LORD JESUS from every part. Oh! how truly lovely is it to behold souls flying to CHRIST, *as a cloud, and as doves to their window.* If David waxed stronger and stronger, surely our

Almighty David's kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and that which shall endure to everlasting ages.

1 CHRONICLES 12:16-22

(16) And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. (17) And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if *ye be come* to betray me to mine enemies, seeing *there is* no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look *thereon*, and rebuke *it*. (18) Then the spirit came upon Amasai, *who was* chief of the captains, *and he said*, Thine *are we*, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace *be* unto thee, and peace *be* to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band. (19) And there fell *some* of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to *the jeopardy of* our heads. (20) As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jedaiel, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that *were* of Manasseh. (21) And they helped David against the band *of the rovers*: for they *were* all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host. (22) For at *that* time day by day there came to David to help him, until *it was* a great host, like the host of God.

David seemed to have good ground for his enquiry of the Benjamites, for Saul was of that tribe. But the *LORD* was better to him than all his fears. Is there not a sweet spiritual lesson veiled under this address of David to the Benjamites, and the answer of Amasai? Are we come to JESUS in sincerity and truth! Can we appeal to the GOD of our fathers in his covenant-love, and say, His chosen is our chosen, and GOD the FATHER'S CHRIST our CHRIST. Thine we are, blessed JESUS, and to thee we vow allegiance and love for ever! Oh! how

delightful it is to feel as Ruth felt, and to yield ourselves to the LORD, as his servants, in affection. Ruth 1:16-17.

1 CHRONICLES 12:23-40

(23) ¶ And these *are* the numbers of the bands *that were* ready armed to the war, *and* came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD. (24) The children of Judah that bare shield and spear *were* six thousand and eight hundred, ready armed to the war. (25) Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour for the war, seven thousand and one hundred. (26) Of the children of Levi four thousand and six hundred. (27) And Jehoiada *was* the leader of the Aaronites, and with him *were* three thousand and seven hundred; (28) And Zadok, a young man mighty of valour, and of his father's house twenty and two captains. (29) And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul. (30) And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers. (31) And of the half tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name, to come and make David king. (32) And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment. (33) Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: *they were* not of double heart. (34) And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them with shield and spear thirty and seven thousand. (35) And of the Danites expert in war twenty and eight thousand and six hundred. (36) And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, forty thousand. (37) And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand. (38) All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel *were* of one heart to make David king. (39) And there they were with David three days,

eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them. (40) Moreover they that were nigh them, *even* unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, *and* meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for *there was* joy in Israel.

David's army, in the numbers, may serve to remind us of that holy army of the LORD JESUS which John saw, which over and above the hundred and forty and four thousand of the sealed of Israel, had a multitude of the Gentile church, which no man can number. Precious thought, Reader! The army of the LORD JESUS is numerous as well as glorious. GOD the FATHER hath said, that *it is a light thing to give him as a restorer of the tribes of Israel, he shall be his salvation to the ends of the earth.* Isaiah 49:6. Observe one sweet Gospel-instruction more from this passage. We are told that upon the accession of David to the throne, *there was joy in Israel.* But what joy is that, when JESUS sets up his throne in the soul of the sinner? And what everlasting joy will that be, when the archangel's trump shall sound, and JESUS shalt come to reign among all his saints for ever and for ever. Hail, Almighty, Universal LORD! Thou art worthy indeed to receive all praises and honor, for *thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, both now and for ever. Amen.*

REFLECTIONS

WHILE we behold David thus surrounded with his worthies, let our thoughts take wing and fly away to the contemplation of David's *LORD*, now attended with his redeemed ones around the throne which is above. Yes: thou Holy and Exalted Saviour! we may, by the eye of faith, look within the veil, and see thee encircled with all the chosen race of worthies, that

have followed thee, and been of thine host, from all ages. The glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all, all, praise thee. And worthy art thou to be praised, thou Holy One of Israel!

And think, ye redeemed ones on earth, whom the *LORD!* hath gathered from among men, and made kings and priests unto GOD and the FATHER,—think to what high honour ye are called, in that ye are a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*. Oh! sound forth *the high praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who were once afar of but are now brought nigh by his blood: who were once not a people, but are now the people of GOD: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy*. If the worthies of David are thus registered in the Chronicles, think of the high honour of the worthies of JESUS, made worthy in his worthiness only, in having their names written in heaven. If David's warriors are thus spoken of with such honorable testimony in the book of GOD, recollect your dignity, ye soldiers in the holy army of JESUS, whose names are *in the book of life*. *Rejoice in the LORD always, and again I say, rejoice. The LORD is at hand*. Yet a little while and JESUS will appear *to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all that believe*. And then the Son of GOD will be seen surrounded with all his throng, and not one, even the humblest and least of his redeemed, will be found wanting, *Haste, my beloved, and until the day break and the shadows flee away, be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether*.

CHAPTER 13

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This chapter relates to us the circumstance of David's fetching the Ark of God from Kirjath-jearim: the death of Uzzah, for his presumption on that occasion; in consequence of which, the Ark is left at the house of Obed-edom.

1 CHRONICLES 13:1-4

(1) ¶ And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, *and* with every leader. (2) And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If *it seem* good unto you, and *that it be* of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, *that are* left in all the land of Israel, and with them *also* to the priests and Levites *which are* in their cities *and* suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: (3) And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. (4) And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

There is so much sameness in the account here given, concerning the removal of the ark from Kirjath-jearim to what we read of it in the 2d book of Samuel, that I shall not enlarge upon the observations, but refer the Reader to that subject already reviewed. See 2 Samuel 6:1 to 11, and the Commentary and Reflections upon it. No doubt David meant well, respecting the removal of the ark, but he should first have consulted the *LORD* before he consulted his captains. After we have been at a throne of grace we may confer with men. Means are to be made use of, when we are looking to the God of the means, to bless them. There is one feature marked in David's conduct upon this occasion, that merits our notice. Though he was king, and a great king, yet he condescends to call his subjects brethren. *Let us send abroad unto our brethren* (says he) *every where*. Can I read this account, dearest JESUS, and not recollect thine unequalled condescension? Thou art indeed King, and a Great King, even

LORD of heaven and earth, and yet thou art not ashamed to call thy redeemed ones, brethren. Oh! thou beloved, precious, condescending Saviour! By what name shall I call thee to testify how endeared thou art to all thy people? *A brother, indeed, born for adversity, and one that loveth at all times, that sticketh closer than a brother.* Hail! thou first-born of many brethren!

1 CHRONICLES 13:5-6

(5) So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim. (6) And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, *that is*, to Kirjathjearim, which *belonged* to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth *between* the cherubims, whose name is called *on it*.

Observe how far the people came, in order to be present at this solemnity. The river of *Egypt* was the remotest southern part, and *Hemath* the furthest north. Reader, it is no wonder that pious Israelites, who by faith viewed the ark as a type of the ever blessed JESUS, should come thus far. But, if the believing Israelites felt their minds constrained to take such extensive journeys to see the *type*, oh! how inexcusable will those be, who have the *substance* in the gospel, if they neglect so great salvation. Dearest JESUS! let it be my happiness to pursue thee in a preached gospel, anywhere and everywhere; so as I may but *see the king in his beauty*. Oh! how precious that ordinance where JESUS may be found.

1 CHRONICLES 13:7-8

(7) And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. (8) And David and all Israel played before God with all *their* might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

Is it not astonishing in the very first view of things, that David, and all his wise men, should have so far forgotten the LORD'S commands concerning the ark, as to attempt the removing it this way. Was it because the Philistines had made use of a cart to put the ark upon, that Israel should do the same, when the *LORD* had specially commanded the sons of *Kohath* to bear upon their shoulders the holy things! Numbers 7:9.

1 CHRONICLES 13:9-10

(9) ¶ And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. (10) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

This awful breach upon *Uzzah*, holds forth a solemn lesson. All approaches to GOD must be done with an holy awe and reverence. Though we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS, yet that boldness, it should be remembered, is not in us, but JESUS. *I will be sanctified* (saith GOD) *in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.* Leviticus 10:3.

1 CHRONICLES 13:11-12

(11) And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perezuzza to this day. (12) And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God *home* to me?

I should pause here to remark the unsuitableness of David's behavior on this occasion, were I not called away to admire still more the wonderful graciousness of the *LORD* to him in his forbearance. Because the LORD smote Uzzah for his presumption and spared David, was this a cause of

displeasure. Would it not have been more suitable in the king to have thrown himself, and commanded all the people to have followed his example, upon the earth before the *LORD*; and humbly, like Job, if he knew not the cause, to have said, *Show me, and that which I see not, teach thou me: and if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.* See a beautiful view of Job on this grand point. Job 10:2. See also another of the like kind in Elihu: Job 34:31, 32. and Job again, chap. 9:11-21. Pray, Reader, turn to those important passages.

1 CHRONICLES 13:13

(13) So David brought not the ark *home* to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite.

One false step generally leads to another. Had David asked counsel of *GOD*, so far from leaving the ark behind, because of this breach, he would have found it profitable to have brought it home with him. Reader! if a poor sinner such as you and I, commit an error, oh, how relieving to the soul is it to have *JESUS* near? How precious that scripture, *Ye are come to JESUS, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.* Hebrews 12:24

1 CHRONICLES 13:14

(14) And the ark of *GOD* remained with the family of Obededom in his house three months. And the *LORD* blessed the house of Obededom, and all that he had.

What a happy house was Obed-edom's made, because of the ark. Think, Reader what happiness and blessedness is in that family, that house, that heart, where *JESUS* dwells. Oh! *LORD JESUS!* come and dwell in my heart, my house, my family, and all will be blessed indeed.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul, in the perusal of this Chapter, how precious the ark of GOD was in the sight of all Israel, and learn from hence how infinitely precious he whom that ark represented ought to be to all his people.

Learn, moreover, how vastly interesting to have his presence brought home to the soul, that JESUS may be formed in the soul *the hope of glory*. But learn, moreover, with what reverence and godly fear the *LORD* is to be approached in holy seasons of ordinances. In the instance of *Uzzah* I would have my whole heart impressed with a deep sense that a trifling frame of mind, or an unbecoming confidence of spirit, is no part of the liberty belonging to the gospel of JESUS. Never, my soul, I charge thee, never dare go to any holy ordinances, as the unthinking horse rusheth to the battle. But *LORD*, grant me *that preparation of the heart, and that answer of the tongue, which are both of thine own giving*.

Learn, my soul, from the conduct of David on this occasion, how to be humbled under his Almighty hand, and never dare to be displeased with GOD, when at any time his providences seem to intimate his displeasure with thee. But let me love the hand that smites, from a conviction that it is from love his chastisements came. And chiefly, and above all, let me have grace to behold in the blessing of Obed-edom's house for the ark of GOD'S sake, how highly interesting it must be to fetch home JESUS

from every ordinance, every event, every Providence, in his word, and by his grace, to my house, my family, my heart. There, blessed JESUS, do thou take the full, the entire

possession. Drive out all other things, all the buyers and sellers out of thy temple, and reign there, and rule there, the lord and sovereign of every affection.

CHAPTER 14

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We are here again introduced to the acquaintance between Hiram, king of Tyre, and David. We have also, an account of David's family and of his victories.

1 CHRONICLES 14:1-2

(1) ¶ Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and timber of cedars, with masons and carpenters, to build him an house. (2) And David perceived that the LORD had confirmed him king over Israel, for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel.

We were before informed of Hiram's message to David, and the events of it, with the king's views, that his greatness came from the *LORD*. The 5th chapter of the 2d Book of Samuel related these things, to which therefore I refer the Reader, without adding any further observation on that subject, than what the Commentary there contains.

1 CHRONICLES 14:3-7

(3) And David took more wives at Jerusalem: and David begat more sons and daughters. (4) Now these *are* the names of *his* children which he had in Jerusalem; Shammua, and Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, (5) And Ibhar, and Elishua, and Elpalet, (6) And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia, (7) And Elishama, and Beeliada, and Eliphalet.

On the subject of David's wives, in addition to what was there observed in the same chapter, let me only add, that such things are the shades in the brightest picture of our nature. And if David will multiply wives, they shall produce trouble. Perhaps no man ever suffered more in ungracious, unnatural, and unworthy children.

1 CHRONICLES 14:8-16

(8) ¶ And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David. And David heard *of it*, and went out against them. (9) And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. (10) And David enquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand. (11) So they came up to Baalperazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place Baalperazim. (12) And when they had left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire. (13) And the Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley. (14) Therefore David enquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. (15) And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, *that* then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. (16) David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer.

The account of these wars is so exactly represented before in the 5th chap. 2 Samuel that I refer the Reader to what is there observed upon them. Spiritually considered, and with an eye to CHRIST, we may derive great improvement from the wars of David. In JESUS, he conquered. So must we. His direction for going forth to the war, was by the sound of the

mulberry trees. Our guide is the same, in the movement of the HOLY GHOST. His opposition to the Philistines all his days, teacheth us, that the holy war with us ends only with our death. His burning with fire the spoil, shows us that no quarter is to be given to the foe. His reputation as a warrior among his neighbours, serves to point him out as a type of CHRIST, under whose banner he fought. And the holy praise he gave to the *LORD*, in saying, GOD hath broken in upon mine enemies, and ascribing all the glory to him, serves to teach us, that in all our victories, like the armies above, *we overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony*. Revelation 12:11.

1 CHRONICLES 14:17

(17) And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

REFLECTIONS

READER! learn from the view given us of David in this chapter, that the highest state of earthly glory, is neither secure from corruptions within, nor from fightings without. Even David hath fleshly lusts which war against the soul. And even David's security under the blessing of the GOD of Israel, shall not exempt him from furious battles with the Philistines on every side. *They that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS shall suffer persecution*. Reader! if you be CHRIST'S, do not expect much ease, or uninterrupted enjoyment. But see to it, in all your conflicts, that you fight under the LORD'S banner. Remember what David saith, speaking of JESUS: *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness make their boast*. Go forth, therefore, as he did, *in the strength of the LORD, and make mention of his righteousness, even his*

righteousness only. And Reader! suffer me to add one thought more. As David waned for the sound of a going in the mulberry trees: so let you and I watch that *still small voice*, of GOD the HOLY GHOST, which, like a voice from *behind* or *within*, saith, *This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right-hand, and when ye turn to the left,* And to what is this direction pointed, but unto thee, thou blessed JESUS, for the HOLY GHOST is unceasingly glorifying thee, for thou art the way, and the truth, and the life. In thee and thy finished salvation, we shall overcome and be more than conquerors through thy love, wherewith thou hast loved us.

CHAPTER 15

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This chapter finisheth the subject of the bringing up the ark. It is performed successfully and with great joy. But Michal, his wife despiseth David for his dancing before the Ark.

1 CHRONICLES 15:1-2

(1) ¶ And *David* made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. (2) Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

It is well worthy of observation, that, in the account here given of David's bringing up the ark of GOD from the house of Obed-edom, the subject begins with pointing out that David had discovered his former error, for he here saith, *none ought to carry the ark of GOD but the Levites.* We have a circumstantial account of this transaction, 2 Samuel 6:12, to

which I refer the Reader, as well as to the observations in the Commentary upon it. But it is not there said that David so expressed himself concerning the duty of the Levites. So that the relation the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have given the church in this place of this affair, serves to throw a great light upon this whole transaction, and particularly concerning Uzzah's presumption: so that I would earnestly recommend the Reader to peruse this chapter, with the 6th of the 2nd book of Samuel together.

1 CHRONICLES 15:3-13

(3) And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it. (4) And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites: (5) Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twenty: (6) Of the sons of Merari; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty: (7) Of the sons of Gershom; Joel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and thirty: (8) Of the sons of Elizaphan; Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred: (9) Of the sons of Hebron; Eliel the chief, and his brethren fourscore: (10) Of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twelve. (11) And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, (12) And said unto them, Ye *are* the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, *both* ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto *the place that* I have prepared for it. (13) For because ye *did it* not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

I refer the Reader as before, to the account of this transaction, as related in the book of Samuel, for the history is the same. But I beg the Reader to remark with me, the charge the king gave to the Levites. They had seen the awful judgment of Uzzah, and therefore it would be at their peril, if

they did not set themselves apart for this service. And the king assigns the reason for the punishment of Uzzah. The *LORD* our *GOD* (said he) made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. Reader! do Observe the modesty and humility of David. He includes himself in this neglect. *We* sought him not, said David. It is a blessed mark of grace, when we take shame to ourselves, rather than put it upon others. *Accepting the punishment of our iniquity, is* made a testimony by the *LORD* of being in the covenant. Leviticus 26:41.

1 CHRONICLES 15:14-28

(14) So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the *LORD* God of Israel. (15) And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the *LORD*. (16) And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy. (17) So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; (18) And with them their brethren of the second *degree*, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obededom, and Jeiel, the porters. (19) So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were appointed* to sound with cymbals of brass; (20) And Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries on Alamoth; (21) And Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obededom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps on the Sheminith to excel. (22) And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, *was* for song: he instructed about the song, because he *was* skilful. (23) And Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. (24) And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of

God: and Obededom and Jehiah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. (25) ¶ So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obededom with joy. (26) And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. (27) And David *was* clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also *had* upon him an ephod of linen. (28) Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

We have a much more circumstantial account in this chapter, concerning the bringing up of the ark, than was given in the former. David's preparing a place for the reception of the ark, before he fetched it: his particularly summoning the Levites, and commanding them both to sanctify themselves for the service, and to appoint the singers which ministered in the temple service; their names also are set down, and their particular abilities for the work: these things were not enumerated before, but are here specially marked. And above all, the singular and gracious help which the *LORD* gave the Levites in their ministry: this is noted with peculiar distinction, and for which the offering of sacrifices was observed.

1 CHRONICLES 15:29

(29) And it came to pass, *as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.

Michal's conduct, in despising David for the part he took in this work, is more fully noticed in the account given in the book of Samuel, than it is here in the Chronicles. So that, I

again request the Reader that he will peruse both narratives together. No doubt the HOLY GHOST intended they should be thus regarded. It is his gracious mercy which hath furnished the church with so rich and full a volume as the Bible contains. And not a jot or tittle of it can be uninteresting, or will be found unimportant, to those that read it under his divine teaching. John 16:13. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

REFLECTIONS

OBSERVE, Reader, how grace had wrought upon the mind of David since the breach of Uzzah. He no longer feels displeasure at GOD. His displeasure is at himself. He confesses our GOD made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after due order. He now sets himself to prepare a place for the ark of GOD, before he presumes to bring it home. My Brother! depend upon it grace will always induce such effects. To justify the LORD in all the LORD'S appointments: Thou hast done right; and we have done foolishly. And not only to justify but to approve: It may be painful, it may be galling to flesh and blood: but it is the LORD that appoints, and therefore it must be right. And still more to cleave to GOD as a friend, though his frowns seem to look like an enemy: to kiss the hand that smites, and to believe and be perfectly satisfied, that while the LORD exercises the authority of a sovereign, he never loses sight of the FATHER and the friend: JESUS, the Son of his love, still lives, and his covenant righteousness still pleads. JESUS is, and will be, still JESUS; this is faith, for this gives glory to his holy name. And it was thus David prepared for the reception of the ark, and thus in faith and holy joy he brought it home, and the LORD blessed him and Israel in the service.

Reader! let us learn from hence the many sweet things it contains. Oh, JESUS! give us grace to prepare a place for thee, even the best place in our affections, the chief and whole room in our heart. LORD JESUS, do thou occupy and fill all! Then under the influence of thy sweet SPIRIT, we shall go forth to meet thee, to receive thee, to embrace thee, and to bring thee home with holy transports of joy, though all the Michal's of the present hour despise: let them despise, so thou smile. Like the church, when I have once found him whom my soul loveth, *I will hold thee and not let thee go, until that I have brought thee into my father's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me; for there wilt thou show me thy loves.*

CHAPTER 16

CONTENTS

This chapter contains an account of the finishing work, in bringing up the Ark to the Holy City. David's gifts to the people in consequence thereof, and the Psalm of praise David delivered upon the occasion.

1 CHRONICLES 16:1

(1) ¶ So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God.

No doubt, after the breach of Uzzah, and which, had occasioned great grief in David's heart, the LORD's approbation, in his bringing home the ark, had wrought in David's mind a proportionate joy, There were many things which served to contribute to the joy of this high festival. The

ark had been long removed from Israel. The people had often mourned after it and the want of its presence had given much sorrow of heart not only to David but to many a gracious soul: the bringing it home was, therefore, a subject of great delight to the people at large. But to David it must have been eminently so. Reader! you have never known, perhaps, the want of ordinances; but if you have, you may form some idea what the restoration of the ark must have been from its long absence, in your own enjoyment of the return of those hallowed seasons. But, Reader, think from hence, what joy of the heart that must be, when after nights of the hidings of JESUS'S presence, he hath come again, *leaping over the mountains, and skipping over the hills.*

1 CHRONICLES 16:2-3

(2) And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. (3) And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon *of wine.*

That love of GOD is sweet which is always accompanied with the love of man. David appears in an amiable light, in the view this gives of him, in his generosity to his people. I beg the Reader not to overlook the expression, that he blessed the people in the name of the *LORD*. The *Targum* hath it, In the name of *the Word* of the *LORD*; that is, the Uncreated Word; which was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Hence if so, it was by faith in him which was to come. Precious thought! for all blessings flow through Him and in Him. How delightful is it, to see that the early church had such views of the coming Saviour!

1 CHRONICLES 16:4-6

(4) And he appointed *certain* of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel: (5) Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obedom: and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals; (6) Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

Probably, in consequence of the breach of Uzzah, the king thought it right that the Levites should never more be out of the path of duty, and therefore made a revisal of their office.

1 CHRONICLES 16:7

(7) ¶ Then on that day David delivered first *this psalm* to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

This is a proof of the bent of David's mind, in the composition of this beautiful and devout Psalm. If the Reader will critically examine it, he will discover that it is a compilation from several other Psalms. Some of the first verses of it are gathered from the 105th. From the 23rd to 34th are taken from, or rather are the whole of, the 96th Psalm. And another part is take from the 136th, and the two last verses of the 106th. Some from hence have thought, and there seems a great propriety in the opinion, that the way to praise GOD with the spirit and with the understanding also is to gather our songs of praise from various parts of the Book of GOD. It is evident, I confess, to me, that whether in prayer or praise, the best words we have to take with us to turn unto the LORD are the words of the LORD. The hymns and compositions of men, however beautifully turned in period or in the jingle of rhyme, cannot be so proper to draw nigh to GOD with, as the words which the *LORD* hath himself given us.

1 CHRONICLES 16:8-36

(8) Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. (9) Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. (10) Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. (11) Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually. (12) Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; (13) O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. (14) He *is* the LORD our God; his judgments *are* in all the earth. (15) Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations; (16) *Even of the covenant* which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; (17) And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant, (18) Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; (19) When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it. (20) And *when* they went from nation to nation, and from *one* kingdom to another people; (21) He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, (22) *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm. (23) Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; shew forth from day to day his salvation. (24) Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations. (25) For great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also *is* to be feared above all gods. (26) For all the gods of the people *are* idols: but the LORD made the heavens. (27) Glory and honour *are* in his presence; strength and gladness *are* in his place. (28) Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. (29) Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (30) Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. (31) Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let *men* say among the nations, The LORD reigneth. (32) Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that *is* therein. (33) Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth. (34) O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever. (35) And say ye, Save us, O God of our

salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, *and* glory in thy praise. (36) Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

The scope of this psalm, taken altogether, is to celebrate the praises of JEHOVAH, and especially in his covenant love to his redeemed. Hence he is to be praised for the glories of his own name, for his mercies in creation, in redemption, in providence, and in grace. These glorious acts of the *LORD* are to be proclaimed throughout the earth that the whole heathen world may rejoice: and surely they will rejoice that seek the *LORD*. Then comes in the praises of his name for his covenant-love and mercy, of which he had been ever mindful, and whereby he hath proved his faithfulness. The mercies of redemption in Egypt come next, in this sweet song, to be celebrated: when the people were but few, and those few strangers; yet such was the love of JEHOVAH, that none were suffered to hurt his redeemed. So that the Psalm calls upon all the redeemed to this service, and that from day to day. This is a sweet thought, because the salvation is all along considered in the church with an eye to CHRIST. And when the Psalm had thus called upon Israel in a more eminent and exalted manner, all creation are invited to join in the universal chorus; and finally all sing aloud, Amen. It must have formed a most interesting sight to have been present at such a solemnity. The instruments used upon this occasion were suited to the dispensation in which the church then was. But I find no authority in our New Testament dispensation for such things. I rather fear, if men were true to their principles, that gracious souls could not be pleased with the use of them. They were never (I venture to believe) found the means of leading the heart *to* GOD; but I venture to assert, that they

have in numberless instances led the heart *from* GOD. The harmony of organs, flutes, and fiddles, may, and will suit *carnal ordinances*; but they who worship GOD in spirit, need only the SPIRIT'S leadings *to worship God in spirit and in truth*.

1 CHRONICLES 16:37-39

(37) ¶ So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required: (38) And Obededom with their brethren, threescore and eight; Obededom also the son of Jeduthun and Hosah *to be* porters: (39) And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that *was* at Gibeon,

Observe the every day service appointed to *Asaph* and his brethren. Reader! if you and I can in spirit sing the Psalm here given one day, depend upon it, that every day the privilege, and the joy, are the same.

1 CHRONICLES 16:40

(40) To offer burnt offerings unto the LORD upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and *to do* according to all that is written in the law of the LORD, which he commanded Israel;

The morning and evening offering were beautiful types of JESUS. His all-powerful sacrifice, and all-prevailing mediation, were thus kept in remembrance, in those ages of the church.

1 CHRONICLES 16:41-43

(41) And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever; (42) And with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that

should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God. And the sons of Jeduthun *were* porters. (43) And all the people departed every man to his house: and David returned to bless his house.

The whole forms a most delightful representation of the services of the old church. And as all the services were with an eye to CHRIST, we never can sufficiently admire the glaze of the HOLY GHOST in the appointment. Think, Reader, of what vast, what infinite importance, is the redemption by JESUS in the eyes of JEHOVAH; when the mere shadow and type of it was so regularly observed, in daily services, through to many intermediate generations, from the fall of man to the coming of CHRIST?

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over the perusal of this chapter, and behold the earnestness with which David entered upon the service of the sanctuary, when the LORD had blessed him and the people once more with the symbol of his divine presence. Observe with what holy joy he celebrates GOD'S praises. How often he repeats in song the glories of the LORD, and the wonders of his grace. And how earnest he is that all the people should partake in the mercies of JEHOVAH. And when thou hast paid all due attention to David, and the children of Israel, in their joy and thankfulness over the ark of the LORD, then, my soul, turn thyself to behold him whom that ark represented, and think, if it be possible, what a vast increase of mercy thou hast to bless the LORD JEHOVAH for, in that thou art called in happier times, than to the symbols of the LORD'S presence, for JESUS himself hath tabernacled among men in substance of the flesh, and hast wrought out and completed eternal

redemption by his blood and righteousness. Hail! thou holy, glorious, gracious, precious EMMANUEL! Oh let my soul be everlastingly rejoicing in thee, I would indeed sing unto thee; I would sing Psalms unto thee; I would for ever glory in thy holy name, and be talking for ever of thy wondrous works. And no less to thee, in my Redeemer's name and mediation, would I look up with thankfulness, O FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort! Thy everlasting love, and grace, and mercy first raised up JESUS, and gave him for a covenant to the people. And it is the same unchanging love, and grace, and mercy which accepts poor sinners in him now, and makes them forever blessed. *Arise, O LORD, into thy rest, thou and the Ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy saints shout with joy.* Oh! let thine HOLY SPIRIT so graciously take of the things of JESUS and show them unto us, that *every knee may bow before thee, and every tongue confess, that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.*

CHAPTER 17

CONTENTS

This is a most interesting chapter, in that it brings before us a gracious interview between the LORD and his servant David, at throne of grace. David felt his heart prompted to build an house for GOD. He is forbidden to do it, but is told that his son shall. The chapter closes with his prayer and thanksgivings.

1 CHRONICLES 17:1

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *remaineth* under curtains.

Before I enter upon this chapter, I beg to premise to the Reader, that as the contents of it, almost literally, hath been commented upon before, in the 7th chapter of the 2nd book of Samuel; I shall not go over the same observations again as were there offered. I therefore refer the Reader to that part of our volume. But as the chapter is uncommonly beautiful, and as it opens to us a vast fund of the sweetest improvement, I beg to call the Reader's attention to several interesting considerations which arise out of it, over and above what are proposed there. This first verse, of what passed in David's mind, may serve to teach gracious souls how evident it is, that the LORD JESUS, by the sweet influences of his SPIRIT, is frequently suggesting to them divine thoughts. May not you and I, my brother, find such in our own experience? Hath the LORD brought me on my way as he had done to David? Hath he blessed me with various mercies around? And shall not I, while I sit in my house of GOD'S providing, feel my soul drawn out at times to contemplate the mercy? Can any history be so sweet and interesting as a man's own history, when he is enabled to look back and trace goodness, mercy, and grace following him all the days of his life? And upon such occasions, what should following the result of a heart overflowing with a sense of mercies; a cup running over; what, but to feel like David, a desire that everything which may promote the glory of JESUS, may be accomplished? Do I really belong to JESUS, and shall I not take part in all that concerns JESUS? Shall I sit in my house with composure, and see the house of my GOD lie waste? Shall I be more solicitous that my house, and my family, and my children, may be great, than to see the house of JESUS prosper, and his hungry ones filled with bread! Reader! what saith *your* heart to these questions? Shall I tell you what I

feel? If I blush as I write these lines, it is to think what mercies of my bountiful GOD I have recompensed with ingratitude? How little I have done for him and his dear ones, who hath done so much for me and mine. And if my eyes overflow, (as they do indeed while my pen moves on) it is in the recollection of JESUS'S love, and my coldness.

1 CHRONICLES 17:2

(2) Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that *is* in thine heart; for God *is* with thee.

Let us pause over this view of Nathan, just to observe how delightful appears the character of a faithful minister of CHRIST, to be always ready to help forward the pious intentions of their people. Nathan concluded that this thought of David must (as no doubt it did) have arisen from the gracious influence of the LORD'S SPIRIT upon the mind. And though Nathan had not been to ask counsel of GOD at a throne of grace, before he gave an answer, (which no doubt would have been wiser) yet the prophet did not err in his conclusion, that GOD *was with him*.

1 CHRONICLES 17:3-15

(3) And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, (4) Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in: (5) For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another*. (6) Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars? (7) Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheeppcote, *even* from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel: (8) And I have been with thee

whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that *are* in the earth. (9) Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning, (10) And since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house. (11) And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go *to be* with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. (12) He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. (13) I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* that was before thee: (14) But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore. (15) According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

But, Reader, if we pause to admire the conduct of Nathan, what a pause of admiration ought we to make here, in contemplating the goodness, the grace, the condescension, (what shall I call it) the astonishing condescension of a most gracious GOD. Oh! Reader! who hath ever calculated, what breast of an angel hath ever fully conceived the astonishing subject, that the High and Holy One, which inhabiteth eternity, should ever look upon, much less dwell *with*, and yet more dwell *in* the human mind! Great *LORD* of heaven and earth, who is it of whom we speak, when we contemplate the great mystery of godliness; *GOD manifest in the flesh!* Mark, Reader, as you go over every part and portion of this gracious message of GOD to his servant, how the whole furnisheth evidence upon evidence of that glorious character in which the *LORD* once for all revealed himself in the Mount to Moses, until the confirmation of it was finally and indelibly sealed in

the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. I mean when the *LORD* passed by, before the man of GOD, and proclaimed; *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.* Exodus 34:6. And was not this message to David a renewed proclamation of the same? I pass over the consideration of the various precious things contained in this message of the *LORD*; for the several expressions themselves, in their own sweet order and simplicity, possess a power, when under the HOLY GHOST'S teaching, to convey to the Reader's mind, an apprehension of the love of GOD in CHRIST to his people; which no Commentator, less than GOD the SPIRIT, can improve. But I beg the Reader to observe the grace of the *LORD* towards David. After having reminded him how he hid been with him, and how he had led him, and defended him, and made his name great among the great ones of the earth; after the recapitulation of these outlines in David's own history, let the Reader observe with me, how the *LORD* calls upon David to attend to higher things than matters of *a temporal* nature. In the throne and kingdom which the *LORD* promiseth to establish with David's seed, and which was to be forever, how plainly are the features of JESUS and his kingdom, as the seed of David after the flesh, here pointed out. Solomon, the son and successor of David, was indeed to build a *temporal* house for the *LORD*, and great earthly splendor was to distinguish that temple. But never could it be said of Solomon, in the peculiar sense in which it is here expressed; *I will be his father, and he shall be my son; much less, that his throne should be established for evermore.* Pause, Reader! and look up with holy thankfulness and praise, while you behold the love of GOD the FATHER thus bursting forth in such precious intimations, concerning the throne, and dominion of our

adorable Redeemer, at an age so remote from the time of JESUS'S coming. *Behold! what manner of love the FATHER hath bestowed on us!* Remark also, the prominent features of JESUS and his kingdom, in the relation here given by GOD the FATHER. *I tell thee* (saith the LORD to David) *that the LORD will build thee an house: and I will establish his throne for ever.* And the prophet saith, in confirmation of it; *He shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the glory.* And this was said several generations after Solomon's death, and after Solomon's temple was rased to the ground. Zechariah 6:13. Precious are these views of the glorious Covenant grace and mercy, founded and secured as it is in JESUS.

1 CHRONICLES 17:16-27

(16) ¶ And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, Who *am* I, O LORD God, and what *is* mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? (17) And *yet* this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast *also* spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God. (18) What can David *speak* more to thee for the honour of thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant. (19) O LORD, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all *these* great things. (20) O LORD, *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (21) And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem *to be* his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt? (22) For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God. (23) Therefore now, LORD, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said. (24) Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God of Israel,

even a God to Israel: and let the house of David thy servant be established before thee. (25) For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house: therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. (26) And now, LORD, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: (27) Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O LORD, and it shall be blessed for ever.

For the sake of shortness, I must again refer the Reader to the Commentary on this conduct of David, as it is written on the 7th chapter of the 2nd book of Samuel. In addition to what is there observed, I would only subjoin, that the reply of David to the LORD, concerning the LORD'S having spoken of *a great while to come*, evidently proves, that by faith David was looking forward to the accomplishment of the divine promises in CHRIST JESUS. Peter, in his sermon, under the HOLY GHOST'S influence, shows this, when he said, *David being a prophet, and knowing that GOD had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up CHRIST to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spoke of the resurrection of CHRIST.* Acts 2:30, 31. Is not the argument which David makes use of, when he saith, *for thy servant's sake*, made with an eye to CHRIST? And if so, how beautiful a view doth it afford of David's faith in JESUS; as well as his dependence upon the covenant love of the FATHER; when he adds, *according to thine own heart.* Reader! these are precious things to glean, as we go, in the field of the Old Testament scriptures. In confirmation yet more, let me beg the Reader to compare what is here said of JEHOVAH'S servant, with what in the parallel passage, is said on the same account, 2 Samuel 7. Here David argues for JEHOVAH'S *servant's sake*. And there it is, for thy *Word's sake*. And what is the fair conclusion from both, but this, that the LORD JESUS

CHRIST is both the *Servant of JEHOVAH* in his human nature, and in his Mediatorial office; and in his divine nature the *Uncreated Word*, as GOD. And as such is frequently in the scriptures spoken of under both, and by either. Isaiah 42:1. John 1:1. Revelation 19:13. I must not enlarge further on this sweet chapter. I have already exceeded the limits I intended. But as the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give his approbation, in having this feature in the life of David drawn again in this book of the Chronicles, added to what he had given the church in the 2nd book of Samuel, what I have ventured to add in this place may not be improper, under an humble hope that he will bless it to the Reader.

REFLECTIONS

READER! observe how truly lovely and graceful a devout heart appears in the highest of characters among the sons of men. How much greater doth David shine in this chapter, when going in before the *LORD* under such a self-abasement of soul, than the mightiest earthly monarch before his army. The way to true greatness is in the path of humility.

Observe how condescending the *LORD* is, for the comfort and encouragement of his servant. And depend upon it, such is, and such will be the graciousness of the *LORD* to all his people. That sweet promise is a volume to this amount. *It shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer: and while they are speaking I will hear.*

But principally, and above all, Reader, do not fail to observe how much of JESUS and his finished salvation is in this passage. The *LORD JEHOVAH* then said to the patriarch; *I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house. I will raise up thy*

seed, He shall build me an house. And I will establish his throne for ever. And what is it now? Blessed be JEHOVAH; FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the glorious Covenanters, the gracious Fulfillers. The Son of GOD is come. He hath tabernacled among us. He hath built his house. He hath *hewn out his seven pillars. He hath* (as the Wisdom, Image of the Invisible GOD) *killed his beasts, mingled his wine, and furnished his table.* And having obtained eternal redemption, by his blood and righteousness, he is now entered into the temple not made with hands, but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us. Hail! thou JEHOVAH JESUS, LORD of all! All power is thine in heaven and on earth. In thee the souls of all thy redeemed ones rejoice. *And of the increase of thy government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will perform this.*

CHAPTER 18

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This Chapter relates the circumstances of David's war with the Philistines, and Moabites. He smiteth Hadarezer.

1 CHRONICLES 18:1-6

(1) ¶ Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines. (2) And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts. (3) And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to stablish his dominion by the river Euphrates. (4) And David took

from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also houghed all the chariot *horses*, but reserved of them an hundred chariots. (5) And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men. (6) Then David put *garrisons* in Syriadamascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought gifts. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

The blessed effects of David's interest with God, are manifested in his success in all that he put his hand unto. *The LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.* Sweet thought to the souls of the gracious. But we must look beyond David in this history, to eye him of whom David in many instances was but the type. All that oppose the Son of David shall perish. JESUS must go on conquering and to conquer. *His dominions shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* Psalm 72:8.

1 CHRONICLES 18:7-10

(7) And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. (8) Likewise from Tibhath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass, wherewith Solomon made the brasen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass. (9) ¶ Now when Tou king of Hamath heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah; (10) He sent Hadoram his son to king David, to enquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer had war with Tou;) and *with him* all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass.

The conduct of the filing of Hamath was political enough, in sending his son to congratulate David. But Reader! pass over the congratulations made by the king of Hamath, to attend to an infinitely higher subject: and behold GOD our FATHER

sending his only begotten Son, that we may be at peace with him. 2 Corinthians 5:20.

1 CHRONICLES 18:11

(11) Them also king David dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all *these* nations; from Edom, and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

I admire the piety and gratitude of David; in dedicating his spoils to the *LORD*. How ought believers in *JESUS to glorify God in the body, and in their spirits, which are GOD'S?*

1 CHRONICLES 18:12-17

(12) Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand. (13) And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went. (14) So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people. (15) And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder. (16) And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Shavsha was scribe; (17) And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David *were* chief about the king.

The equity and righteous reign of David serves to remind us of *JESUS*, of whom it is said, *Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment.* Isaiah 32:1.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while reading the wars of David, do not overlook the spiritual wars in which David's *LORD* engaged for the salvation of his people. *JESUS* hath indeed spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over

them in it. And as the great Captain of our salvation hath gone before in the holy war, so his people follow him with conflict and in armour. Who shall say, what Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and a troop of foes both within and without, are unceasingly making war with the people of GOD. Blessed JESUS! where is our strength but in thee? Where shall we find might, or power, or strength, against the host of our enemies, unless thou wilt fight our battles for us, and in us, that we may be more than conquerors through thy grace helping us? Oh! how precious the thought. The battle is not doubtful, nor the conflict uncertain. Thou hast conquered all our foes for us, and we overcome them also by the blood of the Lamb. LORD JESUS, in all my spiritual conflicts let me set thee continually before me; for thou art on my right hand, therefore shall I not be moved. *Behold, God is my salvation, I will not fear what men can do unto me.*

CHAPTER 19

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We are here told of David's friendly message to Hanun king of Ammon; and of the impolitic conduct of Hanun to David's messengers, whereby David is so angry that he opens a war against Hanun, and conquers him.

1 CHRONICLES 19:1-5

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass after this, that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his stead. (2) And David said, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father shewed kindness to me. And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. So the servants of David came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun,

to comfort him. (3) But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? are not his servants come unto thee for to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land? (4) Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the midst hard by their buttocks, and sent them away. (5) Then there went *certain*, and told David how the men were served. And he sent to meet them: for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

The relation we have of this event in the 2nd Samuel 10 is so very similar with this, that I would refer the Reader to what is there said upon it, and not detain him with many observations further. How strange it is that a poor king, like Hanun, and of a poor little kingdom, like Ammon, could venture to affront king David. But pause, Reader, and I will show you a yet more marvellous thing. When the LORD JESUS sends to us his ambassadors, not indeed to congratulate, but to tell us how we may flee from the wrath to come, how are they entertained? Equal, if not greater contempt is poured upon all that beseech sinners, in CHRIST'S stead, to be reconciled to GOD! Alas! to what a blind, ruined, and undone state is man by nature fallen!

1 CHRONICLES 19:6-19

(6) ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Syriamaachah, and out of Zobah. (7) So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people; who came and pitched before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle. (8) And when David heard *of it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men. (9) And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array

before the gate of the city: and the kings that were come *were* by themselves in the field. (10) Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose out of all the choice of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians. (11) And the rest of the people he delivered unto the hand of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in array against the children of Ammon. (12) 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 help thee. (13) Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do *that which is* good in his sight. (14) So Joab and the people that *were* with him drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and they fled before him. (15) And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem. (16) And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them. (17) And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came upon them, and set *the battle* in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him. (18) But the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven thousand *men which fought in* chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the host. (19) And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

I pass over the historical part of this subject to attend to the spiritual. If sinners, who by their transgressions make themselves odious in the eyes of all lovers of holiness, would seek, by a change of conduct, to conciliate favor, instead of hardening themselves in sin, how blessed would be the change! But *evil men, and seducers*, (saith an apostle) *wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*. 2 Timothy

3:13.

REFLECTIONS

IN the unprovoked ill treatment of David and his servants by the king of Ammon and his people, we may behold a picture of the ungodly world harassing and afflicting the people of GOD. When the LORD JESUS sent his servants the Prophets to prepare the way for his coming, what reception did they meet! When he came himself, with all that meekness and gentleness which distinguished his character, the rancor of the enemies to the cross became only inflamed the more. And when the whole of redemption was finished, and the Son of GOD was returned to glory, though he now sent graciously, from heaven by his HOLY SPIRIT, and by the ministry of his Apostles, to tell even Jerusalem sinners, that the very blood they had shed was spilt for the redemption of many that had their hands in his crucifixion; yet who believed their report? Alas! what deadly blindness hath veiled the eye of man by nature! The Son of GOD foretold the event; and its correspondence exactly answered. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, much more will they call them of his household." Precious LORD JESUS! well may every heart exclaim, whom the LORD hath made willing in the day of his power; *How is it, LORD, that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world.*

CHAPTER 20

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This Chapter contains a further account of the wars of David.

Rabbah is besieged and taken. The Philistines are again overthrown.

1 CHRONICLES 20:1-3

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out *to battle*, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it. (2) And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it; and it was set upon David's head: and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city. (3) And he brought out the people that *were* in it, and cut *them* with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

The Reader will recollect the circumstances which are here related have been before noticed, and with more particulars in the 11th and 12th chapters of the 2nd book of Samuel. I refer therefore to the account there given. I would only desire the Reader to recollect, that while Joab was thus engaged at Rabbah, this was the sad period when David was falling into the fool sin of adultery at Jerusalem. It is remarkable, however, that though the relation of that sin is immediately connected with the account of the war at Rabbah in the book of Samuel, yet it is not inserted here. Perhaps as it said there on David's confession, *the LORD hath put away thy sin*, the HOLY GHOST thought proper not to record it in the Chronicles, which was written so many years after. Sweet thought to the poor sinner, whose sins are blotted out, when the times of refreshing are come from the presence of the *LORD*. So saith one prophet, and the same is confirmed by another. *The sin of Judah shall not be found*, saith Jeremiah, chap. 1:20. And the Prophet Micah adds, *the LORD will cast all their sins into*

the depths of the sea. Micah 7:19.

1 CHRONICLES 20:4-8

(4) ¶ And it came to pass after this, that there arose war at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Sippai, *that was* of the children of the giant: and they were subdued. (5) And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff *was* like a weaver's beam. (6) And yet again there was war at Gath, where was a man of *great* stature, whose fingers and toes *were* four and twenty, six *on each hand*, and six *on each foot*: and he also was the son of the giant. (7) But when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother slew him. (8) These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

We had the account of these battles before related. 2 Samuel 21:18-22. In addition to the observations there made, I would only detain the Reader just to remark, that whether giants, or men of little stature, no weapon, nor instrument, nor creature, can prosper against JESUS, our spiritual David, and his servants in him. Every tongue that riseth in judgment against them the *LORD* will condemn. Oh! sweet and soul-reviving thought! Hence the believer may exult and say, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the LORD shall be a light unto me.* Micah 7:8.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, Reader! how the Ammonites were brought under with harrows of iron, and with axes. A lively representation how ill it will fare with the enemies of our spiritual David, when they shall be brought under his dominion. For the knee that will not bend to the sceptre of his grace, shall be broken under the iron rod of his justice. Oh! for grace to kiss the Son

lest he be angry with unhumbed sinners, for their long standing out against the word of his gospel, and they perish from the right way. If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Let me contemplate, in the crown of Ammon put upon the head of David, with all the precious stones in it, the sure presage that our JESUS must be crowned even in the presence of his enemies. And they who would not have this glorious man CHRIST JESUS to reign over them, shall be brought before him for destruction. Yes! thou precious JESUS! thy people shall see thee as the beloved Apostle saw thee, *on thine head many crowns*. The crown of thine eternal GODHEAD; the crown of thy Mediatorial kingdom. The crown of victory over all thine enemies. The crown of redemption for every poor sinner thou hast brought home to thy kingdom. And dearest LORD, amidst so many crowns shall not there be one more conspicuously great and illustrious as it will appear to *my eye*, and as it concerns *my* redemption, even the crown which I, a poor, ransomed, hell-deserving sinner, do now with joy unspeakable and full of delight, put upon thy sacred head, in ascribing the whole, and every part, from beginning to end, of my redemption from sin and Satan, my own dreadfully wicked heart, and a world of wickedness all around, to thee, my glorious, gracious, Almighty Redeemer, JESUS! *for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me to GOD by thy blood*.

CHAPTER 21

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This chapter represents David in a very different point of view

from the former. There we beheld him most lovely in his humbleness before the LORD. In this, in a state of transgression, numbering his people. Here is an account also, of GOD'S visitation and David's punishment.

1 CHRONICLES 21:1

(1) ¶ And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

This memorable transaction of the numbering of Israel, is recorded both in this place and in the 24th chapter of the 2d Book of Samuel. And the accounts given in both, serve to throw light upon each other. In the account given in the Book of Samuel, it is said, that the anger of the *LORD* being kindled against Israel, he moved David against them. In this verse the matter is explained. It was not the *LORD* that moved David, but Satan, that is, the, adversary—the tempter. James, the apostle, throws the best light upon this subject. *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust.* James 1:13, 14. The sense is, that the enemy, taking advantage of GOD'S displeasure at that time against Israel, moved David to the dreadful sin of distrusting GOD, in counting the number of Israel; not considering that God saveth not by many or by few.

1 CHRONICLES 21:2

(2) And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know *it*.

Numbering the people, if it had been done with an eye of thankfulness to GOD for the increase of Israel, would have

been attended with a blessing, and not a curse. But as it arose out of mistrust, it arose from unbelief and sin. Reader! see what a deadly sin unbelief, and a distrust of divine strength, is.

1 CHRONICLES 21:3-4

(3) And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they *be*: but, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? (4) Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

Joab seems to have had a serious thought, that the motive in the mind of David was not right.

1 CHRONICLES 21:5-6

(5) And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all *they of* Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah *was* four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword. (6) But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

There is a difference in the account here given, from that of 2 Samuel 24:9. Perhaps Levi and Benjamin might not be numbered in the one as in the other.

1 CHRONICLES 21:7-29

(7) ¶ And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. (8) And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. (9) And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, (10) Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*: choose thee one of them, that I may do *it* unto thee. (11) So Gad

came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee (12) Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh *thee*; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me. (13) And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great *are* his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man. (14) So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. (15) And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. (16) And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders *of Israel, who were* clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. (17) And David said unto God, *Is it* not I *that* commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but *as for* these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued. (18) ¶ Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. (19) And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD. (20) And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. (21) And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshingfloor, and bowed himself to David with *his* face to the ground. (22) Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of *this* threshingfloor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: thou shalt grant it me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people. (23) And Ornan said unto David, Take *it* to thee, and let my lord the king do *that which is* good in his eyes: lo, I give *thee* the oxen *also* for burnt offerings, and the threshing

instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all. (24) And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take *that* which *is* thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. (25) So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. (26) And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. (27) And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. (28) At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. (29) For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, *were* at that season in the high place at Gibeon.

I refer the Reader to the account as given in the book of Samuel, as also to the Commentary upon it. The relation of this transaction is so similar, that I do not think it necessary to swell the subject. But I beg again and again to repeat, and to enforce it, as much as the outward ministry of the word can accomplish this point, that the Reader will look over the historical part to discover the spiritual. Evidently the fall of our corrupt nature is set forth in this representation. And, no doubt, to make way for that important and most interesting of all doctrines, redemption by JESUS. The burnt-offerings and peace-offerings offered up on the very memorable spot, where afterwards the LORD JESUS CHRIST offered his soul an offering for sin, most plainly shows how, all along, the HOLY GHOST had an eye to this, and accepted the sinner in the complete salvation of the Saviour: and that all the law ministered to the good things to come, to keep up the constant remembrance in the church, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission*.

1 CHRONICLES 21:30

(30) But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

READERS let us pause over this chapter to remark what a vast difference we behold in David, from what the former chapter represents him! Is this David, who so enjoyed the gracious manifestations of the LORD, and found his whole heart going forth in praise, and prayer, and faith, and love! And now through distrust numbering his men, as if he had no longer confidence in the LORD, and was looking to an arm of flesh! But, Reader! what is man, even the best of men, if but for a moment left to himself?

Precious JESUS! cause me to learn, from this renewed instance before my eyes, what a poor creature is man in his highest attainments, and how needful thy blood and righteousness are, through the whole and every part of our pilgrimage, to cleanse the conscience and to justify the soul. Reader, learn from it your daily need of JESUS! See whether you are thus coming to CHRIST daily, hourly, to gather pardon, grace, and strength for every emergency. Depend upon it, if you have lost a sense of that powerful impression, which you felt when you first came to JESUS a poor, needy, helpless sinner, it is not because you have less need of him, but because you have relaxed in your attention to your own wants, and the Redeemer's fulness to supply. Oh, Sir! see that you make him what he really is, and must be, to his people, when rightly used and improved, as well the Finisher, as the Author of our

faith; the End as well as the Beginning. Many set out upon a full conviction of their need of JESUS, but after awhile are turning in to somewhat of their own by way of confidence. Pray GOD, that you and I may not so learn CHRIST. But may the LORD give us grace to make him the whole of our hopes, for there is salvation in no other. As you have received CHRIST JESUS, the LORD, so walk you in him. Let every grace be acted upon him, and everything will then tend to show our increasing need of him, until we arrive to this blessed issue, to know him, to be *made of GOD to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption, that he that glorieth may glory in the LORD.*

CHAPTER 22

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Though David had it in command, that he should not build the temple of the LORD, yet it was not commanded him that he should make no preparations for it. This chapter represents him busy in the design, and instructing his son, Solomon, who was appointed by the LORD to build it, how to proceed.

1 CHRONICLES 22:1

(1) ¶ Then David said, This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account. David, perhaps, had some secret intimation from the *LORD*, that the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, was to be the hallowed spot. How strange and mysterious are the ways of the *LORD*! Was there no spot in all Jerusalem belonging to one of the seed of Israel, but this spot of Araunah must be

chosen? Some Commentators have thought (and I see no reason to reject the idea) that it was a beautiful figure to represent the interest the Gentile world should have in the LORD JESUS, which this temple typified. The prophet Amos seems to have had such a thought, and one of the apostles, even James, in his sermon appears to have cherished the idea. I beg the Reader to compare Amos 9:11, 12. with Acts 15:16, 17.

1 CHRONICLES 22:2-5

(2) And David commanded to gather together the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. (3) And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight; (4) Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. (5) And David said, Solomon my son *is* young and tender, and the house *that is* to be builded for the LORD *must be* exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will *therefore* now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

These verses represent David in a very engaging light. Though the honor of building this temple was not to be his, yet he will do his utmost towards it, that he may show his zeal and love to so good a cause. Do not the costly preparations made for it, serve to show a lively representation of the LORD JESUS, of whom this temple was to be a type, in those vast, and long, and costly preparations, made through so many ages, even from the fall: in all which there were so many shadowy representations for the introduction of the LORD JESUS? And do not these hewn stones David had prepared, represent to us the nature and state of GOD'S people, who must be long hewing and polishing to become stones in the everlasting temple of JESUS'S body, after they are

dug out of the quarry of our fallen nature?

1 CHRONICLES 22:6-16

(6) ¶ Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. (7) And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: (8) But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. (9) Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. (10) He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I *will be* his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever. (11) Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee. (12) Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God. (13) Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. (14) Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. (15) Moreover *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. (16) Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. Arise *therefore*, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

The time of this address of David to his son, as well as the occasion, *being, as we are told, just before his death, gives great weight and energy to it. It is indeed a most interesting address from a father to a son. Like a parent anxious for his*

son's welfare, and in that grand point, which of all others is most interesting, David charges Solomon to be very attentive in this business, to which the LORD had called him. There is a beautiful intimation which David gives to Solomon, in that the LORD had reserved this honour to him, and would not suffer David to accomplish it. David had had his hands all his days engaged in the LORD'S battles. But Solomon's reign was to be a peaceful reign. How sweetly this points to Him whose kingdom was in righteousness and peace, and who alone was competent to build the house, and to bear all the glory. Zechariah 6:13.

1 CHRONICLES 22:17-19

(17) ¶ David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying*, (18) *Is not the LORD your God with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before his people. (19) Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.*

This charge to the princes of Israel, very properly succeeds David's charge to his son. As a dying king he earnestly desired to see every heart engaged in the LORD'S work, as certain of the LORD'S blessing. So that altogether the whole forms a beautiful representation of the king and court of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while you and I pause over the account here given of David's zeal for the LORD'S house, and behold with what generosity and greatness of mind he prepared his silver and

*his gold, for the service of Him, from whom he received, and to whom he owed all he had: while we pay all suitable respect and praise to David, let us duly consider to what nobler services we are called under a gospel dispensation, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD in JESUS CHRIST. Silver and gold, (may many a precious soul say, with the Apostle,) have I none, but such as I have, would I offer to the LORD. Oh! dearest JESUS! it is thou which hast made all thy followers kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. By thee, therefore, would we offer the sacrifice of praise to GOD continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. And while contemplating the vast preparation of Solomon's temple, in the gold, and silver, and wood, and stones, think of the vast and long preparation from the foundation of the world, for the introduction of him whom that temple represented. Oh! thou blessed JESUS! give me continually to meditate with rapture and delight on that love of thine in which GOD our FATHER laid the foundation of our everlasting happiness, and formed the temple of thy body for the express purpose of salvation. Here was mercy indeed built up forever. Here was a temple indeed formed for eternity, in which all thine, being incorporated, should be kings and priests forever. And when the temple of thy body, by the sacrifice of thyself was destroyed, according to the determinate counsel and fore knowledge of GOD, thou didst by thine own power, agreeable to thine own prediction, raise it again the third day. Make us, blessed JESUS, even all that are thy people, make us, as thou hast promised, pillars in thy temple; that being *built upon the same foundation as the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief corner stone; and in whom the whole building is fitly framed together!* we may grow up unto an holy temple in the LORD,*

for an habitation of GOD, through the SPIRIT.

CHAPTER 23

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This Chapter relates to us the appointing of Solomon king, in the room of David his father. The Levites and officers of the temple are appointed also, and numbered.

1 CHRONICLES 23:1

(1) ¶ So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

The age of David was not so great as many of his fathers. When he died, he had not exceeded seventy years. But the truth was, he had worn fast, and worn out. His whole life had been both an active, and an anxious one; and cares consume the strength.

1 CHRONICLES 23:2

(2) And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.

The gathering of the Levites seems to have been a very pious act, and evidently intended for the furtherance of the divine glory.

1 CHRONICLES 23:3

(3) Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward: and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.

The age of their numbering from thirty years, seems to

convey very strong testimonies that a competency of wisdom and gravity were considered as necessary, before that they were numbered among the Levites.

1 CHRONICLES 23:4-24

(4) Of which, twenty and four thousand *were* to set forward the work of the house of the LORD; and six thousand *were* officers and judges: (5) Moreover four thousand *were* porters; and four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, *said David*, to praise *therewith*. (6) And David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi, *namely*, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. (7) Of the Gershonites *were*, Laadan, and Shimei. (8) The sons of Laadan; the chief *was* Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three. (9) The sons of Shimei; Shelomith, and Haziël, and Haran, three. These *were* the chief of the fathers of Laadan. (10) And the sons of Shimei *were*, Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four *were* the sons of Shimei. (11) And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second: but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; therefore they were in one reckoning, according to *their* father's house. (12) The sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. (13) The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever. (14) Now *concerning* Moses the man of God, his sons were named of the tribe of Levi. (15) The sons of Moses *were*, Gershom, and Eliezer. (16) Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel *was* the chief. (17) And the sons of Eliezer *were*, Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. (18) Of the sons of Izhar; Shelomith the chief. (19) Of the sons of Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. (20) Of the sons of Uzziel; Michah the first, and Jesiah the second. (21) The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. The sons of Mahli; Eleazar, and Kish. (22) And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters: and their brethren the sons of Kish took them. (23) The sons of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three. (24) ¶ These *were* the sons of Levi after the house of their fathers; *even* the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls,

that did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and upward.

I do not interrupt the reading of this list of the Levites, but bring the account altogether into one view, because the observations arising out of the whole are one and the same. The Reader may perhaps be led to remark, from the great number of Levites here mentioned, and which it should seem were much increased from the days of Moses, (see Numbers 4:48) how large an house of servants the *LORD* kept. And what a precious thought it is, that there was not only room enough for them, but a plentiful table for them, and every supply. The promise runs to this amount; *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fulness of thine house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.* Psalm 36:8. Reader! do not overlook the privilege still of JESUS'S people. They are spiritual Levites, nay, they are royal Levites, for he hath made them kings and priests unto GOD and the FATHER. Revelation 1:6. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee.* Psalm 84:4. But is there not an additional note to this divine song. Yes! there is, when the believer can sing it under the SPIRIT'S teaching. I mean, when JESUS himself is beheld as the house and home, and habitation of his redeemed. If Moses sung this song. Reader, why may not you and I? *LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations,* Psalm 90:1.

1 CHRONICLES 23:25

(25) For David said, The LORD God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever:

This verse confirms the thought with which we closed our observation on the former. And if we read it in a gospel sense, and with an eye to the ever blessed JESUS, is it not

delightful? The LORD GOD of Israel hath indeed given rest unto his people, for JESUS is *the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing*. Reader, oh! for grace to say, as one of old did, concerning our JESUS; *return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee*. Isaiah 28:12. Psalm 116:7.

1 CHRONICLES 23:26

(26) And also unto the Levites; they shall no *more* carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.

The employment of the Levite, probably before the temple was built, had been accompanied with bodily exercise and labour: but now they are henceforth to minister only in holy things. Is not this a beautiful type of the gospel church? When JESUS, whom this temple represented, came in the fulness of grace and truth, his spiritual worship for ever did away the shadow of service. For in JESUS CHRIST neither circumcision availed anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Galatians 6:15.

1 CHRONICLES 23:27-32

(27) For by the last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and above: (28) Because their office *was* to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; (29) Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for *that which is baked in the pan*, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size; (30) And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even; (31) And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD: (32) And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and

the charge of the holy *place*, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

The last words of David, that is, the last words of David on this subject, lessened down the age ten years from the former appointment. Probably this means; that the introduction of younger men for the subordinate service, was now such, that under the eye and teaching of the elders, they might be in longer preparation for the sanctuary. I cannot help remarking that in a gospel church, though such as are intended for the ministry will find their account, when like Timothy, from a child they have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS; yet the clearest evidences should be seen in their life and conversation that they are truly awakened men, before they go forth to call others. Oh! for such ministers as Jeremiah, concerning whose ordination, the *LORD* himself gave such precious testimony. *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.* Jeremiah 1:5.

REFLECTIONS

READER! I only detain you with the reflection of one interesting thought, which seems to arise out of the perusal of this chapter, concerning the Levites. You see how numerous they were in those early ages of the church; and you will, I am sure, think with me, that in the present hour faithful ministers can never be too numerous, in labouring in the word and doctrine. If JESUS, in the days of his flesh, commanded his disciples to pray the *LORD* of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; well may we with earnestness beseech of

him, now in compassion to the perishing state of thousands everywhere around, to send forth truly awakened servants of the sanctuary to his service. LORD JESUS, I would say, thou great Bishop of souls! graciously do thou ordain pastors after thine own heart, which shall feed thy people with understanding and knowledge. Let them be such, O LORD, as shall do the work of Evangelists, and make full proof of their ministry. Oh! for the dawn of that glorious day when the watchmen upon the walls of Zion shall see eye to eye! when the church of JESUS upon earth shall hear some resemblance to the church triumphant in glory. Surely, dearest JESUS, when that hour comes, so faithfully promised, and so devoutly prayed for by the faithful in all ages, under the quickening influences of the HOLY GHOST; that hour, that day, when Ethiopia, and Seba, and the multitude of the isles, shall stretch forth their hands unto GOD: surely, LORD, thou wilt be adored by the redeemed below, in congregations as numerous as the multitude which John saw in heaven, whom no man could number. LORD! hasten the hour in mercy to a lost world; cut short thy work in righteousness, thou that art mighty to save; and bring on the latter day glory, *when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.*

CHAPTER 24

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Here is a continuation of the same subject concerning the Levites as the former. The several divisions in the different branches of the Levites are here made by lot.

1 CHRONICLES 24:1-18

(1) ¶ Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. (2) But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. (3) And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service. (4) And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and *thus* were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *there were* sixteen chief men of the house of *their* fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers. (5) Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another; for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors *of the house* of God, were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar. (6) And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, *one* of the Levites, wrote them before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and *before* the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites: one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and *one* taken for Ithamar. (7) Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, (8) The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, (9) The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, (10) The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, (11) The ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, (12) The eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, (13) The thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, (14) The fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, (15) The seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Aphses, (16) The nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel, (17) The one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul, (18) The three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah.

The division and arrangement begins very properly in the house of Aaron; for Aaron himself was called of God. Hebrews 5:4. And it was worthy observation that the appointment of this man's family to the offices assigned them, was done by lot. The apostles of Jesus did the same in filling up the vacancy of the traitor Judas. This was done by lot,

accompanied with earnest prayer that the LORD's choice, and not man's, might be known and attended to. If this were made the plan now, instead of human caprice, fancy, interest, and humour, would it not be more scriptural, and more likely to produce blessings? Acts 1:24.

1 CHRONICLES 24:19

(19) These *were* the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

I cannot help detaining the Reader at this verse just to observe, that the regular course which those Levites were appointed to seems to have been observed as a standing thing ever after, even unto the conning of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. No doubt it received interruption during the Babylonish captivity. But yet perhaps even there it might, in some measure, have been regarded. This, however, I cannot determine. But it is worthy remark that Zecharias the priest is said to be ministering in the order of his course (and which is the *eighth* here enumerating of *Abia*, or *Abijah*) when the angel came to him on the subject of John the Baptist's birth, and the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Luke 1:5, &c.

1 CHRONICLES 24:20-31

(20) ¶ And the rest of the sons of Levi *were these*: Of the sons of Amram; Shubael: of the sons of Shubael; Jehdeiah. (21) Concerning Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* Isshiah. (22) Of the Izharites; Shelomoth: of the sons of Shelomoth; Jahath. (23) And the sons of *Hebron*; Jeriah *the first*, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. (24) *Of* the sons of Uzziel; Michah: of the sons of Michah; Shamir. (25) The brother of Michah *was* Isshiah: of the sons of Isshiah; Zechariah. (26) The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi: the

sons of Jaaziah; Beno. (27) The sons of Merari by Jaaziah; Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. (28) Of Mahli *came* Eleazar, who had no sons. (29) Concerning Kish: the son of Kish *was* Jerahmeel. (30) The sons also of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the Levites after the house of their fathers. (31) These likewise cast lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites, even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.

How particular the HOLY GHOST is in the enumeration of the names of GOD'S servants! Reader, depend upon it, the least and most inconsiderable in GOD'S house is neither overlooked nor forgotten by him.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a sweet thought ariseth out of the perusal of this chapter! we here behold Levites set apart by lot to stand *before* the LORD, according to the order of their course in their daily ministration. And no doubt, beheld with an eye to JESUS, as a figure for the time then present, the order was beautiful, their ministration lovely, and they were accepted before GOD in JESUS. But what a sweet thought ariseth out of this very contemplation, when we consider the whole of this service as shadows only of good things to come, the body of which was JESUS; and now behold the whole body of Levites, even all the mystical members of JESUS, as set apart to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable, before GOD in JESUS, as their reasonable service. The Levites ministered only in the order of their course. But JESUS'S Priests continually. They, when they had fulfilled their monthly station, retired to make way for the ministration of others. But JESUS'S Levites

are supposed daily and hourly to draw nigh to a throne of grace, having boldness to enter into the holiest at all times, and upon all occasions, by the blood of JESUS. Think, then, ye of this royal priesthood, to what vast dignity ye are called! JESUS, your great high priest, hath brought you nigh. He hath opened this new and living way by his blood, and ever liveth to keep it open by his intercession! See, then, that ye live up to this high privilege. A throne of grace is always open, always accessible, and the promise calls us to approach. Sprinkled with the blood of JESUS, consecrated by the word and prayer, and receiving of the fulness of the SPIRIT, let us draw near with true hearts, in full assurance of faith.

CHAPTER 25

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As the preceding chapters related the regulation of the service of the Levites; this chapter is directed to inform the Reader of the appointment of the order of the singers in the temple service. They are also arranged by lot in the same number of four and twenty distinct orders.

1 CHRONICLES 25:1

(1) ¶ Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was:

Divine psalmody formed a large portion in the temple service. And hence we find the servants of the *LORD* calling upon others to this employment, by way also of exciting their own

hearts to the celebration of JEHOVAH. *Sing unto the LORD, sing psalms unto the LORD. With trumpets also and cymbals; show yourselves joyful before the LORD.* Reader! under a gospel dispensation, how sweet is it to discover that those instruments are changed for *the singing with grace in the heart*. The phrase of *prophesying* with harps, and psalteries, and cymbals, seems to be meant to convey, that the words of the holy song were sometimes prophetic. Hence we find in the company of prophets Saul met at the hill of GOD, they were thus engaged. 1 Samuel 10:5. So the apostle Paul speaks of a psalm of prophecy. 1 Corinthians 14:26.

1 CHRONICLES 25:2-31

(2) Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied according to the order of the king. (3) Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD. (4) Of Heman: the sons of Heman; Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamtiezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth: (5) All these *were* the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. (6) All these *were* under the hands of their father for song *in* the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman. (7) So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, *even* all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight. (8) ¶ And they cast lots, ward against *ward*, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar. (9) Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons *were* twelve: (10) The third to Zaccur, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (11) The fourth to Izri, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (12) The fifth to Nethaniah, *he*, his sons,

and his brethren, *were* twelve: (13) The sixth to Bukkiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (14) The seventh to Jesharelah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (15) The eighth to Jeshaiiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (16) The ninth to Mattaniah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (17) The tenth to Shimei, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (18) The eleventh to Azareel, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (19) The twelfth to Hashabiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (20) The thirteenth to Shubael, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (21) The fourteenth to Mattithiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (22) The fifteenth to Jeremoth, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (23) The sixteenth to Hananiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (24) The seventeenth to Joshbekashah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (25) The eighteenth to Hanani, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (26) The nineteenth to Mallothi, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (27) The twentieth to Eliathah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (28) The one and twentieth to Hothir, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (29) The two and twentieth to Giddalti, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (30) The three and twentieth to Mahazioth, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve: (31) The four and twentieth to Romamtiezer, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve.

The whole of what is here said of the order in which they were placed, and of the method taken to prevent jealousies arising from the natural infirmity of the human heart, may serve to teach us that in all ages man hath been the same; all striving for pre-eminency. How blessed that sweet direction of JESUS, had we but grace to practice it: Whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister: and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant! (and observe, Reader, what follows by way of enforcing the precept:) even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:26-28. Precious JESUS! in how sweet and endearing a

manner dost thou recommend thy glorious example to thy people! Hence, dear *LORD*, we perceive that in all things, even in the humbleness of the lowest servitude, thou wilt have precedency. Thou condescendest to be servant of all in the very moment thou art *LORD* of all, on purpose to manifest thy love and thy grace to thy people. *LORD!* is it not enough to put pride to the blush, and to make every man out of love with himself, in the consciousness how little we know in what true greatness consists.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in beholding this goodly company of the singers in the temple, think of him whose praise they celebrated, and sing thy song of redemption also; for he hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light. The song they sung is the same as John heard the armies of Israel in heaven sing, and which, neither in heaven nor earth can any sing, but the redeemed. Reader! can you join the happy chorus? Are you of this temple service? Salvation is the joyful sound; and to the Lamb that was slain in the accomplishment of it is, the voice is directed in praise. Precious, precious *LORD JESUS!* let me daily, hourly, sing of thy love, shout loudly of thy mercy; and here, however faintly, poorly, and with a feeble voice, my notes express the unequalled blessing; still may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not thee and thy salvation above my chief joy. And wilt not thou, gracious Redeemer, since thou hast purchased me with a price so dear as thy blood, take me at length, when my song is ended upon earth, to sing it anew before thy throne of glory in heaven?

CHAPTER 26

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To the account given of the singers in the former chapter, is here subjoined the list of the porters, treasurers, and store-keepers, among the Levites; and of certain officers called to the administration of the affairs of GOD, and the king.

1 CHRONICLES 26:1-19

(1) ¶ Concerning the divisions of the porters: Of the Korhites *was* Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. (2) And the sons of Meshelemiah *were*, Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, (3) Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elioenai the seventh. (4) Moreover the sons of Obededom *were*, Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethaneel the fifth, (5) Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth: for God blessed him. (6) Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father: for they *were* mighty men of valour. (7) The sons of Shemaiah; Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren *were* strong men, Elihu, and Semachiah. (8) All these of the sons of Obededom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, *were* threescore and two of Obededom. (9) And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen. (10) Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons; Simri the chief, (for *though* he was not the firstborn, yet his father made him the chief;) (11) Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen. (12) Among these *were* the divisions of the porters, *even* among the chief men, *having* wards one against another, to minister in the house of the LORD. (13) And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate. (14) And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward. (15) To Obededom southward; and to his sons the house of Asuppim. (16) To Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came forth* westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up, ward against ward. (17) Eastward *were* six

Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two *and* two. (18) At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, *and* two at Parbar. (19) These *are* the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari.

The office of a porter in the temple, must certainly have been an office of high repute and importance, as appears by the characters given of such to whose lot it fell. They are said to be *mighty men of valour, and for strength for the service*. And evidently they are marked as being competent to the office, on account of their wisdom; for *Zechariah*, one of them, is said to have been a *wise counsellor*. And another, *Simri*, though not the first-born, was made chief by his father. I do not presume precisely to point out in what the principal parts of their office consisted; and more especially as the HOLY GHOST hath not been particular about it. We are told that their station was at the gates. But from this feature of character we may safely infer, that the spiritual porters of JESUS' church have a very solemn trust to keep the doors, and by their wisdom, which they derive from their glorious Head, to counsel others, and by their strength which they have in CHRIST JESUS, to withhold others from every improper entrance into the sanctuary. *JESUS is the way*, and no other can be the entrance. And as to Him, so to all his, *the Porter openeth*. GOD the HOLY GHOST opens to CHRIST, leads to CHRIST, helps to CHRIST, and takes of CHRIST to show the people. Lead me, LORD, in thy truth, and guide me, for thou art the GOD of my salvation. John 10:3, 9. Psalm 25:5.

1 CHRONICLES 26:20-28

(20) ¶ And of the Levites, Ahijah *was* over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things. (21) *As concerning* the sons of Laadan; the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, *even* of Laadan the Gershonite, *were*

Jehieli. (22) The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother, *which were* over the treasures of the house of the LORD. (23) Of the Amramites, *and* the Izharites, the Hebronites, *and* the Uzzielites: (24) And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, *was* ruler of the treasures. (25) And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son. (26) Which Shelomith and his brethren *were* over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated. (27) Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the LORD. (28) And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruah, had dedicated; *and* whosoever had dedicated *any thing*, *it was* under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren.

Next to the Porters we find in those verses an account of the Treasurers. There must have been great abundance of stores in the LORD'S house for the daily service of it. The multitude of things according to the law in the utensils used in sacrifices, as well as the costly things of the sacrifices themselves, certainly formed a vast treasury. Were not these highly emblematical of JESUS, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

1 CHRONICLES 26:29-32

(29) ¶ Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons *were* for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges. (30) *And* of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valour, a thousand and seven hundred, *were* officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward in all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king. (31) Among the Hebronites *was* Jerijah the chief, *even* among the Hebronites, according to the generations of his fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valour at Jazer of Gilead. (32) And his brethren,

men of valour, *were* two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers, whom king David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king.

The last list in this chapter of the officers and judges, seems to have been for inferior services, because they are said to have been for the outward business of Israel. But no doubt, from the record here given, both of the employment and the names of the persons exercising this office, it formed an important part in the government of Israel.

REFLECTIONS

FROM the perusal of this Chapter, the ministers of JESUS may derive, under his SPIRIT'S teaching, sweet instruction, to show with what vigilance they are expected to stand as porters in their station. Ye shall be named (saith the prophet) the priests of the LORD. Men shall call you the ministers of our GOD. Placed at the doors of the house of JESUS, what an eye of vigilance should be open to every one about to enter; to observe their walk, their life, their conversation, their object, their pursuit, their design. And how to look out and notice the approaches of the enemy, so as to defend the truth from error, and keep back the feet of those who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

From the character and officers represented here under the name of treasurers, how sweetly are the Scribes in the gospel, which are well instructed, taught the necessity of bringing out of the gospel treasury to the people, things new and old. Entrusted by JESUS with the charge of his holy word, his ordinances, and all his precious truths in a way of instrumentality; oh! how lovely is the office of those who,

from their inexhaustible Storehouse, bring forth continually to the people the unsearchable riches of CHRIST. But on the contrary, what an awful abuse of their office do they make, who preach themselves, instead of CHRIST JESUS the LORD.

And let all officers, and judges, and magistrates, from this sweet chapter learn also that since the temple service with all its appendages were thus appointed, how needful it must be to manifest that they bear not the sword in vain, but by a wise and impartial administration, are counted worthy of double honor.

LORD JESUS! give to all thy servants grace in the several ordinations of thy service, that all, with a single eye to thy glory, may promote thy blessed cause, and set forward the salvation of thy people.

CHAPTER 27

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The Chronicle of characters in the temple service is nearly finished. Here therefore in this chapter we have the list of the fathers, and chief captains, the princes of the several tribes, and the officers of the court.

1 CHRONICLES 27:1-15

(1) ¶ Now the children of Israel after their number, *to wit*, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course *were* twenty and four thousand. (2) Over the first course for the first month *was* Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (3) Of

the children of Perez *was* the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month. (4) And over the course of the second month *was* Dodai an Ahohite, and of his course *was* Mikloth also the ruler: in his course likewise *were* twenty and four thousand. (5) The third captain of the host for the third month *was* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (6) This *is that* Benaiah, *who was* mighty among the thirty, and above the thirty: and in his course *was* Ammizabad his son. (7) The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (8) The fifth captain for the fifth month *was* Shamhuth the Izrahite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (9) The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (10) The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (11) The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zarahites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (12) The ninth *captain* for the ninth month *was* Abiezer the Anetothite, of the Benjamites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (13) The tenth *captain* for the tenth month *was* Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarahites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (14) The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh month *was* Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand. (15) The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month *was* Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

There is very little more to be observed on the contents of those verses, than, that as David wisely thought in time of peace, it is right to be prepared for war, in a world like the present, so here we see the means he adopted to be secure from foreign foes. In a spiritual sense it may be observed, that as good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST we ought to be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might, and to take to us the whole armour of GOD. There is somewhat remarkable in the

selection of captains for each month in the year. There were twelve tribes of Israel, and JESUS chose twelve apostles. The gates of the New Jerusalem had the names of the same upon them.

1 CHRONICLES 27:16-24

(16) ¶ Furthermore over the tribes of Israel: the ruler of the Reubenites *was* Eliezer the son of Zichri: of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah: (17) Of the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of the Aaronites, Zadok: (18) Of Judah, Elihu, *one* of the brethren of David: of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael: (19) Of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel: (20) Of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiiah: (21) Of the half *tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner: (22) Of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham. These *were* the princes of the tribes of Israel. (23) But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under: because the LORD had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of the heavens. (24) Joab the son of Zeruihah began to number, but he finished not, because there fell wrath for it against Israel; neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of king David.

All the heads of the tribes have honorable testimony given of them by way of perpetuating the memory of Israel.

1 CHRONICLES 27:25-31

(25) And over the king's treasures *was* Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, *was* Jehonathan the son of Uziah: (26) And over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground *was* Ezri the son of Chelub: (27) And over the vineyards *was* Shimei the Ramathite: over the increase of the vineyards for the wine cellars *was* Zabdi the Shiphmite: (28) And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that *were* in the low plains *was*

Baalhanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil *was* Joash: (29) And over the herds that fed in Sharon *was* Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds *that were* in the valleys *was* Shaphat the son of Adlai: (30) Over the camels also *was* Obil the Ishmaelite: and over the asses *was* Jehdeiah the Meronothite: (31) And over the flocks *was* Jaziz the Hagerite. All these *were* the rulers of the substance which *was* king David's.

The particular mention that is made of the respective situations of those heads of houses, no doubt had a divine authority, and may serve to convey to us, that the LORD arrayeth and disposeth all things according to order.

1 CHRONICLES 27:32-34

(32) Also Jonathan David's uncle *was* a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe: and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni *was* with the king's sons: (33) And Ahithophel *was* the king's counsellor: and Hushai the Archite *was* the king's companion: (34) And after Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and the general of the king's army *was* Joab.

The relations of the king are also put down, not only by way of filling up the list, but by way of manifesting his attention to all.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to read the order of things observed in the days of David, without having our minds led out to consider yet more, the beautiful disposition and order made in the house of our Almighty Spiritual David, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, after that he had taken to himself his great name, ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and sat down on the throne of his kingdom. The apostle beautifully describes it when he saith; And he gave some Apostles, and some

Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of CHRIST; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.

Reader! it is a blessed thing to belong to this holy army. Though door keepers only in his service, or merely hewers of wood, or drawers of water, yet to be brought into the family and household of faith, exceeds, in point of dignity and of happiness, the highest station, void of CHRIST, in earthly greatness. LORD JESUS, grant me to be among the number of thine! And whatever station in thy service thou wilt be pleased to appoint me, so that I but stand before thee, under thy eye, and the smiles of thy love, I shall feel the full enjoyment of that felicity, which the Queen of the South described of Solomon's household: Happy are the men; happy are thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. And blessed forever, blessed be thou LORD JESUS, my GOD and Saviour!

CHAPTER 28

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Having finished the Chronicle of persons and things, as pertaining to the service both of the temple and the court; this chapter opens to us on interesting view of some of the concluding scenes of the life of David. He calls his people together; makes an affectionate address to them; delivers the pattern to Solomon of the temple, and earnestly exhorts both

him and the people to the greatest care and diligence in the building of it.

1 CHRONICLES 28:1

(1) ¶ And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem.

We have some account of David's conduct towards the close of his life, in the opening of the first book of the Kings; but by no means so particular, nor so interesting, as in this chapter. David is represented here in a very amiable and affectionate light, and the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to cause the sacred writer to be more particular upon it. He convenes all Israel before him. He is about to take his leave of them forever. The time is arrived that he must be gathered to his fathers. He therefore wishes to see them all once more, and to dismiss them with his love and his blessing, before that he himself receives the LORD'S dismissal from this world to a better.

1 CHRONICLES 28:2-10

(2) Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: *As for me*, I *had* in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: (3) But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood. (4) Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah *to be* the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me

to make *me* king over all Israel: (5) And of all my sons, (for the LORD hath given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. (6) And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him *to be* my son, and I will be his father. (7) Moreover I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. (8) Now therefore in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God: that ye may possess this good land, and leave *it* for an inheritance for your children after you for ever. (9) And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. (10) Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do *it*.

No doubt growing infirmities were upon him; nevertheless he will stand on his feet before them. Observe the kind and affectionate manner of his address; he calls them *brethren and people*. He next tells them what was his intention in the building of the temple, but that the LORD had said nay; in which his heart acquiesced. He then proceeds to point out his claim to the throne; and this not by purchase, nor by conquest, nor by merit, nor by birth-right; but of the LORD's appointment: The LORD chose me. He next points to Solomon, as his successor, and from the same cause; the LORD's pleasure. He then makes a most affectionate appeal, first to the people; and then to his son, Solomon, that both would honour that gracious God who had done so great things for Israel, and walk before the LORD with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. The whole of this farewell discourse of David's, forms a most interesting period of history in the life

of David and is capable of leading out the mind of the Reader into numberless sweet and precious reflections, both of the divine goodness in the instances of mercy recorded, and David's piety. But passing over all these, I rather call the Reader to the more blessed, spiritual beauties of the passage, as all typical of JESUS and his temple, of which Solomon's was but a type. Here indeed in the person of the LORD JESUS, we see that promise breaking out from everlasting, in the decree of divine counsels. JESUS was set up, and all his covenant engagements marked down in the volume of the book, which he alone was found worthy to open. It is of him that GOD the FATHER said, *I have raised him up in righteousness: and I will direct all his ways. He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price, nor reward, saith the LORD of Hosts.* To constitute the glory of this house, the labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia shall be brought, and the LORD would consecrate the gain of all the whole earth. Sweet and precious thoughts! and all finally and fully confirmed in JESUS. Isaiah 45:13, 14.

1 CHRONICLES 28:11-12

(11) ¶ Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, (12) And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:

There is somewhat very interesting in this account. David is expressly said to have received this model or pattern, from the SPIRIT. It doth not appear at what time or period of his life this was; yet the fact itself cannot be questioned. Moses had a pattern of the Tabernacle, we are told, given to him, when

in the Mount with GOD, accompanied afterwards with a strict charge to make all things according to it. Hebrews 8:5. But when David received it; or how he received it, whether by open vision, by message, or by dream, is not said. It may serve, however, to teach us the great importance of it. And the reason doth not seem difficult to discover. This temple was to be a type of CHRIST. Afterwards in whatever part of the earth any of GOD'S people were driven out or scattered, yet directing their hearts by faith towards this hallowed spot, the *LORD* would be sure to hear. A delightful type of our ever blessed JESUS. 1 Kings 8:46-53. But even this, infinitely grand and important as it was in itself, and independent of every other consideration, yet even this was not all. This temple might be said to be *sacramental*. It prefigured the *body* as well as the *person* of JESUS. And as the body of our dear *LORD*, for the purpose of sacrifice, was prepared and given without the intervention of an human father, by the miraculous impregnation of the HOLY GHOST; so the Church of JESUS, his body, his fair one, his chosen, originated from the gift of JEHOVAH; and therefore the temple, which represented both, must be the result of Divine counsel and Divine wisdom. Infinitely important, therefore, was the object in the building the temple, that it should be according to the mind and will of GOD.

1 CHRONICLES 28:13-21

(13) Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD. (14) *He gave* of gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; *silver also* for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service: (15) Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof: and for the

candlesticks of silver by weight, *both* for the candlestick, and *also* for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick. (16) And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of shewbread, for every table; and *likewise* silver for the tables of silver: (17) Also pure gold for the fleshhooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basons *he gave gold* by weight for every bason; and *likewise silver* by weight for every bason of silver: (18) And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD. (19) All *this*, said *David*, the LORD made me understand in writing by *his* hand upon me, *even* all the works of this pattern. (20) And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will be* with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. (21) And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, *even they shall be with thee* for all the service of the house of God: and *there shall be* with thee for all manner of workmanship every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people *will be* wholly at thy commandment.

All these are beautiful descriptions in continuation of the subject. The refined gold for the altar, (verse 18) which altar became typical of JESUS and his intercession, is peculiarly striking in the midst. And David's enforcing the whole again by insisting once more, that he had it from the SPIRIT in writing, gives a validity which stamps the vast importance of the thing itself, and decidedly proves the allusion of the whole to JESUS. Well might he, therefore conclude with strengthening the assurance of his faith to give strength to the faith of Solomon, in adding, the LORD GOD, *even my* GOD, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work. Reader! how encouraging to our faith is it to behold dying saints among the faithful in all ages thus resting with firmness on a long-tried and a long

found faithful GOD. So died Jacob. So departed Joseph. So closed Moses at his farewell to Israel. So died Joshua. And thus David. Oh! precious, precious principle of a more precious, precious GOD and Saviour! Genesis 49:33. 50:25, 26. Deuteronomy 34:1-5. Joshua 24:26-29.

REFLECTIONS

READER! behold what an interesting light the HOLY GHOST hath placed the departing patriarch David in, before the Church in this chapter. When we behold him going forth in the name of the *LORD* to the battles of the *LORD*, against Goliath and the many other such like blasphemers of GOD and his cause which followed, we could not but admire the stripling, and yet more be led to admire and adore the gracious hand which strengthened him for the war. But now arrived to the close of life, how interesting is it to see the old man ready to depart, and standing on the threshold of the eternal world, yet giving his last advice for the due glory of the GOD of his mercies. Reader! must it not be the best and sweetest of all deaths, as well as the most honourable, to be found in the exercise of faith, praying for the glory of GOD to be continued among his church and people here below, when the believer himself is going to be removed to the enjoyment of the church triumphant which is above? How would you wish to be found in the dying hour, but in the living experience of JESUS' faithfulness, and recommending him and his great salvation to all around you? It is true, indeed, few situations, like that of David, open so large a sphere for an interference in the public government of JESUS'S church. The *LORD* calls, as in the instance of David and Solomon, whom he pleases to take interest in this important concern. And when princes are found, like David, heartily engaged in promoting

GOD'S glory, happy is that nation and people so unitedly employed in raising the spiritual temple of GOD'S worship. But every individual who knows JESUS, and loves JESUS, cannot but take part in what concerns Jesus; and must, and will, serve and promote the growing interest of JESUS, with his prayers at least, when he hath nothing else to offer.

Dearest LORD! Do I behold David and his son, his court and people, all interested, all alive and animated in preparing, what after all was but a type of thy presence: and shall I, who know thee now in substance, as the Author and Finisher of salvation, shall I be cold and lifeless when thy glory is languishing all around, and all hands are faint, and hearts are dead, in thy service? Oh! come LORD JESUS with all thy quickening influence in the midst of thy churches; inflame the souls of princes, priests, and people; *let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST, have his heart warmed with the love of CHRIST, that the LORD may revive his work in the midst of the years;* and bring on that fullness of the Redeemer's glory in the earth, which the LORD hath promised, when, *from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered to his name, and a pure offering.* Amen, LORD JESUS. Amen.

CHAPTER 29

CONTENTS

This chapter is but a continuation of the former. David had not finished all he had to say, and here therefore we have the sequel of his address. He then makes his offering towards the

building, and calls upon the people to follow his example. He closes in prayer and thanksgiving. Solomon commenceth his reign, and David dies. With these relations the first book of the Chronicles closeth.

1 CHRONICLES 29:1

(1) ¶ Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, *is yet* young and tender, and the work *is* great: for the palace *is* not for man, but for the LORD God.

There is a great degree of piety, as well as humbleness of soul, in this intimation of the youth and inexperience of his son. No doubt, in it the father was looking up to God, that he would support his gracious choice, and confirm it by his approbation.

1 CHRONICLES 29:2-5

(2) Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for *things to be made* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and the brass for *things* of brass, the iron for *things* of iron, and wood for *things* of wood; onyx stones, and *stones* to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. (3) Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, *which* I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, (4) *Even* three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses *withal*: (5) The gold for *things* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and for all manner of work *to be made* by the hands of artificers. And who *then* is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?

The motive of David's liberality is beautifully set forth in this account. It was not to bribe GOD with his own gifts. It was not

to give of the possessions of the body for the sin of the soul. But it was because he had set his affection on the house of his GOD. GOD in covenant was a precious GOD to David, and therefore he loved the place where his honor dwelt. Reader! look to it upon all occasions, that the service is the service of the heart. Let the gift be ever so costly, yet unless it be given from the heart it is of no esteem in the sight of GOD.

1 CHRONICLES 29:6-8

(6) Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly, (7) And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. (8) And they with whom *precious* stones were found gave *them* to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.

It is delightful to see what a noble disposition the princes manifested in following the example of the king. But Reader do not overlook the most important point of all in this account, namely, how gracious it is in the *LORD* to accept the gifts of his creatures as their gifts, when in reality all is the *LORD'S* before. *The earth is the LORD'S and the fulness thereof.* And dost thou, blessed JESUS, really and truly look upon the cup of cold water when given to one of thy distressed ones in the name of a disciple, when it is thou thyself that furnisheth both the means and the disposition to bestow it. Oh! glorious Redeemer! how wonderful in grace and goodness are all thy ways!

1 CHRONICLES 29:9

(9) Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and

David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

The rejoicing of prince and people affords a lively representation of the happiness of the soul when all things are going well between GOD and us. If I am at peace with GOD in CHRIST, all things else must be at peace with me. *For when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.* Proverbs 16:7.

1 CHRONICLES 29:10-12

(10) ¶ Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed *be* thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. (11) Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. (12) Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand *is* power and might; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Now we come to the most interesting part of all this beautiful scene. David knew his end to be near. David convened his people, his princes, his son. David addressed them all affectionately: but the chief point of all is yet to be done. He now looks up to the LORD. Here, Reader! is the first, and best, and chief end of all. In JESUS the soul finds all its blessedness center. But let us hear what David saith.

1 CHRONICLES 29:13-19

(13) Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. (14) But who *am* I, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. (15) For we *are* strangers before thee, and sojourners, as *were* all our fathers: our days on the earth *are* as a shadow, and *there is* none abiding. (16) O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build

thee an house for thine holy name *cometh* of thine hand, and *is* all thine own. (17) I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. (18) O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: (19) And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all *these things*, and to build the palace, *for* the which I have made provision.

Nothing can be more sweet, more interesting, more expressive. He first begins in blessing. Who so worthy to be praised as the *LORD*, as he is in himself? What so suitable for man to offer as praise for the blessings he bestows, as he manifests himself to his creatures? And Reader, do observe how David dwells upon the distinguishing excellencies of *JEHOVAH!* both greatness and power, and glory, and victory, and majesty, are his. Not only his as the author, but peculiarly his as the very properties and attributes of his nature. To give, therefore, anything to such a being, is but to give him of his own, for all are his already. In contributing therefore to the building of this house for the *LORD*, we in fact do nothing but what the *LORD* gives the power and ability to do. And Reader! do mark this thought as strikingly worthy of the highest attention; the more any man doth for the *LORD*, the more highly is that man the *LORD'S* debtor, in that what he doth is from the *LORD'S* giving ability to do it; and not only giving the ability, but giving grace and disposition to do it. So that the most laborious servant of *JESUS* is the greatest debtor; and he that is enabled to do most is the most indebted for being singled out and qualified for the service. Blessed *JESUS!* oh! for grace to be employed more frequently

and earnestly by thee, that I might thereby become the more insolvent and thy prisoner. There is a great beauty in the close of this prayer, in beseeching the LORD to keep alive in the minds of the people the LORD'S goodness, and to bless his son Solomon with a heart suited to the LORD'S mercies.

1 CHRONICLES 29:20-22

(20) And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king. (21) And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, *even* a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, *and* a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel: (22) And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed *him* unto the LORD *to be* the chief governor, and Zadok *to be* priest.

How beautifully the solemn service closed, All were called upon to bless the LORD in bowing heads, and suitable acknowledgments of the reverence becoming GOD'S presence. And their enjoyment at their tables, no doubt was all sanctified with reverence and praise.

1 CHRONICLES 29:23-25

(23) ¶ Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. (24) And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king. (25) And the LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him *such* royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

Here begins the reign of Solomon, of which the following book of the Chronicles treats largely. The LORD'S approbation

of him is strikingly expressed. Perhaps what is here said of the LORD'S magnifying him above, any king that had been before him, means in wisdom, peace, and riches. For herein he was an eminent type of JESUS.

1 CHRONICLES 29:26-30

(26) Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. (27) And the time that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three *years* reigned he in Jerusalem. (28) And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. (29) Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, (30) With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

It is no small beauty in my apprehension of the history of David, by way of marking the greatness of the man, that the humbleness of his beginning is again noticed at the close of his life, that he was the son of Jesse. The sum total of every man's life is in this instance like David's, that he lived so long, and died so distinguished. But Reader! mark what the HOLY GHOST saith on this point. *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD!* O! precious JESUS! be this my portion, and then all the appendages of death in earthly greatness, or all the wants of life in earthly poverty, will be nothing. *To live will be CHRIST, and to die will be gain.* Revelation 14:13. Philippians 1:21.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us take one view more of the dying patriarch David as we read his history in this close of it, and gather from it those interesting lessons it so highly affords. What a

life was it taken altogether, though so abundantly distinguished with divine favor. Might he not, like another patriarch of yet more ancient days, have taken up his language and said, *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*. If we pursue the thread of his history from the sheepcote to the throne, and look at him in every point of view, and in every character, whether public or private, we trace a life of perpetual anxiety, trouble and sorrow. And had not an abundance of suited grace and strength been given him, the persecutors of Saul in his early days, and the heart-breaking sorrows induced by the conduct of his ungodly children in the after stages of his life, would have drank up his spirits. But Reader! amidst all these what a beautiful, what an interesting, and what an highly finished character, in the devotional part of David's life, doth the HOLY GHOST set forth to the church. And while the faithful record that is made of the patriarch's shameful fall, and the foul offences he committed, is brought forward without the least reserve, to show what man, even the best of men, is in himself; how illustrious an instance, in his recovering by almighty grace, is afforded to show what the same man is, when under the powerful work of salvation by GOD. Let the best of saints feel deeply humbled as they read the awful transgressions of David. Let the worst of sinners feel their souls lifted up with every encouraging hope as they behold his transgressions put away from the covenant redemption in JESUS. Oh! thou source, and fountain, and author, and finisher of all our joys, all our blessings, all our hopes, temporal, spiritual, and eternal: How shall we even hear of thy name, thou blessed, blessed JESUS, but with rapture! surely the everlasting fragrancy of it will be *as ointment poured forth*.

One thought more let both Writer and Reader indulge in,

before they close this book of GOD. Let us pause over its sacred contents, and as we trace a Chronicle of so many generations, and of so many events, all brought within so little a compass, let us solemnly consider the trifling nature of all things here below, and the total insignificancy of man upon earth. Here is the record indeed of many generations. But where are the generations themselves; to say nothing of the thousands of the great ones of the earth which kept the world in awe while living, whose very memorial is perished with them! Reader! let it be our wisdom, from the contemplation of such men and things, to turn to a brighter subject, which is neither liable to decay, nor to be forgotten. In JESUS we behold one who compriseth in himself, in his own person, and in the fulness of his office-work, as the Redeemer of his people, all that the most unbounded desires can need to constitute happiness in time, and to all eternity. It is thine, blessed JESUS, to live for ever amidst the dying circumstances of all things around; for thou art both the life and the light of all things; and as the FATHER hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, because thou art the Son of Man; because thou art the life of all thy people; and because thou livest, in thee they live also. Precious consideration under all our changes, in life and in death. Here, then, blessed *LORD*, let both Writer and Reader rest. The love, the praise, the service, the adoration of every creature, angels and men, are thine. To thee the whole of thy redeemed bow; nay, all power is thine in heaven and in earth. We hail thy name amidst the Chronicles of worlds, and the rise and fall of nations and of empires. Thou art worthy alone to possess universal dominion. To thee peculiarly it belongs as the infinitely wise, holy, glorious, eternal Son of GOD. And in thy glorious office-work as the Redeemer and Mediator of thy

church, all the ransomed of thy blood adore thee, the LORD JEHOVAH, our righteousness for evermore. To thee, thou blessed JESUS, in union with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, as the one eternal GOD, and the joint-author of creation, redemption, sanctification, and glory, may both Writer and Reader, with the whole church above and below, bring their offerings of love and praise for evermore. Amen.

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE SECOND BOOK OF *THE CHRONICLES*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This *second* book of the Chronicles bears no proportion, in point of the time it records, to that of the former. For all the events registered in this volume, include the history of somewhat less than 500 years. It takes up the records of the church from about a thousand years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the history is pursued through this book to the period of the Babylonish captivity.

The events recorded in this second book of the Chronicles, correspond, in point of history, to what is related in the first and second book of the Kings; but the Reader will do well to observe, what further accounts are given here, in addition to what were then recorded. The design of the HOLY GHOST, (if one may presume so to speak) in the compilation of these Chronicles, is to preserve the history of the church of GOD, and especially in a faithful record of the regular descent of the family of David. The dying patriarch, Jacob, under the influence of GOD the SPIRIT had prophesied, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come*. These Chronicles, when traced in a regular succession, and compared with what

follows in the other books of sacred inspiration, lead the Reader on to the discovery of the fulfillment of this prophecy. Through the several monarchies which succeeded the *Babylonian*, to the coming of CHRIST, we trace the lineal descent of David's royal house. And as, through all the tributary state in which the church was brought, under the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and at last the *Roman* government, the Jews never lost sight of their own king, neither their own laws; so it is worthy the highest attention, that under the *latter* empire, during which time the LORD JESUS came, the Jews themselves confessed, that *now they had no king but Cesar*. Now therefore *the Shiloh was come*. And the royal house of David, in the person of JESUS, emerged from the obscurity in which it had been so long hid, and brought forward again that kingdom, *of the increase and government of which there shall be no end*.

I shall detain the Reader no longer from entering on the perusal of this book of GOD, but only, as in every former instance, so in this, to beg his eye may be always on the look out for Him, on whose account, and for whose great work of redemption, not the Bible was written, but even creation itself, with all its magnificence, was appointed. It is offering no violence to truth, to believe that, as the LORD JEHOVAH from everlasting had determined the redemption of his people; when he went forth in acts of creation, these were preparatory to the more glorious deeds in redemption, which were to follow. And hence, every event from the creation of the world, to the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, was designed as intermediate, and preparatory to the introduction of him, who though appearing in what is called *the fullness of time*, was in reality *set up from everlasting*. It is under the most perfect conviction of this, that I venture to beg again and again the Reader's most earnest enquiry through every

page, for him to whom the whole ministers. And oh! thou HOLY SPIRIT of truth; thou Glorifier of the LORD JESUS! let it please thee to call up the diligence, and to reward the search both of Writer and Reader in their enquiries, like the Greeks which came up to the feast, when like them, as we explore this feast of divine records, we say also, *We would see* JESUS. Be pleased, LORD, to hang out his star in the firmament of thy word, and by a more luminous light of thy grace within our souls, lead us, and go before us, until it points to the place where the LORD JESUS is. One such view of thee, thou blessed JESUS! discovered in those Chronicles of thy church, in manifesting both thy love then and now, will give a *joy unspeakable, and full of glory*; and become a renewed evidence, to all the numbers we are continually receiving, that thou, art indeed JESUS CHRIST, *the same yesterday, and, today, and forever.*

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

This second book of Chronicles takes up the subject of history where the former left off. Solomon's entrance on his reign is here recorded: his solemn offering at Gibeon: his choice of wisdom: his strength, and riches.

2 CHRONICLES 1:1-6

(1) ¶ And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him, and magnified him exceedingly. (2) Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers. (3) So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had

made in the wilderness. (4) But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to *the place which* David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. (5) Moreover the brasen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it. (6) And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.

There is somewhat very interesting in this view of Solomon, on his entrance on his government. How beautiful is it to see magistrates first seeking grace and wisdom from the *LORD*, before that they take the reins of government into their hand. Is not the custom of our nation, in the election of chief magistrates in towns and cities, being preceded by prayer, to direct them in their choice; is it not taken from such scripture authority as this? I shall not offend, I hope, any of this character, (if peradventure any such should condescend to glance their eye on my Poor Man's Commentary) when I add, it is a sight indeed most lovely, when men really and truly seek counsel from GOD on those occasions. Oh! what a beautiful portrait of magistracy hath Job drawn, when he says, *I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out.* When JESUS, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, gives out of himself to the men that seek for him as for hidden treasure; then he is, and will be all this to his people. I would wish the Reader to peruse the whole passage. Job 29:5-17. It should seem that the ark being at Jerusalem, and the altar at Gibeon, was for the present intended for the greater benefit of the church. Our JESUS is both the Ark and the Altar: and he, blessed be his name, is in all places, and with all his people always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:20.

2 CHRONICLES 1:7-10

(7) In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. (8) And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead. (9) Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. (10) Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, *that is so great?*

We have this account before, 1 Kings 3:5, I must again beg the Reader to consult the parallel passage, both in the sacred text, and in the Commentary. For the sake of shortness, I shall not repeat what is there said. I only in addition, request the Reader to observe with me, how evident it is, from this prayer of Solomon, that the SPIRIT of the LORD was upon him, to teach him what to say, and what to pray for. Observe how Solomon eyes the LORD'S hand in his appointment as king. *Thou hast showed mercy to David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.* Observe moreover, how Solomon begs for suited wisdom to the discharge of the high trust to which he was called. *Give me wisdom, that I may go in and out before this people.* And observe still further, that he founds all his claim upon GOD'S promises; *Let the promise unto David my father be established.* Reader! mark down what most concerns us in this view. Doth not our GOD say, *Ask what I shall give thee?* Not indeed in dreams of the night, but in the open full day of his gospel. So run the precious words, *Ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full.* John 16:24. And is not the promise of GOD the FATHER founded in covenant engagements, confirmed with an oath, and sealed in the blood of his dear Son? Shall we doubt? Shall we question the divine truth and faithfulness? Oh! how precious is it to see our security in this doubled grace; the glory of JEHOVAH'S name, in his word and oath; and the

everlasting merit and righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST !

2 CHRONICLES 1:11-12

(11) And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: (12) Wisdom and knowledge *is* granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that *have been* before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

We have here GOD'S gracious answer. And in the overflowing bounty of the LORD, how sweetly doth it remind us what the apostle saith, that *GOD is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think*. Ephesians 3:20. But I hope, after what was observed in the parallel passage, (1 Kings 3) that the Reader is running beyond his views of Solomon king of Israel, to contemplate in all this our Almighty Solomon, GOD the FATHER'S Jedidiah (his beloved) shadowed forth in his furniture for the kingdom of his people. JESUS indeed, in his mediatorial character, was not only filled with wisdom and knowledge, and all the treasures hidden with him: but he is emphatically called wisdom itself, even the Wisdom of GOD for salvation. Reader! behold then the LORD JESUS entering upon his kingdom, and in the constitution of his Person, in his offices, in all his characters, acts, and relations, unfolding to his church and people, the most sovereign proofs of wisdom, grace, and riches. How lovely is it to behold the features of the Redeemer, shadowed forth in any of his people!

2 CHRONICLES 1:13-17

(13) ¶ Then Solomon came *from his journey* to the high place that *was* at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and reigned over Israel. (14) And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred

chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. (15) And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem *as plenteous* as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that *are* in the vale for abundance. (16) And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. (17) And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so brought they out *horses* for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means.

I have before noticed those things in the Commentary on the same history, I Kings 3 &c. I only therefore now add, that when we read those things of Solomon's splendor with an eye to JESUS, what is the plenteousness of the silver and gold at Jerusalem, compared to the durable riches, and righteousness, which JESUS gives in plentiful profusion to his people, when he gives them himself? Then, in deed and in truth, JESUS causeth them to inherit *substance*; all else is vanity. JESUS'S fruit *is better than gold, yea, than fine gold, and his revenue than choice silver*. Oh! thou precious LORD! lead me in the way of righteousness, and cause me to inherit thyself, which is substance indeed! Proverbs 8:18-20.

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I PASS over every other consideration in this chapter, to have my soul unceasingly fixed on thee, thou glorious Solomon, and the peaceable, happy reign of righteousness, which by thy coming to the throne of David thy father, thou, even thou, O blessed JESUS, hast brought in to the redemption of mankind! I cannot look on any other. I dare not take off my thoughts from the contemplation of JESUS! Thy word tells me, that in thee are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. And to what other source shall I go, who am so poor and ignorant in myself, and need supply so continually,

when all riches and honour are with thee, and there is none else that can cause my soul to inherit substance. Like the Solomon of whom I read in this chapter, I would say, *Give me understanding and knowledge*, that I may have that *life eternal*, which consisteth in the light *of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST!* Hath not GOD thy FATHER constituted thee King in Zion? Hath he not given all things into thine hand? Is not grace, mercy, life, and peace, treasured up in thee? And are not all the blessings thy redeemed can possibly need, in time or in eternity, found in thee? not simply as plenteous as the stones in Jerusalem, but inexhaustible, incalculable, unsearchable? Oh! then for faith to believe *the record which GOD hath given of his dear Son!* I would come to thee, blessed JESUS, for all I need. And I would come as one sure to obtain. For though thou hast all the treasures of heaven, and art the Almighty Treasurer, yet is it not for thyself, but for thy people. It hath pleased the FATHER, that *in thee should all fulness dwell; that of thy fulness we might all receive, and grace for grace.* Who so ready to give as JESUS! Who so needy as I! Pour out then, *LORD*, of thy fullness. I ask not the riches, the wealth, the honour of this vain world, but *the wisdom that maketh wise unto salvation.* I ask JESUS himself! Grant me thyself, O *LORD*, for in thee I have all things.

CHAPTER 2

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This Chapter represents Solomon as beginning the work of the temple. He numbers the men for the service: sends to Hiram for materials; Hiram's kind answer.

2 CHRONICLES 2:1-2

(1) ¶ And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. (2) And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

The account here given, is so very similar to what we read 1 Kings 5 that once for all I refer the Reader to it.

2 CHRONICLES 2:3-10

(3) And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, *even so deal with me*. (4) Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to him, *and* to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual showbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This *is an ordinance* for ever to Israel. (5) And the house which I build *is* great: for great *is* our God above all gods. (6) But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who *am* I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? (7) Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that *are* with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. (8) Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants *shall be* with thy servants, (9) Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build *shall be* wonderful great. (10) And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

The message here recorded, which Solomon sent to Hiram, is much more particularly related than the parallel one in the book of the Kings. I beg the Reader to mark this. There is very great beauty, as well as piety, in that part of his address,

in which he endeavors to impress upon the mind of Hiram suitable ideas of the greatness of the LORD GOD of Israel. He was asking favors of the king of Tyre; and the king of Tyre, for ought we know to the contrary, had but slender knowledge, if any, concerning Israel's GOD. Yet Solomon refrains not from magnifying the LORD GOD of Israel. He plainly tells Hiram, that his GOD is above all gods; that none was worthy, none was able to build an habitation suitable for his honour; that the heavens and the heaven of heavens could not contain him. And though Solomon doth not say it in so many words, yet he as good as intimates, that, if so great a king as Solomon could not be worthy to build this house, what ought Hiram to think of himself, whose revenues and dominions were small and contemptible, compared to Solomon's? It is not said what effect this message had upon the mind of Hiram, as it concerned his own everlasting welfare. It wrought so far indeed with the king of Tyre, that he readily granted all he asked. This he might do from policy. But whether it went further, to the conversion of his soul to GOD, must be left undetermined by us. We may however thus far observe upon it, that when we have done all we can to hold up to others the glories, the loveliness, the beauties of JESUS, in order to win their affections to our beloved, if *their hearts* be not enamored, *ours* will be the more refreshed with every renewed opportunity of speaking of his love.

2 CHRONICLES 2:11-16

(11) ¶ Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them. (12) Hiram said moreover, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. (13) And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's, (14) The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father

was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father. (15) Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants: (16) And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

Some have thought that Hiram was one of that class of people, who were Proselytes to the Jewish religion. There were some who were permitted to worship in the gates, or outer courts of Israel. But I do not think from his letter, in ascribing blessedness to Solomon's God for having set him on the throne of his father, that this is sufficient to draw the conclusion. This might be complimentary. However, whether he was, or was not, thus far a believer in the God of Israel, yet he was well affected to Solomon, in granting him his request. How many are there whom the *LORD* will make use of as instruments in building churches and chapels to his glory; but who feel no predilection to the person of JESUS himself. It is an awful thought! And to carry it further: how many have been led to put forth an helping hand for the promotion of others salvation, whose lives have given no proofs that they have been anxious for their own! A class of them our *LORD* himself describes, who are represented by him at the last day as saying; *Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* but of whom JESUS will disclaim all knowledge, as to any *vital* communion between himself and them! Reader! of all melancholy thoughts this is the greatest. That a man should preach JESUS: should be commissioned by that preaching, (or prophesying, as it is called) to be an instrument to a sinner's conversion, in leading him from the

power of the enemy! What work can be mote wonderful! and yet he himself made no partaker of the grace; but simply, like a water pipe, to convey to others, and never refreshed, nor desiring refreshment himself! Matthew 7:22. The envious workman which Hiram sent to Solomon, of whose genealogy the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give some account, deserves a little notice. He was by the mother's side of the tribe of Dan it seems, and his father a Tyrian. I do not say so; but yet I think there is somewhat in it worth remarking, that in the building of this temple, the master workman should have sprung both from Jew and Gentile. Was it thy pleasure, dearest JESUS, as this temple was thy type, that thou wouldest have it constructed by one that belonged to both thy families? Didst thou really, blessed *LORD*, mean thereby to give thy poor Gentile church a sweet thought, that as we know thine heart, and thy love towards us poor Gentiles was from everlasting, thou wouldest in this instance, however trifling it may seem to some, yet manifest to others that thou hast loved us with an everlasting love! Methinks I hear thee say, and from this mark showing it also, *I know the thoughts that I think toward you saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Precious JESUS! oh! that my thoughts were always on thee, as thy thoughts have been towards thy people! Jeremiah 29:11.

2 CHRONICLES 2:17-18

(17) And Solomon numbered all the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. (18) And he set threescore and ten thousand of them *to be* bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand *to be* hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.

We may in some measure, form some faint idea of the wonderful structure of Solomon's temple, which was finished

in seven years, from the number of hands employed. But what is this to the grand thought of the temple of JESUS' body!—Here, again, we find the great multitude of laborers were strangers, that is Gentiles. John's view of the glories above was of the same kind. While he saw an hundred and forty and four thousand of Israel, he saw a multitude that no man could number, of the great varieties of the earth. Yes! blessed JESUS: *the FATHER hath given thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and to be his salvation to the ends of the earth.* Revelation 7:4, 9. Isaiah 49:6.

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IN the view here given of Solomon's temple, the workmen, and the materials taken and gathered from afar, I would contemplate how Solomon, my GOD and King, hath gathered the workmen and materials for his Temple, from all the varieties of the earth. *When the LORD gave the word, great was the company of the preachers.* Thou hast called patriarchs, prophets, and apostles: thou hast taken thy workmen from among the lowest, even the outcasts of the world. And now, *LORD*, when called, and gathered, and collected, and brought to thy Jerusalem to form thy church below; founded on thyself, thou Chief Corner Stone, how are they like polished stones of the temple, closely joined in JESUS, and formed for *an habitation of GOD, through the SPIRIT.* Are they not the household of faith? Are they not as a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by JESUS CHRIST! And when, by and by, thou shalt remove the whole building to constitute thy temple above, how will they all appear before thee in glory! Blessed *LORD!* give my soul to see in those outer things, the shadow of those good things which are yet to come. Make me, however low and humble the lot assigned may be, a builder in thine house. Cause me

to rest wholly my salvation, and all my hopes upon that elect, precious Corner Stone, which GOD hath laid in Zion; that all my strength, faith, and gospel conversation may be *on* JESUS, *in* JESUS, and *of* JESUS: perfectly and unalterably convinced, that *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST*. Here, LORD, would I rest, and here would I be found knowing that he that thus buildeth, and thus liveth, and thus dieth, *shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end*.

CHAPTER 3

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The information in this Chapter, is in respect to the building of the temple. Here is an account of the spot, the time in which it was begun, the dimensions, extent, and ornaments of it.

2 CHRONICLES 3:1

(1) ¶ Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where *the LORD* appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Though we have a more particular account in the 6th chapter of the 1st book of the Kings, (to which once for all I refer the Reader) of this temple, and the building of it by Solomon; yet, as the HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to have it recorded again in this book of the Chronicles, it evidently implies the importance of the thing itself; and how highly it ought to be regarded. I should not think myself justified, therefore, in passing it hastily by. And first, Reader, consider the hallowed spot in Mount *Moriah*. A spot rendered for ever memorable, being the place the *LORD* pointed out to Abraham, for the offering of his son Isaac. And as this was evidently intended

to shadow forth the offering of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; what spot could be more suited for the temple (which was also a type of CHRIST) to be erected upon? Mount Moriah was one of those several mounts around Jerusalem. Mount Calvary stood near it. And what is observable moreover is, that neither Abraham nor Solomon had any hand in the choice of the place. GOD himself appointed both. JESUS is of the LORD'S own providing. Genesis 22:2. And, secondly, what rendered this place more memorable was, that it was in the place in which the LORD had answered by fire. 1 Chronicles 22:18, 26.

2 CHRONICLES 3:2

(2) And he began to build in the second *day* of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

It was thought an object of moment, to mark down the time also when this great work was begun. Believers in JESUS love to dwell particularly on the first temple-work building of grace in their souls. Some can trace these things more fully than others. Some, like the blind man whose eyes the LORD had opened, can hardly tell the time, or method by which the *LORD* began the work in their hearts. But it is a blessed thing when a poor sinner can say, *One thing I know, that where, as I was blind, now I see.* Reader! would you know this for yourself, whether the temple work building is begun in your heart? Ask yourself this question; Have you seen JESUS in his glory and suitableness to you as a poor sinner? When JESUS is truly seen, truly known, and truly felt, the day of conversion is arrived, the day of Jubilee is come. The GOD of the Hebrews hath met with us. Like Jacob, it may be said, *He found him in Bethel; and there he spake with us.* Hosea 12:4.

2 CHRONICLES 3:3-9

(3) Now these *are the things wherein* Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty

cubits. (4) And the porch that *was* in the front *of the house*, the length *of it was* according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height *was* an hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold. (5) And the greater house he cieled with fir tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm trees and chains. (6) And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold *was* gold of Parvaim. (7) He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls. (8) And he made the most holy house, the length whereof *was* according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, *amounting* to six hundred talents. (9) And the weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

I have no doubt but that some interesting things are included in the dimensions, extent, and ornament. But all that we can speak of these things is, that as they were all belonging to a temple that was a type of JESUS, they were all suitably costly. Perhaps they represented the graces of his Person, and the gifts of his SPIRIT. But what ornaments of gold, or silver, or precious stones, are competent to resemble those!

2 CHRONICLES 3:10-17

(10) ¶ And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold. (11) And the wings of the cherubims *were* twenty cubits long: one wing *of the one cherub was* five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing *was likewise* five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. (12) And *one* wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house: and the other wing *was* five cubits *also*, joining to the wing of the other cherub. (13) The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces *were* inward. (14) And he made the vail *of* blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon. (15) Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that *was* on the top of each of them *was* five cubits. (16) And he made chains, *as* in the oracle, and put *them* on the heads

of the pillars; and made an hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the chains. (17) And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.

As to the most holy, and the vail of the temple, we, who live under gospel times, can have a clearer apprehension of their significance, since the Son of GOD hath come, and opened a new and living way for us through the vail, and hath entered into the most holy place, even into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us. JESUS is the true Temple, in whom dwells all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily. Until he came and opened this way by his blood, there could be no approach to GOD. The vail formed a total separation. It was formed not only for separation, but for concealment: for none but the high priest, and he only once in a year, and that not without blood, could venture within it. And this evidently pointed out the darkness of the dispensation until the gospel. And what was this separation, but an intimation, that by the breach of the law man was separated from GOD; that GOD'S perfections were injured, and that our unholy nature would for ever have kept up this distance, had not JESUS interposed. By the obedience and death of the LORD JESUS, the law was satisfied; the justice of GOD appeased, and the sin which separated between GOD and us, done away by the blood of JESUS, which cleanseth the sinner, and by the righteousness of JESUS, which justifieth the sinner. So that now a new and living way is opened by his blood, and poor sinners are authorized, nay, even commanded *to draw nigh with true hearts in full assurance of faith.* Hebrews 10:19, 20, &c.

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How is it possible, dearest JESUS, to behold the account of this

temple; to behold the hallowed spot on which it was built; to mark the dimensions; to observe the most holy place, and the vail, which at thy crucifixion was rent in twain, as a token that all separation between GOD and his people was forever done away; without having our very souls led out to thee, and to mark all the lovely features of thy Person and work, thus shadowed forth in the ancient building of Solomon's temple? Do I behold thee, thou dearest *LORD*, in substance of our flesh, entering into the temple! Do I see thee going on to Mount Calvary for a sacrifice! Do I hear thee say, *Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days!* Do I behold the vail of the temple rent at thy death and shall I not in all these, see that everything in Solomon's temple was intended to typify, and represent thy Person, and offices, and relations, and characters! Yes! blessed JESUS, this, with all its superb furniture and ornaments, was but the shadow; it is thou that art the substance, and in thee most plainly is set forth the whole to which these things ministered. Condescend, Holy Saviour! to bring my soul from the ministry of these things, to be more and more acquainted with thee. And as the mind of JEHOVAH was thus occupied in directing the structure of an earthly house, to represent thy glory, oh! that thou wouldest lead forth my soul to the beholding in it, what sets forth the heavenly temple of thy body. *LORD* grant that I may be growing up to thee in all things. Be thou my GOD, my holy one, the foundation, the top stone, the all in all, of the spiritual building, that I may be found in thee, and united to thee for ever.

CHAPTER 4

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This chapter is but a continuation of the former. The subject

is prosecuted concerning the work and materials of the temple; and here is described, the altar of brass, the molten sea, the lavers, candlesticks, and tables, together with the instruments of gold.

2 CHRONICLES 4:1

(1) ¶ Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

This altar of brass received the gifts and offerings of the people. How lovely a representation of JESUS, in whose hands, as mediator, all *the* offerings of his people must be placed. *None cometh to the FATHER but by him.* Moreover the largeness of it represents the largeness of the heart of JESUS. There is room enough in our JESUS for all his people. Add to this, the height of it pointed to the loftiness of our Great Saviour, who is both the sacrifice, and the sacrificer, and the altar, on whom all sacrifices were offered. And from this elevation of ten cubits high, every Israelite from the courts around might see the sacrifice, and behold the flame ascend before GOD. Oh! how very precious to see, with the eye of faith, the LORD JESUS going in before the mercy-seat with the offerings of his people.

And Reader! do you not believe that the faithful Israelites then understood all this with a reference to JESUS, and eyed the LORD JESUS in all as the great propitiation? Surely, if the earlier patriarchs offered all their sacrifices by faith in this great atonement, as we are assured they did, in those later ages, when CHRIST had been more fully and more openly preached in type and figure, we cannot but suppose, that the HOLY GHOST had brought the minds of the people, more savingly acquainted with the substance to which the whole shadow ministered. Hebrews 9:4, 17, 28.

2 CHRONICLES 4:2-5

(2) Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. (3) And under it *was* the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen *were* cast, when it was cast. (4) It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward. (5) And the thickness of it *was* an handbreadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; *and* it received and held three thousand baths.

Can anything be more similar, in figure and type, than this molten sea to the fountain opened in gospel-times for sin and for uncleanness? And observe the vast size of it, to denote the infinite fullness that there is in JESUS. Oh! for faith to wash and be clean in the blood of the Lamb! John 1:29.

2 CHRONICLES 4:6

(6) He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea *was* for the priests to wash in.

Observe, how all must be particular and express in pointing to gospel mercies. All must be washed, both priests, people, and sacrifices: for nothing but the blood of CHRIST cleanseth from all sin. 1 John 1:7.

2 CHRONICLES 4:7-22

(7) And he made ten candlesticks of gold according to their form, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left. (8) He made also ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made an hundred basons of gold. (9) Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid

the doors of them with brass. (10) And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south. (11) ¶ And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God; (12) *To wit*, the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapiters *which were* on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapiters *which were* on the top of the pillars; (13) And four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapiters *which were* upon the pillars. (14) He made also bases, and lavers made he upon the bases; (15) One sea, and twelve oxen under it. (16) The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to king Solomon for the house of the LORD of bright brass. (17) In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah. (18) Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out. (19) And Solomon made all the vessels that *were for* the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the showbread *was set*; (20) Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the oracle, of pure gold; (21) And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, *made he of* gold, *and* that perfect gold; (22) And the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers, *of* pure gold: and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy *place*, and the doors of the house of the temple, *were of* gold.

I include all these under one view; for of the whole it may be said, as the apostle hath before remarked, concerning the tabernacle in the wilderness, *of those we cannot now speak particularly*. But of this we may be sure, the HOLY GHOST graciously signified, that by the whole, and from the use of all of them, the grand lesson taught was, that the way into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest, until CHRIST being come; an high priest of good things to come. Precious JESUS! who shall properly and fully estimate the preciousness of thy salvation shadowed forth through so many ages, and all completed by thine own perfect righteousness, and by that

one offering of thyself once offered, whereby thou hast for ever perfected them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let us not dismiss this chapter, however short and imperfect our researches can go, in the discovery of spiritual blessings veiled under temporal ministrations, without first looking at the several things here consecrated to the service of the temple, with an eye to better things to come, and in reference to JESUS, and his church, and ministry. Was not the golden altar a beautiful emblem of the divinity of the LORD JESUS? It is the altar, we are told, which sanctifieth the gift: and surely it was the Deity of JESUS which gave dignity and efficacy to his complete redemption. Surely the altar represented JESUS in his person, blood, and sacrifice, as the incense ascending from it, became a lively emblem of the efficacy of his all-prevailing intercession; neither can we be at a loss to understand to what purpose the tables in the temple ministered, when we now behold the table of the *LORD*, with the standing ordinance of his holy supper, constantly presented to our view, as a memorial of his death, to be observed for ever in his church. And the molten sea, with all the washings both of priests and people, as sweetly set forth the ordinance of baptism in the church of JESUS, which forms an entrance into the pale of the covenant by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the HOLY GHOST, shed on the LORD'S people abundantly through JESUS CHRIST our Saviour. Hail! thou all-blessed, all-precious EMMANUEL! thou art the one great ordinance of heaven! in thee and thy finished work of salvation we behold all the services, ordinances, sacrifices, and temple-worship of the old church dispensation centre. In thee, dearest *LORD*, they all had their accomplishment. They were the shadow of good things to

come: and thou art the substance. To thee they all point. By thee their efficacy is forever done away. And in thee their services are rendered no longer necessary. Thou art the end of all for righteousness to every one that believeth; and in thy complete redemption-work we behold our souls justified before GOD. Everlasting praises be unto thee; O *LORD*, for all thou hast wrought and accomplished by thy blood!

CHAPTER 5

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The temple being finished, the vessels and dedicated treasures are brought into the temple, and the LORD giveth a token of his favour and acceptance.

2 CHRONICLES 5:1

(1) ¶ Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in *all* the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

I refer the Reader for the observations on this subject to the parallel account given of it, 1 Kings 8:2. How delightful is it to see Solomon bringing in his treasures into the LORD'S house. But, Reader! how much more lovely to behold JESUS bringing in his treasures, even his redeemed, into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?

2 CHRONICLES 5:2-3

(2) Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which *is* Zion. (3) Wherefore all the

men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast which *was* in the seventh month.

This assembly beautifully illustrates how all Israel is concerned in what concerned the ark. And how more beautiful still to consider, how all the redeemed of the *LORD* are concerned in what belongs to JESUS, whom that ark typified. Here let all be convened—our little ones, and even they that suck the breast!

2 CHRONICLES 5:4-5

(4) And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark. (5) And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, these did the priests *and* the Levites bring up.

So would I take JESUS in the arms of my faith, and all that appertains to him, and, like holy Simeon, desire *to depart in peace, having seen his salvation*.

2 CHRONICLES 5:6

(6) Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

Observe, Reader! how sacrifices made a part in every service: *without shedding of blood there is no remission*. Nothing but the blood of CHRIST cleansed from sin.

2 CHRONICLES 5:7-8

(7) And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy *place, even* under the wings of the cherubims: (8) For the cherubims spread forth *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

Observe, how necessary the presence of Jesus must be to sanctify both place and service.

2 CHRONICLES 5:9

(9) And they drew out the staves *of the ark*, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.

That the ark was in the temple unto this day, means somewhat more, than the mere literal sense. Most probably Ezra wrote this book of the Chronicles; at which time Solomon's temple was destroyed. I rather think Ezra had a spiritual meaning in the expression; and that the phrase is intended to say, that the ark, that is, the presence of the *LORD*, is with Israel to this day. How delightful to consider, *JESUS is with his people always, even unto the end of the world!*

2 CHRONICLES 5:10

(10) *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put *therein* at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

When John, the beloved apostle, in a vision, saw the temple of God opened in heaven, he saw the ark of his testament: meaning, perhaps, the everlasting perpetuity and duration of the covenant of redemption in the blood of JESUS, whom that ark prefigured. Revelation 11:19.

2 CHRONICLES 5:11-14

(11) ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*: (for all the priests *that were* present were sanctified, *and did not then* wait by course: (12) Also the Levites *which were* the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being* arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) (13) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised

the LORD, *saying*, For *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD; (14) So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

What sublimity is there in this account; short as it is. The LORD'S approbation of this temple is the most interesting part; in filling the house with a cloud. The Reader will not, I hope, overlook that the approbation of JESUS was by a voice coming out of the cloud, *saying*, *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*. Matthew 17:5. Observe, moreover, that all the manifestations before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST were through the medium of clouds and ordinances. But when the Son of GOD came, the dark dispensation was done away: *We all beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the LORD*. And do remark yet further, that as the priests could not stand to minister before the LORD, by reason of the glory, though in a cloud, nothing could more decidedly preach, that until JESUS came, there could be no approach, no drawing nigh to the LORD JEHOVAH. But now we have access and redemption through his blood, we may approach with holy confidence in him and through him to a mercy-seat, and *find mercy and grace to help in every time of need*. Hebrews 4:14, 15, 16.

REFLECTIONS

LORD! as I look on, and behold the riches and stores bringing into thy temple, what have I to offer or bring to the service of my GOD? Blessed JESUS! give me grace, like that poor widow, whose offering thou didst regard, to bring my two mites, even my soul and body, for all I have, and all I am, and ever shall be, is from thee, LORD, and of thy bounty, and of thine own would I give thee.

But oh, precious JESUS! did the Levites take up the ark unto its place, and did the whole nation of Israel celebrate the festivity with sacrifices, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude: and shall I not prize that one all-sufficient, all-glorious, and all-effectual sacrifice, to which they ministered, which is thyself, in all the fullness of thy love and redemption!

I bless thee, thou great High Priest of a better dispensation, established upon better promises; that now no cloud can intercept the view of thee, when, in the glory of JEHOVAH, thou hast filled the house of our GOD. We can and do behold thee, by faith, in thy word, in thine ordinances, in thy visits of grace to our hearts. And we can and do behold thee, by faith, when we see thee entered into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of GOD for us, having obtained eternal redemption by thy blood. Hail! holy blessed LORD JESUS! be thou our hope, our joy, our salvation here below, as thou art, and wilt be our portion for evermore.

CHAPTER 6

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This chapter is so closely connected with the former, that it may be considered but as a continuation of the same subject. The cloud which filled the house, as an intimation of the divine presence, gives occasion to Solomon to bless GOD for this grace manifested.

2 CHRONICLES 6:1-2

(1) ¶ Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. (2) But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

In the opening of this chapter, I beg to refer the Reader to

the history, as we have it almost literally the same, 1 Kings 8. Reader! what a blessed dispensation are we brought under! JESUS sweetly visits his people, and manifests his presence, not in clouds and darkness, but under the enlightening influences of his HOLY SPIRIT. Oh! what a blessed thought! our bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST. *He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,* saith our precious LORD JESUS. 1 Corinthians 6:19. John 14:17.

2 CHRONICLES 6:3-11

(3) And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood. (4) And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled *that* which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying, (5) Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel: (6) But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel. (7) Now it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. (8) But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart: (9) Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name. (10) The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken: for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. (11) And in it have I put the ark, wherein *is* the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel.

Observe, Solomon first turns to the people, as if by an enumeration of the divine mercies he aimed to raise their souls into an holy flame of devotion, before that he fell upon his knees to present himself and the people before God. Do we not feel our minds irresistibly led to contemplate the LORD

JESUS in this? How doth our glorious High Priest and king go in and out before his people, in all the ordinances of worship? And how doth he, by the sweet influences of his grace, raise up our souls to the love of the FATHER himself and blessed SPIRIT, in the remembrance of the great things in redemption-work which he hath wrought for us! here, indeed, in the true sense of the word, the LORD JEHOVAH hath fulfilled all his gracious purposes; for in the person of JESUS the promise is accomplished. *I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways. He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price, or reward, saith the LORD of Hosts.* Isaiah 45:13.

2 CHRONICLES 6:12-13

(12) ¶ And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands: (13) For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,

Those verses throw a light upon the parallel passage in the book of the Kings. While Solomon addressed the people he stood before the altar. But when he came to address the *LORD* he fell upon his knees.

2 CHRONICLES 6:14-42

(14) And said, O LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and *showest* mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts: (15) Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day. (16) Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as

thou hast walked before me. (17) Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David. (18) But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! (19) Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee: (20) That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place. (21) Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, *even* from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive. (22) If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; (23) Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness. (24) And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; (25) Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers. (26) When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; *yet* if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them; (27) Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way, wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance. (28) If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness *there be*: (29) *Then* what prayer *or* what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: (30) Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place,

and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) (31) That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. (32) Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house; (33) Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as *doth* thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name. (34) If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; (35) Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. (36) If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before *their* enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near; (37) Yet *if* they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly; (38) If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and *toward* the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: (39) Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee. (40) Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and *let* thine ears *be* attent unto the prayer *that is made* in this place. (41) Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. (42) O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.

I refer the Reader to the observations made on this prayer

already in the Commentary on the I Kings 8. And only by way of enforcing what was there said, I would beseech the Reader, as he goeth over every part of it, to keep an eye stedfastly fixed on our glorious Solomon, whom the king of Israel here personated as his type. It is JESUS alone who is the intercessor, the high Priest, the advocate of his people. By virtue of his blood and righteousness the divine favour can alone be obtained. And therefore, in all the supposable cases here enumerated, of error, infirmity, transgression, and sin; oh! what a resource is it, that the eye of JEHOVAH is eternally fixed on the LORD JESUS whom this temple typified. Reader! while our souls follow the spirit of Solomon's prayer, that the LORD GOD of Israel would own his house, would hear and accept prayers; would remember his covenant engagements, would compassionate the frailties of his people, and, even when in an enemy's land, if their eye and their heart should be directed in supplication towards this house as the house of the LORD, that then mercy might be shown them; shall we not discover what pure gospel runs through every part of it, and that the whole sum and substance of it is JESUS? Oh LORD GOD, the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, well may we in the contemplation of thy rich salvation in JESUS take up the language of Solomon and say, *Arise, O LORD GOD, into thy resting place: thou and the ark (the JESUS) of thy strength.* Blessed be the LORD our GOD who in him hath confirmed to us all *the sure mercies of David.* Isaiah 55:3.

REFLECTIONS

Oh! most gracious, most holy, most blessed LORD GOD Almighty! what expressions of thankfulness can be found sufficient to speak thy love in the unequalled gift of thy dear Son! Was it not enough, O thou FATHER of mercies, and GOD of all comfort, that from thine own free grace thou didst set

up thy dear Son from everlasting, as the constituted head of thy church and people; but through so many ages intermediate to his coming thou shouldst be pleased to keep up, by so many ways, and in such various representations, tokens, and symbols, and types to shadow forth the glories of his person, and the vast importance of his salvation? Oh! *LORD!* I would not only beseech thee, like Solomon, to bless me in all the circumstances in which I may be placed, and to pardon me in all the transgressions into which I may fall, for *JESUS'S* sake; but I would pray also, Holy *FATHER*, that thou wouldest give me grace to appreciate and esteem this inestimable gift of thy dear Son in a manner suited to the vast importance with which thou hast been pleased to give him. I see, *LORD*, that thine infinite mind hath been occupied in this grand concern, as it relates to the salvation of poor sinners, from everlasting. Thou hast called upon the world to behold him whom thy soul loveth. Thou hast manifested such a display of love and grace in this solemn transaction of redeeming thy church by the *LORD JESUS*, as challengeth the whole earth to contemplate the person of *JESUS* whom the *FATHER* so loveth. Now, *LORD*, hear me for one sweet mercy which in its bosom includes every other; cause me so to love the *LORD JESUS* as thou lovest him. Let *JESUS* be precious to my soul as he is to my *GOD* and *FATHER*. And while I pray thee to look upon the face of thine anointed, and accept my soul in him; oh! for grace in mine own soul to look unto *JESUS* with that fixedness of rapture and joy, until my whole heart be found going out after him in such earnestness of desire as can be satisfied with nothing beside. Hear me, *LORD* and *FATHER*, for this mercy! I am encouraged to ask it in faith, because *JESUS* himself encourageth me so to do. For he hath said, *In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the FATHER, in my name he will give it you. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be*

full. Thus my joy will be full when my soul is full of JESUS! let this be the very language of my heart, Whom have I in heaven but thee; and who is there upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee? My flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

We have here the account of the LORD's gracious answer to Solomon's prayer. The effect it had upon the people. Beside these things, here is related the circumstance of the LORD's visit to Solomon by night.

2 CHRONICLES 7:1

(1) ¶ Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

It is remarkable, that this gracious manifestation of God's acceptance in the fire descending and consuming the sacrifice is not noticed in the parallel passage in the book of the Kings. We therefore may find cause from it to bless the HOLY GHOST for this duplicate of the history in this book of the Chronicles, by which the Reader is desired to take notice, that this part of the word of GOD is not, as some have injudiciously thought, a superfluous repetition of the sacred history. If there was but this one thing contained in all the Chronicles which had not been brought before the church in the former account, this alone would be enough to prove its value. The fire coming down from heaven, and consuming the sacrifice, was the gracious method the LORD was pleased to adopt by way of testifying his divine approbation. We have several examples before this of Solomon's sacrifice upon record. If the Reader

wishes to compare scripture on this point, I refer him to the case of Aaron in his offering of the sin-offering, Leviticus 9:24: the memorable case of Gideon, Judges 6:21: and Elijah, 1 Kings 18:38. But Reader! when you have turned to these and other instances which may be found in scripture, do not overlook the vast and infinite concern we have in this doctrine as it refers to the LORD JESUS. When the Son of GOD, for the purpose of redemption, took upon him our nature, and became a sacrifice for our sins; the fire of GOD'S wrath was manifested in the sufferings of JESUS. And what an approbation was given to this redemption by JESUS, when the voice from heaven publicly proclaimed: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!* Precious JESUS! how lovely and gracious dost thou appear in all thy redemption-work for the souls of thy people.

2 CHRONICLES 7:2-3

(2) And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. (3) And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

GOD is awful even in his mercies. The fire which consumed the sacrifice, had it consumed them would have been their just desert: And in that it consumed the offering, it implied as much. The fire of GOD'S wrath burns against sin: That sin transferred to the sacrifice, there it breaks forth. Oh! precious, precious JESUS! what love was thine to take my sins, and to sustain the fire of thy FATHER'S wrath, that I might escape, and thou endure. Oh! for grace to love thee as thou hast loved me!

2 CHRONICLES 7:4-6

(4) Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. (5) And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. (6) And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of musick of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

How grateful is praise from a poor sinner to the *LORD*, when the *LORD* had pardoned his sin, and received him into favor. It is really beautiful to behold the joy of Solomon and his people upon this occasion.

2 CHRONICLES 7:7-11

(7) Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brasen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat offerings, and the fat. (8) Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt. (9) And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. (10) And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the LORD had shewed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people. (11) Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

While the *LORD* was so gracious, the king will go on to seek blessings. Not only the temple, but the court, shall be hallowed. *LORD*, I would desire grace that everything may be sweetly sanctified by JESUS, and in JESUS. When I am most happy in ordinary things, let my soul be very jealous over its

affections, that I may be sure my happiness is still in JESUS, and flowing *from* JESUS. The promise is, *men shall be blessed in him*. And how shall I look for anything to be blessed out of JESUS? They who would seek any one comfort *without* JESUS, it is to be feared their joys upon other occasions are not *in* JESUS. Reader! mark this thought, and see whether it suits *your* estimate and standard of real happiness. The return of the people to their habitations after so rich a festival, may serve to teach us with what spiritual joy GOD'S people should return from the house, or the table of JESUS, after the enjoyment of *a feast indeed of fat things, of marrow, and of wine on the lees well refined*. Oh! thou dear Redeemer! what a feast dost thou hold! and what holy joy ought the living upon thy body and blood to impart to thy hidden ones!

2 CHRONICLES 7:12-16

(12) ¶ And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. (13) If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; (14) If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (15) Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer *that is made* in this place. (16) For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

This gracious second visit of the LORD to Solomon is related, 1 Kings 9. In addition to what was there observed, I only beg the Reader to remark with me how the LORD delighteth in mercy. If we read the LORD'S answer with an eye to CHRIST, how beautiful is the paraphrase. "If to prompt my people to call upon me I withhold their comforts: If the influence of my spirit be restrained, like heaven shut up; or if I permit the enemy to distress them, like the locusts devouring the land;

yet under all these discouraging circumstances, if my people feel their souls humbled, and shall look with an eye of faith to my dear Son, mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend unto the supplication of my people, for I have placed salvation in Zion for JESUS my glory." Isaiah 46:13. Oh! how sweet, how very sweet, are all the Old Testament mercies, when explained to our souls with an eye to the New Testament blessing in JESUS!

2 CHRONICLES 7:17-18

(17) And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; (18) Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man *to be* ruler in Israel.

How gracious is this declaration to Solomon considered in his own personal character. I would have the Reader make a proper distinction between mercies which are general and those which are special, and in particular, GOD'S promises to Israel as a nation were sweet; but Solomon needed those promises as personal to himself. And here they are delivered. Reader! remark those promises were concerning the kingdom of Israel. How far they referred to Solomon's personal and everlasting happiness is not said. They seem to refer to temporal blessings.

2 CHRONICLES 7:19-22

(19) But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; (20) Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it *to be* a proverb and a byword among all nations. (21) And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say,

Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house? (22) And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

The *LORD* here takes in the whole of the people as a nation. And when we compare the sequel of the history of Israel, as a people, to what is here said, nothing can be more plain than that *GOD*, foreseeing the apostacy and corruption of his people, held forth to them the sure consequence of sin and transgression.

REFLECTIONS

How encouraging is it to see the gracious answers of *GOD* to the cries and supplications of his people. Surely, as the prophet said upon another occasion, the *GOD* that answereth by fire let him be *GOD*. But oh! how sure is it, that the *LORD GOD* that hath answered, and doth answer, by the acceptance of the sacrifice of *JESUS*, he must be *GOD*. Yes! blessed *LORD*! thou hast heard, and thou hast answered, in the rich redemption of thy dear Son, and manifested that in him *shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*.

LORD! I would look up to thee that as my eye and my soul desires to be everlastingly fixed on *JESUS*, thou wouldest grant me all that is needful for me in all my straitenings and difficulties. And if the heavens are shut up, or if sickness, pestilence, or evil, have their commission to devour; yet, *LORD*, look, we beseech thee, unto *JESUS*, and accept poor sinners in him. Pardon and forgive thy poor creatures, and let the blood and righteousness of *JESUS* plead when sin most cries out against the iniquities of thy people. Consider, *LORD*, that they are thy people, the work of thine hands, and whom

thou hast taken into covenant with thyself. *Be very gracious, LORD, for thy name's sake, and let not iniquity be our ruin. See, we beseech thee, we are all thy people?*

CHAPTER 8

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This chapter relates to us a further account of Solomon's buildings. Having built the temple and his own house, he here is represented as building cities. The Gentiles are made tributaries. His yearly sacrifices.

2 CHRONICLES 8:1-6

(1) ¶ And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the LORD, and his own house, (2) That the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. (3) And Solomon went to Hamathzobah, and prevailed against it. (4) And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. (5) Also he built Bethhoron the upper, and Bethhoron the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars; (6) And Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion.

The view here given of Solomon is similar to what is related of him, 1 Kings 9. To one of Solomon's wisdom, one might have hoped to have heard more of his hours of meditation and prayer than of his building of cities! alas! what earthly affections are in our minds.

2 CHRONICLES 8:7-10

(7) *As for* all the people *that were* left of the Hittites, and the

Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which *were* not of Israel, (8) *But* of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day. (9) But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they *were* men of war, and chief of his captains, and captains of his chariots and horsemen. (10) And these *were* the chief of king Solomon's officers, *even* two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.

The distinction Solomon made between his own people and the strangers, in exacting from the latter tribute, might, for ought I know, be politic as a prince. But blessed be our almighty Solomon, he makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile. The latter are fellow-heirs. And of such JESUS himself saith, *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* John 10:16.

2 CHRONICLES 8:11

(11) And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places are holy*, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.

There is a great outline of character given here of Solomon. In all his pursuits of pleasure he still retained a veneration for holy things.

2 CHRONICLES 8:12-16

(12) ¶ Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch, (13) Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, *even* in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles. (14) And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their

service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded. (15) And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures. (16) Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished. *So* the house of the LORD was perfected.

The most interesting part to be noticed in these verses is what is said of the every-day offering. Never, from the first institution of sacrifices was this omitted. The lamb of the morning, and the lamb of the evening. What a wonderful thought! that three o'clock in the afternoon which was the ninth hour in the Jews reckoning, should have been held so sacred for the evening sacrifice, because that was the hour which had been appointed before all worlds for the offering of the body of JESUS on the cross. The *ninth hour* JESUS cried, *It is finished*; and the whole of redemption was then completed. The HOLY GHOST, we see, marked this hour in all the evening sacrifices with an eye to JESUS, from the beginning.

2 CHRONICLES 8:17-18

(17) Then went Solomon to Eziongeber, and to Eloth, at the sea side in the land of Edom. (18) And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought *them* to king Solomon.

Solomon is represented under various characters. But though he went, it seems, in person to gather the gold of ophir, yet he himself hath left it upon record that *there is a merchandise that is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold*. Proverbs 3:14. And what is that but the bartering with thee, thou blessed JESUS, our poverty for

thy riches; our sins for thy righteousness; and our weakness for thy strength. Oh! for that *durable riches and righteousness* which is with thee, in which there is nothing hollow and unsubstantial; for thou causest them that love thee *to inherit substance, and thou fillest all their treasures*. Proverbs 8:18, 21.

REFLECTIONS

WHILE I behold Solomon engaged in building houses, and going as a merchantman to gather riches; *LORD*, I would say, make me a wise master-builder, and the true merchantman that seeketh goodly pearls, even *the pearl of good price*.

Upon thee, thou blessed JESUS, as the chief corner-stone GOD the FATHER hath laid in Zion, would I build both for my present, and for my eternal habitation. And *LORD*, do thou instruct me so to build that when the winds, and storms, and rain shall descend, being founded upon thee the rock of ages, I shall never fall, but abide on thee, and in thee, forever.

And as a goodly merchantman may I seek thee, the precious treasure hid in the field; needing not to go to *Ezion-geber*, and to *Eloth*, but may find thee at the entering in of the gates, and at the coming in of the doors. Yes! blessed JESUS, thou standest, and criest, and holdest forth thy riches, yea durable riches and righteousness, without money and without price. Oh! then, thou dearest *LORD*! teach my soul this precious merchandise, how a poor sinner may be eternally rich in receiving out of a full Saviour, whom the more he gives out, the more he hath to bestow; and the more impoverished insolvent sinners he receives, the more glorious he himself becomes. Here, *LORD*, would I for once be truly covetous, and desire to make this the gainful business of all my life. For this would I rise early, late take rest, and eat the bread of

carefulness, that JESUS, with all his fullness, GOD with all his promises, and the HOLY SPIRIT with all his influences, I might bring home to my house, to my heart, to my soul; and live and feast upon them for ever and ever.

CHAPTER 9

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This chapter, which closes the history of Solomon's reign, gives the most brilliant account of his greatness. His fame brings to his court the Queen of Sheba. Here is the relation of the interview between them; Solomon's riches; his death.

2 CHRONICLES 9:1-12

(1) ¶ And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. (2) And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not. (3) And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, (4) And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. (5) And she said to the king, *It was* a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom: (6) Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it*: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: *for* thou exceedest the fame that I heard. (7) Happy *are* thy men, and happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. (8) Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, *to be* king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and

justice. (9) And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon. (10) And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought alnum trees and precious stones. (11) And the king made *of* the alnum trees terraces to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah. (12) And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.

The account here given of the visit of the queen of Sheba is so exact with that given in the 1st book of the Kings, chap. 10 that I think it needless to detain the Reader, but rather to refer him to that scripture, and the Commentary upon it. Oh! what a reproach is it now, and what an everlasting condemnation will it be in the world to come, to thousands, and tens of thousands, who so far from taking a long and wearisome journey, as this poor woman did, to hear the wisdom of Solomon, cannot be prevailed upon to hear and regard the wisdom of Solomon's *LORD*, though held forth in a preached gospel every sabbath-day.

Reader! do not overlook what was pointed at in the account of this woman's conduct, in the former relation of her history, how sweet an emblem she is of the coming sinner, in whose heart the HOLY GHOST hath given information, and raised a desire of enquiry concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Neither let you and I overlook in the view here given of Solomon's condescension, the still greater grace and condescension of our JESUS, in discoursing with poor sinners, and eating with them. How astonished was the queen of the south in that the king of Israel told her all that she desired. But how abundantly more is the sinner overwhelmed with astonishment, when the LORD JESUS opens to his view all that

passed within, and removes all his fears, and anxieties, and gives him a confidence in JESUS which he apprehended he should never possess. Reader! what are your thoughts of our almighty Solomon concerning these things? Have you heard, as the queen of the South did, of the fame of our Solomon! are you come to prove him with hard questions! have you indeed been with JESUS! and hath he told you all that was in your heart! oh! then I need not tell you for you can better tell me, your astonishment. Surely you will conclude as she did, and yet infinitely higher will be your conclusion; the half of his greatness and wisdom hath never been told you. And of his love you could have had no conception. Go home then, Reader, as the queen did to her country, go home to thine house, spread abroad his fame, invite thousands and tens of thousands to come to him, and prove him themselves, that he is infinite in council and might. *Let the fathers to the children make known his praise.*

2 CHRONICLES 9:13-28

(13) ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold; (14) Beside *that which* chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. (15) And king Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of beaten gold went to one target. (16) And three hundred shields *made he of* beaten gold: three hundred *shekels* of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. (17) Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. (18) And *there were* six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by the stays: (19) And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom. (20) And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold: none *were of* silver; it was *not* any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon. (21) For the king's ships

went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. (22) And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. (23) And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart. (24) And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. (25) And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. (26) And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. (27) And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycomore trees that *are* in the low plains in abundance. (28) And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

What an astonishing relation is here given of the riches, and splendor, and power, and sovereignty of Solomon. Surely never was there a king among the sons of men of equal grandeur and magnificence. And yet what is all this compared to the durable riches and righteousness of JESUS? All that Solomon possessed, he tells us himself, was but vanity. But JESUS'S gifts are solid, and not liable to decay. *I will cause those that love me (saith JESUS) to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.* Proverbs 8:21.

2 CHRONICLES 9:29-31

(29) Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat? (30) And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. (31) And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Pause, Reader! and in the account of the death of Solomon, learn to make a true estimate of human life. Alas! what can be the real intrinsic value and importance of all things here

below, bounded as they are within the transitory existence of threescore and ten years, and those years liable to be cut short by numberless causes every moment! Oh! *LORD, teach me, teach every Reader that gracious lesson, so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Psalm 90:12.

REFLECTIONS

READER! it is truly interesting to behold the queen of the South coming from her own country, excited by the fame of Solomon to seek after his wisdom. But how much more truly interesting is it when we consider that the HOLY GHOST herein beautifully represents the coming of the whole gentile church to the light of JESUS, and *kings to the brightness of his rising.*

It forms a subject in which every intelligent Reader cannot but feel pleased to behold the friendship between Solomon and the queen of Sheba, when he imparted to her of all her heart desired, and she presented to him the treasures of gold of ophir, and precious stones, and algum trees. But how infinitely higher in delight doth the subject arise in our view, when we behold in this a lively representation of JESUS our Solomon receiving the poor gentile church, and every individual sinner among his redeemed ones, with his poor offerings, and bartering his grace, and wisdom, and love, with all the riches of his redemption in the wonderful exchange!

And Reader! while we look at Solomon in all the splendor in which he is here described, and before we take our farewell of him, shall we not be led from the view of him as far as the shadow goes, to the contemplation of JESUS the substance, of whom in many instances he was a lively type. Our CHRIST, as well as Solomon after the flesh, was the son of David; and sure I am, that as the LORD sent by Nathan to have Solomon named Jedidiah, beloved of the LORD, a voice from heaven

proclaimed our JESUS under this glorious character, the beloved and only begotten Son of GOD, in whom JEHOVAH was well pleased. And who can read the account of the wisdom of Solomon, as wiser than all the men of the east, without having their thoughts directed to the contemplation of that Solomon *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!* who can behold the extensiveness of Solomon's empire, of whom it is said that the LORD gave him a largeness of heart, even as the sand which is on the sea shore: without immediately being led to consider the kingdom of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, whose dominion *is an everlasting dominion and whose power ruleth over all.* Solomon was indeed the richest of all princes of the earth; for silver was as the stones of the street in Jerusalem. But what is this in comparison of the unsearchable riches of CHRIST! Solomon had a reign of peace during his life, and his subjects were happy under his government. But JESUS is himself, by way of emphasis called *the prince of peace;* for the sceptre of his kingdom is altogether *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.* And if Solomon built by divine appointment the temple of the *LORD,* did not our JESUS himself become both the builder and the temple; for all his people are built on JESUS, the chief corner stone. He it is of whom alone it ever could be said, *He shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the glory!* Hail! holy, glorious, gracious, blessed JESUS! a greater indeed than Solomon is here. Thou art higher and more excellent than the kings of any land. Thou *art the man whose name is the BRANCH,* Under thee and thy government we shall be safe. *All power is thine in heaven and in earth. Thy name shall endure for ever. Thy name shall be continued as long as the sun. Men shall be blessed in thee. All nations shall call thee blessed. Blessed be thy glorious name for ever; let the whole earth be filled with thy glory. Amen, and amen.*

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

We enter upon the history of Rehoboam in this chapter. He begins his reign with rejecting the counsel of the elders, and following youthful advice. Ten of the tribes of Israel revolt. He fleeth to Jerusalem.

2 CHRONICLES 10:1

(1) ¶ And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.

We have this history almost word for word as it is here, 1 Kings 12 I therefore would refer the Reader to consult what is there said.

2 CHRONICLES 10:2-15

(2) And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who *was* in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard *it*, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt. (3) And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying, (4) Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee. (5) And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed. (6) And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye *me* to return answer to this people? (7) And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever. (8) But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him. (9) And he said unto them, What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to

me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us? (10) And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins. (11) For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions. (12) ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day. (13) And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, (14) And answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions. (15) So the king hearkened not unto the people: for the cause was of God, that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

I have purposely gone through all these verses in one reading before that I offered any Commentary upon them in order to come to this last verse, which explains the whole; *the cause was of GOD*. It is of the highest importance in life, amidst all the concerns of it, the smallest, and apparently most inconsiderable, as well as the greatest, and those which carry consequence with them, that we never suffer our minds to lose sight of the LORD's hand. *He ordereth all things according to the counsel of his own will*. Hence we find Rehoboam following the rash; ill advised counsel of young men, and slighting the ripened judgment of years. And Reader! are there not a thousand Rehoboams in life who prefer the pursuit of things temporal to the grand and momentous concern of things which are eternal; who are wise, according to their judgment of things, for a moment, and foolish for eternity!

2 CHRONICLES 10:16-19

(16) And when all Israel *saw* that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and *we have* none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: *and* now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents. (17) But *as for* the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. (18) Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram that *was* over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to *his* chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. (19) And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

If we read this spiritually, and with an eye to JESUS, is not the language of every unawakened man similar to this, *We have none inheritance in the son of Jesse*. Alas! how was this fulfilled in the instance of the Jews at the crucifixion of JESUS! precious LORD JESUS! how did thy prayer bring down mercy to turn many of them from the error of their ways, when those among them who had been most clamorous, crying out, *Crucify, crucify him!* at the day of Pentecost, were pricked at the heart, and then their language was, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Acts 2:37.

REFLECTIONS

IF in perusing the page of Rehoboam's folly we stand amazed to see the blindness and infatuation of such conduct; how much more may we be astonished at the folly and infatuation of sinners in rejecting the counsel of GOD against their own souls, and preferring the pleasures of sin for a season. *Oh! ye simple ones* (is the language of wisdom in the streets of the city) *how long will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge!* Surely the sinner that slights JESUS and his salvation is simple to the utmost possibility of simplicity. He hath no true knowledge to guide him. He prefers the hollow and empty husks of the world to

durable riches and righteousness. The sinful pleasures of the earth are to him preferable to JESUS and his grace and glory. Could a man make a mock at sin, if he were not a fool? Could he sport with that which must end in ruin if he were not blind, and ignorant, and senseless, and stupid? Precious JESUS! thou that art wisdom itself. Oh! give us to see, to know, to appreciate rightly thy value, and to be thoroughly convinced of this, that *Happy is the man that findeth thee; for thy merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain of thee more than fine gold.*

CHAPTER 11

CONTENTS

This chapter is the continuation of the history of Rehoboam. He raiseth an army to subdue Israel. Is forbidden to go to war by Shemaiah. An account of his wives and children.

2 CHRONICLES 11:1

(1) ¶ And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen *men*, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.

From small beginnings what large things follow! Rehoboam's preferring the counsel of young men to the old, laid the foundation of the revolt of the ten tribes of Israel from the house of David.

2 CHRONICLES 11:2-4

(2) But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, (3) Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, (4) Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of

me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

We cannot but admire the conduct of Rehoboam in this obedience to the command of the *LORD*. Had he consulted the *LORD* at first, how much better would it have been.

2 CHRONICLES 11:5-12

(5) And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah. (6) He built even Bethlehem, and Etam, and Tekoa, (7) And Bethzur, and Shoco, and Adullam, (8) And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph, (9) And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah, (10) And Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which *are* in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities. (11) And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine. (12) And in every several city *he put* shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

Those fenced cities were intended, no doubt, to act upon the defensive, after that he had received command from the *LORD*.

2 CHRONICLES 11:13

(13) ¶ And the priests and the Levites that *were* in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts.

The encouragement given to the priests and Levites should seem to imply that Rehoboam regarded the service of the sanctuary.

2 CHRONICLES 11:14-15

(14) For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD: (15) And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.

We have here introduced, in a parenthesis, a short but awful

sketch of the infamous character of Jeroboam, which is spoken of in scripture in such dreadful terms of reproach.

2 CHRONICLES 11:16-23

(16) And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers. (17) So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon. (18) And Rehoboam took him Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David to wife, *and* Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse; (19) Which bare him children; Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham. (20) And after her he took Maachah the daughter of Absalom; which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith. (21) And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.) (22) And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, *to be* ruler among his brethren: for *he thought* to make him king. (23) And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives.

There is very little more to be gathered from the character of this prince than that he wisely preferred peace to war. Indeed the shelter he gave to the priests and Levites is much to his honour. No doubt his kingdom was preserved in peace and good order from the blessing of the *LORD* in answer to the prayers of his people. This was the real strength given to the kingdom of Judah.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a poor trifling character is this Rehoboam? Is this the son of Solomon? Alas! what a poor resemblance of wisdom to the Father. Reader! do remark that grace is not hereditary. As

the father cannot bear the sins of the son, neither the son the sins of the father; so grace hath no connection in natural alliances.

Is not this Rehoboam a true picture of all carnal, slothful men! as he preferred the sluggish situation of the fleshly pursuits to those of promoting the glory of GOD, so we find all men under the reigning power of indwelling sin, desire only *to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. Oh! what multitudes are there of Rehoboams in the land, who know nothing, think of nothing, enjoy nothing but fleshly lusts; whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things. Precious JESUS! keep thy people from such things. Oh! give to them to have their conversation more and more in heaven, and from thence to be always looking for the Saviour, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who will change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to his mighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

CHAPTER 12

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We have an awful sequel to the life of Rehoboam in this chapter. The lustful king forsaking GOD is left in the hand of the king of Egypt. His death.

2 CHRONICLES 12:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

The Reader would do well to consult the parallel history, 1 Kings 14. From the entrance of Rehoboam on his government to the close of it, nothing can be more evident than that his

heart was not right in the sight of God. Towards the close of his reign he gave more awful proofs of his corruption.

2 CHRONICLES 12:2-4

(2) And it came to pass, *that* in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, (3) With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people *were* without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians. (4) And he took the fenced cities which *pertained* to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

How gracious is the *LORD* in raising up instruments of correction!

2 CHRONICLES 12:5-6

(5) Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and *to* the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak. (6) Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD *is* righteous.

It is lovely always to see souls humbled under afflictions.

2 CHRONICLES 12:7-16

(7) And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. (8) Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries. (9) So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. (10) Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed *them* to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house. (11) And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and

fetches them, and brought them again into the guard chamber. (12) And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy *him* altogether: and also in Judah things went well. (13) ¶ So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam *was* one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess. (14) And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD. (15) Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And *there were* wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. (16) And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

What a poor trifling, uninteresting character was this man! alas! what can make any character respectable but a life of piety and obedience towards God.

REFLECTIONS

READER! what evidences do the whole earth afford of the reality of grace. We see men like Rehoboam, filling up a place in history, and the sum total of their lives is this, they lived, and eat, and drank, and then died. But is this the end of man's existence? Oh! for distinguishing grace to live all our days to the glory of GOD. To live *for* JESUS; and to live *to* JESUS. What can be sweeter than the precious testimony that *we have fellowship with the FATHER, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST. LORD!* grant that this may be my portion. Let nothing call off my attention from thee, the one grand object of all desire. In thee, LORD, I shall possess all things. And if thou art mine, I shall be truly happy in time, and happy to all eternity.

CHAPTER 13

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This chapter relates to us the history of Abijah, the son of Rehoboam. And here we have the melancholy account of the wars between Judah and Israel. This brings us to the close of Abijah's history.

2 CHRONICLES 13:1-2

(1) ¶ Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. (2) He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

The Reader will do well to consult the parallel history, 1 Kings 15. though it is more fully related here concerning the reign of Abijah than in that sacred record. But the subject is truly interesting; and the Reader will, I hope, not fail to regard it. The name of Abijah is striking; Abba, FATHER; Jab, JEHOVAH; meaning, the *LORD* is my FATHER.

2 CHRONICLES 13:3-5

(3) And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, *even* four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, *being* mighty men of valour. (4) And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which *is* in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; (5) Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, *even* to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

His army was greatly inferior. But this he regards not. He pleads right, as descended from David; whereas Jeroboam is an usurper. The covenant of salt should seem to imply a covenant with sacrifice. For every sacrifice is salted with salt. David, with an eye to CHRIST, had so expressed himself, Psalm 50:5. It is precious to see so much of JESUS in the general circumstances of the people in those remote ages. By Abijah

standing upon mount Ephraim, it is clear that he had penetrated pretty far into the heart of Jeroboam's dominions.

2 CHRONICLES 13:6-9

(6) Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord. (7) And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. (8) And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye *be* a great multitude, and *there are* with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. (9) Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of *other* lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, *the same* may be a priest of *them that are* no gods.

This speech of Abijah is very animated and powerful. He points out the iniquity of Jeroboam, who as a servant had stood up in open rebellion against his *LORD*. He bids the people take notice what vain, light, and trifling men were his supporters. He next adverts to the awful state in which he and his army stood, in respect to religion. He had thrown off the true religion of the God of Israel, and had set up calves for gods, and consecrated unhallowed men for his priests. As if he had said, Is it possible that any among you can conceive that such a cause can prosper?

2 CHRONICLES 13:10-12

(10) But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *wait* upon *their* business: (11) And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also *set they in order* upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him. (12) And, behold,

God himself *is* with us for *our* captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

Abijah, having in the former part of his speech pointed out the badness of the cause of his enemies, in those verses calls upon the people to judge of the goodness of his cause from the *LORD*. He strongly represents that his priests are the descendants of Aaron, and dwells more particularly, (and I wish the Reader not to overlook this part of his address) on that distinguishing character of the true religion, the observance of the burnt sacrifice in the morning and evening of every day. Reader! was not this evidently with an eye to CHRIST? Sweet thought! *If JESUS be for us who can be against us!*

2 CHRONICLES 13:13

(13) ¶ But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment *was* behind them.

It should seem that while Abijah was addressing the armies Jeroboam artfully sent off a party to surround him.

2 CHRONICLES 13:14

(14) And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle *was* before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.

This is a beautiful testimony of piety; this cry unto the LORD.

2 CHRONICLES 13:15

(15) Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

And this is as sweet a testimony of the LORD'S hearing and

answering prayer.—It was not Abijah's sword, not Abijah's speech, but it was the LORD that smote Jeroboam and Israel with him.

2 CHRONICLES 13:16-19

(16) And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand. (17) And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. (18) Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers. (19) And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Bethel with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof.

The event was truly awful. This slaughter is the greatest that we ever read of in sacred history.

2 CHRONICLES 13:20

(20) Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died.

What a short but awful account doth the HOLY GHOST give of this man! think only what a terror this wretch had been to multitudes. Like another Herod, the *LORD* smites him, and he dies. Oh! did but such characters consider what feeble creatures they are in the midst of all their boasting, what a check might it give to the vanity of their mind! See Acts 12:23.

2 CHRONICLES 13:21-22

(21) But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters. (22) And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, *are* written in the story of the prophet Iddo.

There appears to have been no grace in Abijah's heart; though the *LORD* was pleased to make him an instrument in

his hand for the destruction of Jeroboam. Reader! is not this the case in the present hour?

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to read the history of war and bloodshed without having our minds led out to the serious consequences of sin, which hath introduced death with all its trains of evil. Behold, Reader, in the example before us, how the descendants of Jacob, in the different tribes and families, have lost sight of their original stock, and are employed in destroying one another. Oh! the wretched consequences of a fallen state! precious JESUS! here again, as in a thousand other instances, let me pause to praise thee for thy gracious interposition in the redemption of our fallen nature!

LORD! I beseech thee that in all the conflicts and warfares in which my soul may be engaged, give me to see, like *Abijah*, that the LORD is on my side, then need I not fear what men can do unto me. And oh, LORD! let my cause be on the same side as his was, with the house of David. JESUS is my lawful sovereign: by heirship; for the FATHER hath made him heir of all things; and by purchase and by conquest, for he hath purchased my redemption with his blood; and by the victory of his grace over my heart, he hath a rightful claim to my obedience and my love. LORD, grant that I may never be found lifting up the heel of disobedience against thee, lest like Jeroboam the LORD smite me, and I never after recover strength to lift up my head. But make me the willing subject of thy grace, that my knee may bow before thee, and with all the redeemed joyfully confess, that JESUS CHRIST *is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER.—Amen.*

CHAPTER 14

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The succession of the history is carried on in this chapter in the relation of the reign of Asa, the son of Abijah. His character and piety, and an account of his victories.

2 CHRONICLES 14:1

(1) ¶ So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

The history of a pious king amidst the relation of impious princes, is to the historian precious and refreshing, as some sweet spot of herbage and of water to the traveller amidst a barren and dry wilderness.

2 CHRONICLES 14:2-7

(2) And Asa did *that which was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God: (3) For he took away the altars of the strange *gods*, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: (4) And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. (5) Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. (6) And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest. (7) Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about *them* walls, and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought *him*, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.

It should seem from the account here given that Asa, immediately on his accession to the throne, began to reform the abuses of the preceding reign of his father. Idolatry he abolished, which had crept in from the latter end of the reign of his grandfather Solomon. And what is yet more pleasant in the account here given, he set up the pure worship of the

LORD GOD of Israel. So that this forms a very pleasing relation concerning the kingdom of Judah under the government of Asa. If the Reader compares what is related of Asa in 1 Kings 15 with his history as recorded in this place and the two following chapters, the narratives will mutually explain each other. Though we have but a short account in the book of the Kings concerning Asa compared to what is here told of him.

2 CHRONICLES 14:8-10

(8) And Asa had an army *of men* that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these *were* mighty men of valour. (9) ¶ And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah. (10) Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

The happiest and most exemplary life is not free from assault. Nay in a spiritual sense, if any man will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, he shall on this very account suffer persecution. That is a precious blessing of thine, dearest JESUS, only I would be always careful to see that it is purely from an attachment to thee, and to thy cause, that the persecution comes, Matthew 5:11.

2 CHRONICLES 14:11

(11) And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, *it is* nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou *art* our God; let not man prevail against thee.

Reader! do not fail to observe the beauties of this prayer, short as it is, for they are many. In the first place remark in it the ground of Asa's cry to GOD. He had served GOD in the day of his prosperity, and therefore now in the day of his

adversity he might truly call upon him. Observe moreover, that the GOD he called upon was not an unknown GOD, but a well known and a well proved GOD; even GOD in covenant. O LORD, our GOD, said Asa! oh! how precious, how inconceivably precious is it, to have GOD in CHRIST in all the covenant engagements of redemption in the LORD JESUS, to fly to in time of need. Observe still further the strong faith Asa had in the power of GOD. It is nothing with thee (said he) to help with many or with few. Oh! for faith to every poor sinner when a sense of abounding transgression would overwhelm the soul! Thy covenant grace, almighty FATHER, and thy cleansing blood and justifying righteousness, thou blessed JESUS, can save from all sin!—Observe once more the humbleness of soul in Asa concerning his own strength; *we rest on thee*; not in our arms, nor in our strength. So saith the poor sinner made sensible of his own nothingness and depravity. His language is, I place no more dependence on my best prayers for acceptance, than on my worst sins. Neither repentance, nor faith, are the causes of my hope: But JESUS alone, his merits, his blood, his righteousness. And lastly, let not the Reader pass over as distinguishing a feature in Asa's prayer as any; thou art our GOD; let not man prevail against *thee*. Intimating that the cause was the LORD'S, and so would be the glory of the triumph. And is not this the case in all the great objects of redemption? All is for the honour of JESUS; that GOD may be glorified in him. So sung the redeemed in heaven, which John heard, who, while ascribing redemption to JESUS, proclaimed at the same time that this redemption was from GOD as the first cause, and reverted back to GOD again as the final end. *Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.* Revelation 5:9. See, Reader! what a true gospel prayer is here recorded of Asa in the book of the Chronicles.

2 CHRONICLES 14:12-15

(12) So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before

Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. (13) And Asa and the people that *were* with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil. (14) And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them. (15) They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

No wonder after such a prayer; which the *LORD* gave grace to offer up, that an answer of mercy and favor should come down. And Reader! pray remark one or two expressions in this account. It is said that the enemy could not recover themselves *before the LORD, and before his host*. And that *the fear of the LORD*, not the fear of Asa's army, came upon them. And such, depend upon it, is and will be the consternation and terror of all the enemies of our salvation. The *LORD* thy GOD (is the sweet promise) shall drive them out before thee, and shall deliver them into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. See a precious string of promises to this amount, Deuteronomy 7 from beginning to end. And which if the Reader spiritualizeth with an eye to JESUS (for it is pure gospel, and may be safely so interpreted) he will find it most precious indeed!

REFLECTIONS

It is hardly possible to read the character here given of *Asa*, and the blessed eventual consequences of his piety, as it concerned the people of Judah, without having our minds led out in delightful contemplation on the happiness of a church, and nation, and people, under the blessings of princes which set up true religion in the land, and adorn the gospel of JESUS, not only by precept, but example. The imagination can hardly calculate the extensiveness of such a blessing, in the

innumerable happy consequences, which spring out of it. Who shall indeed say to what auspicious blessings, even in generations yet to come, it may reach.

And while we exercise the mind in contemplating the mercy as it is found in a land at large, under the eye of a reforming prince, like Asa; if we carry the thought into the narrower circle of churches and private families, the blessing is immense, even here, in the eventual gracious effects which must follow. Let the Reader figure to himself a church, an house, a family, all living in the faith, and love, and fear of GOD. They are closely allied in the strictest and most durable of all bonds, of reverence and faith in JESUS to a covenant GOD in CHRIST, and in real amity and Christian union to one another. JESUS is their glorious head, and they are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Let the enemies of their salvation, like the Ethiopians against Asa, come forth with an army of a thousand thousand, yet the battle is the LORD'S, and he will eventually come forth to their deliverance. The graces of his SPIRIT will be their support, and confidence in the promises of redemption by JESUS their strong hold. They will be exercised indeed in resisting sin and Satan, but more is he that is with them than all that are against them. It is nothing to our GOD to help, whether with many or with few. They shall overcome, as the armies of heaven have done, by the blood of the Lamb, and be made more than conquerors through his grace helping them.

CHAPTER 15

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The history of Asa is continued through this chapter. Encouraged by Azariah, on whom the SPIRIT of GOD

descended to teach the king, he entereth further in the reformation of Judah from the remains of idolatry. He removeth his mother from being queen in consequence of her idolatry.

2 CHRONICLES 15:1

(1) ¶ And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

What a mercy it was that the *LORD* did not forsake his people in the midst of their idolatry, but poured out of his *HOLY SPIRIT* occasionally upon the minds of some to preserve a sense of his presence among them. Sweet thought!

2 CHRONICLES 15:2-7

(2) And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The *LORD is* with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. (3) Now for a long season Israel *hath been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. (4) But when they in their trouble did turn unto the *LORD* God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. (5) And in those times *there was* no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries. (6) And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. (7) Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

It must have been an animating thing after the victory, and in the moment of returning from the spoils of the foe,—this address of Azariah. And observe how seasonable it was. Though the *LORD* had given them victory, had heard and answered prayer; and had destroyed the enemy; yet let not Asa and his people suppose that they might now return to folly. There is more cause than ever now to keep close to the *LORD*, that the mercy lately manifested might be perpetuated. Reader! mark what is here said with an eye to *JESUS*? Hath he

lately helped us in our conflicts with the enemy? Hath he given us to see our nothingness, and his all-sufficiency? Let these things become only a more earnest call upon our hearts to see our daily need of him, and that we may act more faith upon him. Let his glory be our chief aim: and this will ensure us his abiding favor.

2 CHRONICLES 15:8

(8) ¶ And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD.

How delightful it is to see the gracious effects of the prophet's preaching on the heart of Asa. Such, Reader! ought all the gracious messages of our GOD, in his blessed gospel, to have upon our hearts, to give courage and strength for the holy war, and to animate our souls more and more *to forget things which are behind, and to press forward to those which are before; and thus to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.* Philippians 3:13, 14,

2 CHRONICLES 15:9-15

(9) And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him. (10) So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. (11) And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil *which* they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. (12) And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; (13) That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. (14) And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. (15) And all Judah rejoiced at the

oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.

This convening of the people was a very proper thing after so glorious an instance of the divine mercy; in order that all the people, because all were interested in the deliverance, might send up their praises together. And it is delightful to remark, that the assembly became numerous, and fell to Asa out of all Israel in abundance, because they saw that the *LORD* his GOD was with him. Oh! Reader! what unknown powers of persuasion would be found in that argument, could we but carry that proof with us, that the *LORD* our GOD is with us. Such we are told will be the grand predisposing cause, in making up the gospel church at the last times, when Jew, and Gentile, are to be brought into one fold. *Ten men shall take hold of the skirts saying, we will go with you for we have heard that GOD is with you.* Zechariah 8:23. How beautiful a view is here given of the sacred joy of this people. And what a complacency is described in the LORD'S being found of them, and giving them rest! surely those sacrifices, and this covenant, were by faith in the promised seed and looking unto JESUS!

2 CHRONICLES 15:16-19

(16) And also *concerning* Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped *it*, and burnt *it* at the brook Kidron. (17) But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. (18) And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. (19) And there was no *more* war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

I admire Asa's integrity, in that his eye would not spare even his own mother. Surely there can be no real love to the *LORD*,

that suffers any creature to become a rival. *He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me.* Precious JESUS! give me grace to follow thee wholly, though the ties of nature plead ever so powerfully. Thou who hast made me, redeemed me, and given me all my comforts; surely thou hast an unquestionable right to be loved, and closely adhered to above all.

REFLECTIONS

How beautiful upon the mountains (saith the prophet) are the feet of them that publish salvation. And a lively token of divine favor, in the person of Azariah, was given here in this embassy from GOD to his people. And was not the purport of his visit to the same effect? Did he not hold forth the presence, the favor, the love, the assurance of protection to the people, while adhering to their covenant engagements? And what were these things but shadows and types of JESUS?

And what is it now? Ambassadors are sent by the LORD JESUS to propose and negotiate with poor sinful men, an embassage of mercy, favor, and peace. On JESUS, our fullness, our security, our very being and safety depend. And if, while these glorious tidings of GOD'S good-will to men are held forth to us like Asa and the people, our very souls go forth in praise, and love with thanksgiving, for the unspeakable gift of GOD in his dear Son: oh! how certain is it, that the LORD will give us rest on every side from all our enemies. The LORD will fight our battles for us, and we shall hold our peace, *When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

CHAPTER 16

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This chapter closeth the history of Asa. After a long reign, and long prosperity, in consequence of new troubles arising, Asa sends to the king of Syria for aid. Being reprov'd for it by the prophet, Asa manifests great displeasure. He is diseas'd; seeks not to GOD, but to the physicians, for help. He dies, and is buried with great pomp.

2 CHRONICLES 16:1-3

(1) ¶ In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. (2) Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, (3) *There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.*

Here is a melancholy account of Asa after such an illustrious relation as we have had of him before. Is it possible that the man who had been so highly favored of the LORD; had entered into covenant with GOD; and enjoyed the sweets of it for so many years, should be alarmed at the approach of a power like that of Syria? We have the account of this transaction, 1 Kings 15. There is, however, some difference, in the chronology of the account, between what is here related and in the book of the Kings; to which I refer the Reader. His alliance with Benhadad, an heathen, is singular in a man of Asa's piety. Alas! what a proneness there is in our corrupt nature, to keep fair with the carnal and ungodly world. But Reader! depend upon it, every backsliding of this kind shall bring its own scourge.

2 CHRONICLES 16:4-6

(4) And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. (5) And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *it*, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease. (6) Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

The Syrian gladly availed himself to punish Israel. Herod and Pilate shall be good friends when joining against JESUS. But were it not for this, they would be sworn foes.

2 CHRONICLES 16:7-9

(7) ¶ And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. (8) Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. (9) For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

What a precious thing it is in all masters, could they but be truly sensible of it, to have faithful servants. In the church of GOD how highly essential it is that the preachers should be so! What a lovely account of the divine prescience and knowledge is here given of our GOD. His eyes, not barely looking on, but running through the earth. And this, not to inform himself, but to convince his people, how near at hand he is to their deliverance. Blessed JESUS! grant that I may never lose sight of this precious truth. Surely, dear LORD, if thou art looking on, well may I be confident in thee and in thy strength. But what a melancholy thought it is when past experiences of the

LORD'S *goodness are not found sufficient with our unbelieving hearts to beget an hearty, firm, and unshaken reliance. What a beautiful contrast to this conduct of Asa was that of Samuel between Mizpeh and Shem, when he set up his Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto the LORD hath helped us. 1 Samuel 7:12. And cannot you and I, Reader, set up our hitherto. And if our present Ebenezer depend upon it we shall never, except from the unbelief of our hearts, say with truth, the LORD hath forsaken me, and my LORD hath forgotten me. Isaiah 49:14.*

2 CHRONICLES 16:10

(10) Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for *he was* in a rage with him because of this *thing*. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people the same time.

Alas! what an awful picture is this of Asa. Oh! how evident it is when men grow cool towards GOD that they grow impatient of reproof; and how unbounded is the rage of the human mind! Not only the preacher, but the hearers, if they look as though they countenanced the sermon, will come in for a portion in the angry man's resentment.

2 CHRONICLES 16:11-14

(11) And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. (12) And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease *was* exceeding *great*: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. (13) And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. (14) And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds *of spices* prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

The disease of Asa seems to have been remarkable, as if it was peculiarly sent of the *LORD*, that it is so described,—Perhaps a lameness. He had confined the prophet, and now

the *LORD* confines him. But the prophet's prison was converted into a palace, for the *LORD* was with him: *Asa's* palace into a dungeon, for he had not the light of the divine countenance. He sought aid from the physician. He forgot that it is the *LORD'S* province to kill and to make alive, to bring down to the grave and to bring up. Oh! what miserable comforters are all men. Physicians are of no value except the *LORD* commissions them, either to the body or the soul. His death was awful. Of his burial we read, indeed, that it was attended with great pomp. But oh! how far preferable is one whisper of grace from the *LORD*, in a dying hour, than all the shouts of men without it over the unconscious ashes. Oh! for that voice to be heard and felt, both by Reader and Writer in the last hour, *Blessed are the dead which die in the LORD!* Yes! blessed *JESUS!* let it be my portion to live *to* thee, and to die *in* thee; and then death will be as precious as spices, and lying down with *CHRIST* the sweetest odours. Revelation 14:13.

REFLECTIONS

IT is impossible to close our view of the life of *Asa* without having the mind exercised with solemn thoughts concerning an history so very mysterious and extraordinary. The *HOLY GHOST* hath twice caused it to be recorded in his history, that *though the high places were not removed; nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.* Though his latter end therefore differed so materially from the beginning, yet are we led to hope that a work of grace had passed upon his soul; and though for his rebellion and departure, like a stubborn child, under correction, he was put to bed in the dark; yet a child still, and mercifully considered so by his gracious *GOD* and *FATHER* in *CHRIST*.

But Reader! leaving the history of *Asa*, let you and I

endeavour to make the suitable and becoming improvements from it, which a case so solemn and striking is highly calculated to propose. When we see as in his instance, and in the instance of others, such as the apostle Paul speaks of, in whose hearts a work of grace hath been manifested, that they still carry about with them a body of sin, oh! let it serve to teach us with what wariness and caution believers in JESUS should have their conversation in the world. If Paul himself groaned in consequence of this, and years after his regeneration declared that *he was carnal, sold under sin; that the good he would he did not; but that the evil which he would not that he did*. Oh! think, my brother, what a mass of sin this unrenewed part of our nature the body is, and with what holy jealousy should we watch over it, lest it drag clown the soul! How oft doth Satan, joining with the remaining corrupt lusts of our nature, intice us from JESUS; and in what numberless instances do we find our hearts wandering from all that is truly precious, from JESUS, from our happiness, from his word, from his people!

Oh! thou Holy One of Israel! the *LORD* our righteousness! how endeared art thou to my soul in this among a thousand other views in which I see and feel my daily need of thee. *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* None but JESUS can accomplish this mighty work, for all the angels of heaven are incompetent to such a service. And blessed, forever blessed be thy dear name, thou art truly called JESUS, because thou wilt save thy people from their sins. Thou hast redeemed them by thy blood from all the powers of hell and darkness; and thou hast, and wilt save them from themselves and their own corrupt nature. *Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, (saith GOD by his servant the prophet) or shall the lawful captive be delivered.* And Reader! recollect every sinner is a *lawful* captive, who by sin hath given himself to the service of

Satan. *But thus, saith the LORD, even the captives of the mighty, shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered. For I will contend with them that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.* Isaiah 49:24, 25. Oh! precious, precious promise of a covenant GOD in CHRIST, made to the person of our dear IMMANUEL; and in him confirmed sure to all his seed.

CHAPTER 17

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We arrive now in the history of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah to the record concerning Jehoshaphat the son of Asa. He hath a prosperous reign. He appointeth teachers in Judah. An account of his greatness.

2 CHRONICLES 17:1-4

(1) ¶ And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel. (2) And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken. (3) And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; (4) But sought to the *LORD* God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

The account here given of Jeoshaphat's prudence in strengthening himself in his kingdom, is far less interesting than what is said of him, of his walking in the counsel of the *LORD*. The most lovely feature in every character is that of grace. How truly becoming is it; since we owe everything we have to the *LORD*, that the bountiful giver should have, if but as tenants of such a *LORD*, the just rent of his own property.

2 CHRONICLES 17:5-6

(5) Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance. (6) And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

And Reader! do observe how the LORD'S blessing is sure to accompany such conduct. Our GOD will never be backward; but be always before hand in rewarding the services of his creatures. Though he needs nothing from them, and indeed strictly speaking it is of his own they offer, yet he is graciously pleased to make himself debtor to his creatures, and to accept *that* as a *gift* which from them is indeed a just *debt*.

2 CHRONICLES 17:7-9

(7) Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, *even* to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. (8) And with them *he sent* Levites, *even* Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. (9) And they taught in Judah, and *had* the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

I do not recollect a more beautiful representation given of any of the kings of Israel any where, than what is here given of Jehoshaphat in his sending forth teachers to bring his subjects acquainted with the law of the *LORD*. The teachers also are highly spoken of, in that when they went forth to instruct, their teaching was concerning the *LORD*; for it is said that they had the book of the law of the *LORD* with them. In the present hour ministers of JESUS should never be without their Bibles, for this is their authority by which they may establish the truths which they teach; and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

2 CHRONICLES 17:10

(10) ¶ And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

It plainly proves how much the *LORD* approved of Jehoshaphat's instructing the people, for he suffered no interruption to the pious work to take place from the nations around.

2 CHRONICLES 17:11

(11) Also *some* of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats.

It is more than probable these presents were to preserve peace, for the greatness of Jehoshaphat made him formidable, and the fear of the *LORD* had fallen upon the countries around.

2 CHRONICLES 17:12-19

(12) And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store. (13) And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, *were* in Jerusalem. (14) And these *are* the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valour three hundred thousand. (15) And next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand. (16) And next him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the LORD; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour. (17) And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand. (18) And next him *was* Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war. (19) These waited on the king, beside *those* whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.

When we behold Jehoshaphat, and his court, and army, his teachers, among the princes and the schools, which he had established through his kingdom, we are led to conclude that Judah, during his reign must have been in a state of great happiness and prosperity. That sweet song which David sung in his days might have been sung by Jehoshaphat in his. For it was the same *LORD* which giveth salvation unto kings that delivered him, as well as David, from the peril of the sword. Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose *GOD* is the *LORD*. Psalm 144:15.

REFLECTIONS

IT is highly gratifying in the perusal of the word of *GOD*, when we behold his servants zealous for his honor, and making his glory the first object of their concern. And however, in different ages of the church, and under the different dispensations of the Old Testament scripture or the New, we behold various characters, still it is precious to remark how the children of the *LORD* have all one family feature in their knowledge and love of him. Begotten by the same *FATHER*; purchased by the same Redeemer; and brought under the influence of the same *SPIRIT*; they are adopted into the same sonship, and are heirs of *GOD*, and joint heirs with *CHRIST*. The image of the *LORD* they are changed into by grace; they are impressed with it, for it is engraven on their foreheads, and the *SPIRIT* of the *LORD* is in their hearts. So that everything concerning them becomes precious and interesting. *GOD* their *FATHER* marked them for his own from everlasting; and in the person of his dear Son he chose them and loved them from all eternity. And in time he hath provided for all their wants, and watches over them with thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give them an expected end. *GOD* the Son received them from his *FATHER* as his gift, and by becoming their

husband, head, and surety, made them the purchase of his blood, and became interested in all that concerned them, through time to all eternity. And GOD the SPIRIT graciously undertook in his blessed office-work to bring them savingly acquainted with the FATHER, and with CHRIST, and make them the willing subjects of his grace in the day of his power. So that from the united mercy, love, and blessing, of the sacred three in one, their minds, like Jehoshaphat's, are secretly inclined to the love, and reverence, and obedience, and faith of GOD in CHRIST. They desire to love what the LORD loves, and to hate what the LORD hates. They pray to be brought into an holy conformity to his will in all things. JESUS is precious, his word, his ordinances, his laws, his people. And while they take delight in whatever tends to the promotion of the Redeemer's glory, they feel distress in whatever brings dishonour to his most holy name or his word. Reader! are these, more or less, in all ages the real characters of GOD's people? let your heart and mine see to it then that we have such testimonies of our adoption and sonship.

CHAPTER 18

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This chapter informs us of the treaty Jehoshaphat made with Ahab, to go against Ramoth-gilead to battle; and the consequence of the war. Ahab is slain. Jehoshaphat is spared.

2 CHRONICLES 18:1

(1) ¶ Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.

We have the relation of this connection between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, together with what follows, in the battle of

Ramoth-gilead, in the 1 Kings 22 so that I refer the reader thither for what is remarked upon it. In addition I would just observe, that it was an affinity of marriage between the royal houses of Judah and Israel, that caused this junction in war, for (as it appears, 2 Chronicles 21:6) Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, had married Ahab's daughter. But what a wretched alliance! and sorry I am to add, that in the present hour, even among many professing godliness, riches, and not grace, are too often made the object by which marriage-connections are formed. But of all such it may be said, *Be sure thy sin shall find thee out.* Numbers 32:23.

2 CHRONICLES 18:2-3

(2) And after *certain* years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that *he had* with him, and persuaded him to go up *with him* to Ramothgilead. (3) And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, I *am* as thou *art*, and my people as thy people; and *we will be* with thee in the war.

See how the alliance began to work. Jehoshaphat is enticed into a battle. Ramoth-gilead in fact belonged to Jehoshaphat, for it was a city in the tribe of Gad. And yet Ahab it seems meant, had he conquered, to have united it to his kingdom.

2 CHRONICLES 18:4-34

(4) ¶ And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day. (5) Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver *it* into the king's hand. (6) But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him? (7) And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same *is* Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

(8) And the king of Israel called for one *of his* officers, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla. (9) And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, clothed in *their* robes, and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. (10) And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed. (11) And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. (12) And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets *declare* good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good. (13) And Micaiah said, *As* the LORD liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak. (14) And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand. (15) And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the LORD? (16) Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return *therefore* every man to his house in peace. (17) And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee *that* he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? (18) Again he said, Therefore hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and *on* his left. (19) And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner. (20) Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? (21) And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And *the* LORD said, Thou shalt entice *him*, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do *even* so. (22) Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee. (23) Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? (24) And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see on that

day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. (25) Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; (26) And say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace. (27) And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return in peace, *then* hath not the LORD spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all ye people. (28) ¶ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead. (29) And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle. (30) Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that *were* with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel. (31) And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It *is* the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them *to depart* from him. (32) For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again from pursuing him. (33) And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn thine hand, that thou mayest carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. (34) And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed *himself* up in *his* chariot against the Syrians until the even: and about the time of the sun going down he died.

This account is so similar, as far as it goes, to what is related in the book of the Kings already referred to, that I do not think it necessary to make any further observations, unless it be on that clause which is particularly added here, but not noticed in the former history, that at the crying out of Jehoshaphat, (verse 31), *the LORD helped him, and moved the Syrians to depart from him*. It is delightful to observe how the *LORD*, who hath all hearts at his disposal, can and will interpose for the deliverance of his servants when all human aid fails. The *LORD* may permit, as in the case of Jehoshaphat,

that our sins and backslidings shall correct; they may and sometimes will, bring us into extreme danger; but in every temptation *the LORD will make a way to escape*; and though not for our deserts, but for his great name's sake, he will save in time of need.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader, over the perusal of this chapter, and passing by for the present other considerations, let your meditations with mine be deeply exercised in beholding the striking contrast between the false and lying prophets here represented, seducing Ahab to his ruin, and the faithful honest Micaiah, in foretelling to him what would take place.

Nothing in history, nothing in all the events of the world, nothing in the setting up, or putting down empires, bears the least proportion, in point of magnitude and importance, to that of men drawing the line of eternal distinction between true and false teachers, concerning the truths *as they are in JESUS*.

Who in the days of Ahab would have ventured to have called in question those four hundred prophets, who all with one voice concurred in sending Ahab to battle with full assurance of success; and who backed their commission in the name of the *LORD*? And who would have ventured to come forward, when the poor solitary prophet Micaiah, from the prison, foretold the awful event hanging ready to fall upon the head of the king, and to have justified his faithfulness? But the event manifested where the truth lay. It is not pomp, nor parade, though accompanied with pretended commissions from *JESUS*, can certify to truth. Men, destitute themselves of saving knowledge, can never be safely followed in what they deliver on divine things. And the *LORD JESUS* himself hath

marked *hirelings* in such plain characters, as leave it no great matter of difficulty to discover the object of their ministry. They may, like the four hundred, be numerous, be of one mind, discourse with great confidence, and of certain success; but the apostle awfully speaks of the bringers in of heresies, *even denying the LORD that brought them, that they shall bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

The *Micaiahs* of the present day may be, as he was, exposed to much persecution. Like Paul and his few faithful followers, they may be held up as a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. And faithfulness will be sure, when exercised in the reprovng sinners, to bring upon them the obloquy, the scorn, the derision, to speak the best of it, of men; and to provoke the rage of devils. But if their ministry be directed to exalt the Saviour, and humble the sinner; if they preach CHRIST, and not themselves; set forth the wretchedness of man in his highest attainments, and insist upon the person, offices, blood, and righteousness of JESUS, as the whole of salvation; here we may safely join issue with what so fully corresponds to the counsel of GOD in the salvation of sinners. CHRIST is declared to be both the wisdom of GOD and the power of GOD for salvation, to every one that believeth. These are they *whose faith I pray you to follow, considering the end of their conversation, JESUS CHRIST the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*

CHAPTER 19

CONTENTS

We have related in this Chapter a further account of the reign of Jehoshaphat. He returns to his kingdom after the battle of Ramoth-gilead. He sets judges over the land.

2 CHRONICLES 19:1

(1) ¶ And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.

No doubt the peace which is here spoken of, means the sense he had of the LORD'S goodness in preserving his life in so critical a moment of danger at the battle. It is probable that by this time the mind of the king had been led to consider that he had been out of the path of duty, and therefore the mercy he had received was a double mercy, and being so widely distinguished from the fate of Ahab, he could not but return to his house and family in peace.

2 CHRONICLES 19:2-3

(2) And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore *is* wrath upon thee from before the LORD. (3) Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.

This Jehu was the son of that faithful prophet whom Asa his father put into prison for his faithfulness. A worthy son of so worthy a father. But let us remark rather the grace and mercy of the *LORD* towards Jehoshaphat. The *LORD* saved him in the day of battle, though the wrath of the *LORD* was upon him, as it is said. Reader! it is precious to behold how the *LORD* in the midst of judgment remembers mercy. Sweetly the Psalmist views this in his penitential supplication. *If thou LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD who shall stand! But there is mercy, there is JESUS with thee.* His blood and righteousness plead when iniquities testify against his children: Psalm 130:3, 4.

2 CHRONICLES 19:4-11

(4) And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and

brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers. (5) ¶ And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, (6) And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. (7) Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do *it*: for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. (8) Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and *of* the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem. (9) And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. (10) And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and *so* wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass. (11) And, behold, Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites *shall be* officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good.

We hear of no complaint nor anger in Jehoshaphat, like that of Asa at the reproof of the prophet. But we find on the contrary, his heart setting about a greater reform in his kingdom. He abides at home at Jerusalem his capital, and goes no more to foreign wars. His going forth is only through his own kingdom, to look over the magistrates whom he had appointed to preside over the people. And what a pious charge is recorded here concerning his address to the judges. Nothing, surely, can afford a more lovely view than what is here held forth of Jehoshaphat. In every point, as a king, as a servant of the *LORD*, and as a friend of the people, Jehoshaphat appears illustrious indeed; and the HOLY GHOST hath handed down his memory with great honor to all succeeding generations in the church.

REFLECTIONS

Reader! let us pause over the history here presented to us, and gather from the perusal some of those sweet and interesting instructions which are presented to our meditation.

In the peaceable and happy return of Jehoshaphat to his house after so merciful a deliverance, let us learn to estimate divine mercies, and rightly to receive them. Is not every return to our house, to our families, to our home, a token of divine favour? And are not those mercies heightened if, at any time, like Jehoshaphat, we have gone out without prayer, without seeking the divine blessing, without divine direction; nay, perhaps, like Jehoshaphat, in opposition to the divine will and pleasure. Nay, more than these; when, as in the instance before us, our return to our house in peace hath been distinguished from others who, like Ahab, went out in health as Jehoshaphat, but returned no more. What numberless examples of a similar kind are going on in the present hour in the world, in which we are called upon to mark the distinguishing mercy? And shall not our unthinking hearts sometimes pause, and behold the LORD'S hand in conducting out, and bringing home in peace and safety.

And if a real follower of the LORD JESUS be brought to such views of divine favor, will he not eye the tokens as tenfold brighter, and enjoy them with tenfold sweetness, when viewing them as covenant blessings, and accepting them as such from his interest in JESUS! Hath a GOD in CHRIST entailed blessings both on soul and body; hath he promised, by virtue of covenant redemption in the blood and righteousness of his dear Son, to bless his people both in their basket and in their store; in their going out and their coming in; blessings in the city, and blessings in the field; blessings in time, and blessings to all eternity? and shall not every follower of the

LORD JESUS find a relish and a sweetness of the richest kind from perceiving the covenant love with which every one of them is brought home to the heart, marked in the plainest characters of the FATHER'S love, the Saviour's grace, and the SPIRIT'S fellowship. Yes! thou dearest JESUS! when I see thy love in the mercy, and the precious fruits, of thy redemption in the favor, be it what it may; whether at going out, or returning home in peace, then will my joy be full. It is JESUS *in* the blessing, and the love of JESUS *with* the blessing, which gives the finishing relish to all, and furnishes *a joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

In the faithfulness of the prophet let us not only behold the loveliness of being always firm in the cause of the LORD, but pray for grace to follow so bright an example. An openness and integrity of conduct in speaking truths, however unpleasant, is not limited to the ministry; there are few characters in life but may find occasion for the exercise of it in numberless situations: a father to his child, or a servant to his master. And when GOD and our conscience demands such services there should be no hesitation.

Lastly. In the reformation set up by Jehoshaphat, we may gather a sweet and precious instruction, how grace operates, when the LORD awakens it in the mind. We hear no reproof, no expostulation, no anger, no excuse on the part of Jehoshaphat, towards the prophet. Grace was in the heart of Jehoshaphat, while the prophet was delivering his message from the LORD. And the blessed effects of both, in the word of the LORD from without, and the grace of the LORD within, wrought those sweet consequences in the mind of Jehoshaphat. Let us learn from hence how to estimate the work of grace. It is not he which merely confesseth sin, but the promise is, *he that confesseth and forsaketh it, shall, through JESUS and his complete salvation, find mercy.*

CHAPTER 20

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We have here Jehoshaphat in trouble. War is threatened him: he proclaimeth a fast: he offers up prayer: the LORD hears, and answers in mercy: his enemies are overthrown. The close of his reign.

2 CHRONICLES 20:1-2

(1) ¶ It came to pass after this also, *that* the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. (2) Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in Hazazontamar, which *is* Engedi.

This formidable attempt, planned by the enemies of Jehoshaphat, it should seem, had been carried on so secretly, that they had already invaded his country, before he was apprized of it. How subtle is the enemy of souls! What secret methods he hath, by means of his invisible agency, on the hearts of the LORD'S people, before that they are aware of his approaches!

2 CHRONICLES 20:3-4

(3) And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (4) And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

Reader! do remark with me, how this pious soldier began his defence: not in mustering his soldiers; not in raising his army; but in humbling himself and his people before the *LORD*. Do, my Brother, put it down for certain, whatever begins with prayer, will find cause to end in praise. Jehoshaphat had his

fears for sin and guilt breed fear. But he adopted the best method to overcome them. *He sought the LORD*. Where shall a sinner go in his distresses, but to the great and gracious Saviour? Observe how all Judah took part with their king. No doubt Jehoshaphat had endeared himself by his gentleness to his subjects, and therefore they were all united, as the heart of one man, to seek the *LORD*.

2 CHRONICLES 20:5-13

(5) And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, (6) And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou God in heaven? and rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? (7) *Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? (8) And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, (9) If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. (10) And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; (11) Behold, *I say, how* they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. (12) O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee. (13) And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

This is a beautiful prayer, and both the manner of address, with the appearance of the king and his people make it striking. All Judah it is said, with their little ones, and wives and children, stood before the *LORD*, as if to join in the entreaty. Surely it must have had a most interesting effect. And observe the argument of the prayer. *First*, Jehoshaphat

pleads GOD'S sovereignty; *next*, GOD'S relationship in the covenant engagements he had condescended to put himself into, as Abraham's GOD, and to his seed in Israel; *next*, the dedication of the people to GOD according to Solomon's address; with an eye to the temple, by which they had a claim to GOD'S favour. After stating these things as the foundation of an assurance in GOD'S protection, Jehoshaphat brings forward the present affliction as the time for the *LORD* to work in their rescue. He then shows the baseness of Moab and the confederate army, in that the *LORD* would not suffer his people to molest them when they came out of Egypt. And, *lastly*, Jehoshaphat concludes with throwing himself and his people upon the sovereignty of their GOD, as those that could not but be certain of success in the divine favour. There is a vast degree of sound faith and confidence, with fervent piety, in this prayer, and it is not difficult to trace the leadings of grace through the several parts of it. But, methinks, if the Reader considers it spiritually, and with an eye to the gospel, it ariseth to an infinitely higher point of sublimity. Salvation by JESUS is founded in the sovereignty of JEHOVAH. Here we discover the everlasting love and wisdom of GOD in the ordination. Here also GOD hath put himself in the closest covenant-relationship, in the person of his dear Son; for GOD in CHRIST is truly the GOD of our fathers. And as Jehoshaphat pointed to the temple as the sanctuary of defence, to which the distressed Israelite was to look; was not this typical of JESUS? How beautiful then is it to behold gospel mercies in the finished redemption of JESUS, thus shadowed forth in an age so remote from the time of the gospel, when the open display of mercy was to be made known in the LORD JESUS CHRIST!

2 CHRONICLES 20:14-17

(14) ¶ Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the

congregation; (15) And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's. (16) To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. (17) Ye shall not *need* to fight in this *battle*: set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD *will be* with you.

Observe the astonishing grace of the LORD manifested upon this occasion. It was instant, it was immediate; similar to that of Daniel's vision. *At the beginning of the supplication*, the commandment then came forth to Daniel. And here, while Jehoshaphat was speaking, the *LORD* answered. Daniel 9:19-21. Isaiah 65:24. And observe further, by whom did God vouchsafe to speak?—Even by a poor Levite, *Jahaziel*. The humblest instrument is sufficient, when the *LORD* is pleased to work. And remark further, how sure the promise is, *Tomorrow* shall bring forward their deliverance. And to decide *from* whom, and *by* whom the blessing comes; God himself will fight the battle for them; like another Moses, the direction is, *Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD*. Exodus 14:13.

2 CHRONICLES 20:18-19

(18) And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD. (19) And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

It is not within the compass of language to convey to the Reader, what must have been the feelings of the whole assembly on this occasion. What an holy awe, mingled with holy joy, must have thrilled through every heart. But, Reader!

think, if the imagination be able to picture it, what will be the feelings of that vast assembly of the redeemed, when JESUS will own them before JEHOVAH, and a congregated world, as the purchase of his blood, the trophies of his grace, and the gift of his FATHER.

2 CHRONICLES 20:20-21

(20) ¶ And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. (21) And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Observe, the weapons of Jehoshaphat were faith, and dependence on the *LORD*. Whether the company with the king had other weapons with them is not said: but he went forth depending upon the *LORD*; and he begun the preparation for battle with a song of victory. So should all the soldiers of JESUS go forth. For it is in his strength they fight: and the issue is not doubtful. The fight is in fact already over; CHRIST hath conquered: and his people overcome by his blood.

2 CHRONICLES 20:22-25

(22) And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. (23) For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy *them*: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. (24) And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. (25) And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance

both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

How decidedly did the event testify that Judah should have no hand in the victory. How fully hath JESUS shown in his gospel, that salvation is wholly his own, and his right arm hath gotten himself the victory!

2 CHRONICLES 20:26-30

(26) And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day. (27) Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies. (28) And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD. (29) And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel. (30) So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.

The valley of *Berachah*, which signifies *blessing*, was probably a large convenient spot for the people to assemble in to join their praises. And, no doubt, as they went home they sung victory and praises to the *LORD* all the way. Such a deliverance, and so wrought, called for thanksgiving all their lives. And here was a subject for every day to be rehearsed in every family of Judah, that the memory of it might be preserved throughout all generations, that *the children which had not known any thing, might hear and fear the LORD their GOD* as long as they lived. Deuteronomy 31:13.

2 CHRONICLES 20:31-34

(31) ¶ And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: *he was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah the

daughter of Shilhi. (32) And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD. (33) Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers. (34) Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, who *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

We arrive to the close of Jehoshaphat's reign and life together. The length of it was not equal to many of the kings of Judah, though such honourable testimony is given of him. Perhaps the records concerning him, said here to be in the writings of the book of Jehu, might have been extant for a long space after his death; but not being of sacred authority, they were not made a part of the Canon of Scripture.

2 CHRONICLES 20:35-37

(35) And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly: (36) And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Eziongeber. (37) Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

This affinity with the house of Ahab, had cost Jehoshaphat his life, but for divine interposition before. But yet we find a renewed instance of that folly, so as to call forth the reproof again of a prophet. Alas! it is impossible to keep company with, or to be in the society of the carnal; and the precept is unaccommodating, *Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing.* 2 Corinthians 6:17.

REFLECTIONS

WHERE shall believing souls fly in their trouble, but to a

covenant GOD in CHRIST! Like Jehoshaphat, we are told, and from the unquestionable authority of GOD'S word, that the children of *Ammon*, and the children of *Moab*, even the host of foes arising out of the world, from our own corrupt nature, and from the powers of darkness, all come forth against us, day by day, to battle. But if, like Jehoshaphat, instead of mustering human strength, and human skill, we take refuge in the GOD of our salvation; if we go forth, dearest JESUS, in thy name, and in thy righteousness make our boast, we shall be more than conquerors, through thy grace helping us. And we shall assuredly find the valley of *Berachah*: every place indeed will open room for blessing, for every event will furnish cause for it. But learn, my soul, in the midst of all the precious things which this chapter contains, of GOD'S covenant love and mercy to his people, what corruptions still remain in our old nature. Is it not now, as it was with Jehoshaphat and Judah, amidst all the reform set up? Are there not the sad effects still to be found, of what the human heart is with believers now, as with Judah then? It is said that *the high places were not taken away; for as yet the people had, not prepared their hearts*. Oh! precious JESUS! do I not know, do I not feel the daily workings of a corrupt nature? And though thou hast wrought out, thou blessed Finisher of salvation, a complete deliverance for me in thy blood and righteousness, yet, as if to keep me daily, hourly sensible that the work is all of grace; and what I once needed in bringing me out of nature's darkness, I daily need to keep me from falling back to it again; art thou not showing me that the high places of vanity, pride, self-righteousness, and the breakings out of sin, all contradictory as they are to one another, yet annoy my poor soul, and manifest what a poor creature I am continually. *LORD!* overrule these things to thy glory! Give me to see thy preciousness! Enable me to improve mine interest in thee from day to day, that being stript of everything, I may

lean wholly upon thee and seek comfort only in thy finished work. Oh! for grace thus to live a life of faith upon the Son of God, and to make mention of thy righteousness, even thine only.

CHAPTER 21

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This Chapter opens with the history of the commencement of the reign of Jehoram, who succeeded Jehoshaphat. A melancholy history it contains of his wicked reign. Here is recorded his awful disease, death, and burial.

2 CHRONICLES 21:1-6

(1) ¶ Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. (2) And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. (3) And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he *was* the firstborn. (4) Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel. (5) Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. (6) And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD.

One of the first thoughts which seems to strike my mind, in the review of what is here recorded in the sad picture of Jehoram, so contrasted to his pious father, is the degeneracy of our fallen nature. Grace is not hereditary. That the children of GOD in CHRIST are not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, is most evident in all

generations. Reader! mark this as an observation, for the church of GOD confirms it from the beginning. Abraham had an Ishmael, and Isaac an Esau, as well as Jehoshaphat a Jehoram. Do not fail to observe also, how the HOLY GHOST hath marked one cause of Jehoram's transgressions; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife. Oh! that the alliances among gracious persons were more regarded in their descendants!

2 CHRONICLES 21:7

(7) Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever.

GOD'S covenant love is a point of so much importance to be attended to in the history of the church, that the HOLY GHOST hath caused it to be recorded both here and in the parallel history, 2 Kings 8:19. Sweet thought! that the love of GOD to his people, founded as it is in covenant faithfulness, and originating as it doth, not in man's merit, but GOD'S free grace, is not lost or forfeited, either to the church at large, or the individual who is the happy object of it, from undeservings. Psalm 89:30-35.

2 CHRONICLES 21:8-11

(8) In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. (9) Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots. (10) So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time *also* did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. (11) Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*.

Observe how the LORD raiseth up afflictions from the sinner's

own backslidings. The HOLY GHOST marks this elsewhere in strong expressions; Jeremiah 2:19. And the history of Jehoram is not singular in proof of it. I believe, if GOD'S people were to watch with a jealous eye, so as to connect their corrections with their sins, they would be led frequently to trace, that punishments spring as naturally out of iniquities, as streams issue from a fountain.

2 CHRONICLES 21:12-19

(12) ¶ And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, (13) But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself: (14) Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: (15) And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day. (16) Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians: (17) And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. (18) And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. (19) And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

Elijah, the prophet, lived much about the time as Jehoshaphat and Ahab. But Elisha had succeeded him in his office when Jehoram had the government of Judah. It is probable, however, that the reign of Jehoram might have begun before the translation of Elijah; and therefore this written message came to him in the LORD'S name from his departing servant.

And observe how very awful the contents of it. It first opens to his view, the great enormities he had been guilty of. Impious to GOD; and cruel to man: a murderer even of his own brothers! It next marks his punishment, and that is to be exemplarily striking. Yet we hear of no compunction, no sorrow, no turning to the *LORD* by penitence and reformation, though it should seem a long period was allowed him before it was inflicted. And in the mean time, a more general visitation of foreign enemies, whom the *LORD* stirred up against him, as if to see what gentler corrections would accomplish. And Reader! do notice how progressive the *LORD* made those judgments. First, in the enemies from without; then distresses within. His children, his wives, his substance taken away into captivity. And last of all, his own person under this dreadful disease: no doubt loathsome as well as painful. And this protracted to the long period of two years. Alas! even in this life, what awful effects do we daily behold in the visitations of GOD on sinners.

2 CHRONICLES 21:20

(20) Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

And as he lived so he died, unpitied and disregarded. No funeral pomp, nor tears to lament his loss. Nay, the HOLY GHOST hath marked it down, as if to be particularly noticed, *that he departed without being desired*. So truly worthless in life, and so deservedly despised in death. Such was the termination of the life of Jehoram in the very prime of life, being only forty when he died, and his reign of infamy extended but to eight years!

REFLECTIONS

Who can contemplate the awful character of *Jehoram* without dismay! Who can read such a sad page of history in the life of man, without being struck at the sad degeneracy of human nature! And is this the real representation of all men by nature! Are all men liable to the same conduct, and, but for preventing and restraining grace, would invariably pursue the same steps, if similar circumstances of temptation surrounded them? I Pause, my soul, over such a view! Am I by nature a child of wrath, even as others? Did I bring with me into existence every seed of sin; equally prone to ignorance, blindness, hardness of heart, pride, worldly affections of every kind, envy, malice, hatred, covetousness, and all the deadly fruit of a deadly stock, deeply rooted in my nature! Is this the real state of my soul, and the soul of every son and daughter of Adam! Should I, but for grace, have been for ever ignorant of JESUS, unconscious of the glories of his person, unacquainted with the work of his redemption, totally regardless of his love, ignorant of the importance of his salvation, and not only averse to the desire of it, but even unconscious that I needed it! Was this my case, dearest, blessed, compassionate JESUS, when thou first looked upon me, when thou didst pass by and saw me in my blood, and didst bid me live! Should I never, but for this grace of thine, have heard thy voice, seen thy face by happy faith, tasted of thy goodness, and my hands been made to handle of the word of life! Do I really now love thee, thou precious EMMANUEL, and was this the cause, because thou didst first love me! Oh! matchless goodness! oh! unequalled love! oh! precious, precious Redeemer, friend of poor sinners! *LORD* cause me to love thee, to live to thee, to hang upon thee, to cleave to thee more and more. Surely a whole eternity will be too short to speak thy praise! *LORD* take me, make me thine, poor and wretched as I am, for all I am, and all I have, soul and body, are all too little to offer, and too mean to testify thy

praise, thou Almighty Saviour of our ruined and undone nature!

CHAPTER 22

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Ahaziah's history openeth at this Chapter. He succeedeth to the throne—makes a wicked reign, and is slain by Jehu. Athaliah destroyeth all the royal seed, except Joash.

2 CHRONICLES 22:1

(1) ¶ And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned.

We have the parallel history to what is here recorded in the 2d of Kings 11 So that for brevity's sake I refer the Reader to that part of the sacred writings. The great point to be attended to in this historical relation, and for which, no doubt, the HOLY GHOST hath caused a duplicate of this history to be preserved was, that the church might see how the promised seed, in leading to CHRIST, hath been preserved. Ahaziah and Joash shall be kept safe amidst all danger, because the grand event of redemption is the great point all along referred to. *Destroy it not, there is a blessing in it.* Isaiah 65:8.

2 CHRONICLES 22:2-9

(2) Forty and two years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Athaliah the daughter of Omri. (3) He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly. (4) Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction. (5) He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to

war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramothgilead: and the Syrians smote Joram. (6) And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick. (7) And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. (8) And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. (9) And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he *is* the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader on this part of the history, because it is more particularly set forth in the book of the Kings already gone through, which the Reader may consult.

2 CHRONICLES 22:10-12

(10) ¶ But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah. (11) But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. (12) And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

How beautiful it is to see the LORD'S watchful care over his people, Moses shall be hid when his life is threatened. Joash shall be secured when danger is near. Nay, JESUS shall be carried into Egypt when the monster Herod seeks his life.

Reader! how evidently doth the LORD manifest himself when he hideth his people!

REFLECTIONS

OBSERVE, my soul, in the history of this chapter, the awful consequences of sin! What a short triumph had Ahaziah. Life is but a year, and when that year is spent in sin and folly, what a wretched life is made of it? How awful are the consequences which arise out of improper and irreligious alliances! But what blessed effects have taken place in JESUS'S union with our nature, and his betrothing himself to his people! Our alliance with ungracious persons or in families, is sure to bring on numberless evils. But the LORD JESUS condescending to unite us to himself, hath introduced us into the happiest state, the wonder of angels, and the admiration of a congregated world for ever more. Oh! dear *LORD*, break for ever, in my soul, all affinities and relations which may tend to interrupt my joy and happiness with thee, and do thou take the whole possession of my heart, and reign and rule there with unrivalled sway. *I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.*

CHAPTER 23

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The history is pursued through this Chapter. Joash is made king. Athaliah is slain. Jehoiada restoreth the worship of GOD.

2 CHRONICLES 23:1

(1) ¶ And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and

Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him.

Here we have introduced the beginning of that revolution which was so favorable to the interest both of the church and kingdom.

2 CHRONICLES 23:2-11

(2) And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. (3) And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David. (4) This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, *shall be* porters of the doors; (5) And a third part *shall be* at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. (6) But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they *are* holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. (7) And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever *else* cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out. (8) So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go *out* on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses. (9) Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that *had been* king David's, which *were* in the house of God. (10) And he set all the people, every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about. (11) Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and *gave him* the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king.

We need not dwell particularly upon the relation here given of this event, because we have already considered it in the history which is delivered in nearly the same words, 2 Kings 11. I would only beg the Reader to make a spiritual remark as he passeth through it, and observe with me how often the LORD JESUS, the lawful king of his people, is hidden from them, while his enemies in our corrupt nature, the world and the devil usurp, as Athaliah did, not merely for six years together, but many a six years during our unregeneracy, the empire of our hearts. Oh! precious LORD JESUS! thou art that priest indeed which, in the *seventh* year of Jubilee, hast brought liberty to thy captives!

2 CHRONICLES 23:12-15

(12) ¶ Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD: (13) And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of musick, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, Treason. (14) Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges: and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the LORD. (15) So they laid hands on her; and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house, they slew her there.

When the day of judgment, even in this life, comes to the wicked, what an awful day it is! And what will that tremendous day of GOD be, when it shall arrive in another! The rejoicing of the people at the sight of their king, may serve to give us some faint idea how lovely the sight of JESUS is to a poor soul who hath long groaned under the tyranny of Satan, as Judah had under the tyranny of Athaliah. And, Reader! let your imagination conceive, if it can, what will he

the bursts of joy when JESUS shall appear on his throne of glory, and the redeemed surrounding him in the realms above.

2 CHRONICLES 23:16-21

(16) And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD'S people. (17) Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. (18) Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as *it was ordained* by David. (19) And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none *which was* unclean in any thing should enter in. (20) And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of the LORD: and they came through the high gate into the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. (21) And all the people of the land rejoiced: and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

There is a beautiful order in the account here given. The *first* object of reform is to show that GOD graciously looks upon his people and remembers his covenant. The covenant that is said to be made, is between him, and between all the people, and between the king. *Him* means, no doubt, the LORD, and Jehoiada, as his priest, might be supposed to represent him. Sweetly suggesting to us JESUS, our glorious Head and Mediator, whom Jehoiada typified. Hence, what a beautiful portion of gospel comes in, in the midst of this history? And where we expected to find nothing but a simple narrative concerning Judah, here we find a lovely shadow of the LORD JESUS! The *next* object in this revolution of Judah is the destruction of Baal and his images. When the hearts of the people are turned back again to the LORD, then immediately

follows the destruction of idolatry. Reader! how precious a part of our holy faith is it, when we so love the *LORD* as to hate his enemies, David makes this the subject of appeal in proof of his sincerity, *Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?* Psalm 139:21. The *third* step in the reform of Judah, is the arrangement of the temple service. During the usurpation and tyranny of Athaliah all had gone to disorder. But now the *LORD* shall be again worshipped *in the beauty of holiness*. And *lastly*, all the departments of government were brought into regularity and order. So that when GOD is honored, in his house of prayer, and true religion prevails through the land, all ranks of the people are made happy; *there is no leading into captivity, no complaining in the streets*. Well might the Psalmist, in the view of such a nation, cry out; *Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose GOD is the LORD*. Psalm 144:15.

REFLECTIONS

I would pass over both the history itself, and all the circumstances connected with it, while I review the gracious events the LORD'S right hand here accomplished, to give my meditation wing in flying to the yet more precious subject of that revolution wrought by grace, when sin and rebellion, with all the usurpation of Satan, are put down in the heart of man. I desire to bless GOD for the mercies here wrought for his Judah, and that he raised up this *Jehoiada* for the deliverance of his people. But oh! my soul, think of that everlasting deliverance wrought for all his people, when GOD our FATHER brought forth his dear Son, his true *Jehoiada*, hid from ages and generations, and set him as his King in Zion, when declaring the decree of redemption in his name. Here was the everlasting overthrow of Satan's usurpation, tyranny, and power over our poor nature! Here was the final destruction of

false gods, when the heathen oracles, by the coming of the LORD JESUS, were struck dumb for ever. And here was the introduction of that glorious kingdom of righteousness and peace, which shall flourish forever. Hail, thou glorious, thou almighty JESUS! I see thee and thy lovely form beautifully shadowed forth in the character of *Jehoiada*, who ministered in thy name! Thou hast made a covenant indeed in thy blood and righteousness: for thou thyself art the whole of it. And it is thou that hast both set up the reform, and art the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of thy people. Oh! dearest JESUS! while the FATHER crowns thee King in Zion, and all the redeemed congratulate thee in thy coronation in the church of the first-born which are in heaven, do thou by the influences of thine HOLY SPIRIT enable my soul to put the crown of my own personal redemption on thy sacred head, that I may exult as the people here did in the view of their lawful sovereign, for thou art my lawful GOD and King for evermore. And oh! my gracious LORD, while thou art blessing me with the communications of thy love, and my soul truly enjoys the fullness of blessings under thy reign, let thy grace draw out my heart in thy service, that all the idols of creature affection may be destroyed, and JESUS alone govern my heart and affections forever.

CHAPTER 24

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We have in this chapter the history of the reign of Joash. The death of Jehoiada. Joash falleth into idolatry. He is slain.

2 CHRONICLES 24:1-16

(1) ¶ Joash *was* seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. (2) And Joash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. (3) And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters. (4) And it came to pass after this, *that* Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD. (5) And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened *it* not. (6) And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, *according to the commandment* of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? (7) For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. (8) And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD. (9) And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *laid* upon Israel in the wilderness. (10) And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. (11) Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. (12) And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD. (13) So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it. (14) And when they had finished *it*, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, *even* vessels to minister, and to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of

the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada. (15) ¶ But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died. (16) And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

Precious in the sight of the LORD (we are told) is the death of his saints. Psalms 116:15. And the record which the HOLY GHOST hath thought proper to make of the faithful in the sacred volume, is a blessed testimony of this truth.

2 CHRONICLES 24:17-19

(17) Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. (18) And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. (19) Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

It is remarkable that the parallel history of Joash in the book of the Kings doth not take so much notice of his apostacy. But what an awful thing it is, when men listen to false counselors, and are seduced under pretended friendship. In vain was the expostulation, of the prophets. In vain is the gospel preached in the present hour, when the corrupt passions of the unawakened stifle all convictions.

2 CHRONICLES 24:20

(20) And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

How lovely in the midst of such degenerate times appears this conduct of Zechariah. The imagination can hardly furnish a more amiable view than to behold faithful servants of the

LORD daring to be zealous for the cause of GOD and of CHRIST, when the tide of the day is running violently against them. What a glorious evidence of faith this is, when, like Moses, men fear not the wrath of the king, because *they see him who is invisible*. Hebrews 11:27. But Reader! while we pay all due honour to such lovely characters, let us not overlook the cause. Zechariah was thus faithful, because *the SPIRIT of the LORD came upon him*. Oh! blessed gift. LORD pour out of thy spirit now, we beseech thee, *for the residue of the SPIRIT is with thee!*

2 CHRONICLES 24:21-22

(21) And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. (22) Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon *it*, and require *it*.

What an awful state is Joash fallen into! see, Reader! how faithfulness brings forth the glorious crown of martyrdom. Do you not suppose that at the last day, when JESUS comes to be glorified in his saints, his holy army of martyrs, who have really sealed the testimony of his truth with their blood, will appear with peculiar marks of distinction amidst the throng? I am inclined to think that this *Zechariah* is the same of whom our LORD speaks, Matthew 23:35. For though he is said to be the son of *Barachias*, yet it is well known that the Jews had two names. And Jehoiada and Barachias might be one and our same person. And I am the more inclined to this opinion because our LORD'S declaration concerning Zecharias in his blood being required, corresponds with what is here said by the dying prophet; *the LORD look upon it, and require it*; that is, he spake under the spirit of prophecy; the LORD will visit for it.

2 CHRONICLES 24:23-25

(23) And it came to pass at the end of the year, *that* the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. (24) For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. (25) And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.

Here we have the visitation; and an awful visitation it was. It should seem that Joash not only slew Zechariah, but some other of his faithful servants children; for it is said *the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest*. And with what contempt was he buried! Thus died, unlamented, and disregarded, Joash.

2 CHRONICLES 24:26

(26) And these are they that conspired against him; Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess.

The names of the murderers of Joash being recorded, and their Gentile stock on the mother's side springing from Ammon and Moab, seems to have been done with a view to point out the aggravated sorrow of Joash in his last moments. Not only to have died in his bed full of diseases, but under the sword of foreigners. The fear of this was what made Saul's last moments doubly distressing. 1 Samuel 31:4.

2 CHRONICLES 24:27

(27) Now *concerning* his sons, and the greatness of the burdens *laid* upon him, and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they *are* written in the story of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his

son reigned in his stead.

What these burdens were the HOLY GHOST hath not thought proper to record. That Joash thus died, and his son Amaziah became his successor, is the finishing part of his history. Alas! what a melancholy page it forms!

REFLECTIONS

The improvements to be gathered from the perusal of this chapter seem very obvious, and as important as they are plain. In the conduct of Joash we see to what an extent men may go in carrying on the purposes of religion when outward circumstances correspond to make it their interest, while all the while rottenness at the core is in the heart. In all this outside reform how plain is it that there is no regeneration, no work of GOD the SPIRIT; no turning of the heart to GOD; no real regard for his honour and glory. Oh! thou blessed SPIRIT of truth, thou glorifier of JESUS, let thy work on my soul be manifest. Plead, I beseech thee, O Almighty LORD, *with* my soul, and *in* my soul, the cause of JESUS. By thy discoveries to my own view of sin, of unbelief, of lusts, and all the train of corrupt affections, oh! give me to see, to feel, and to be earnest in seeking after JESUS in all his fullness, suitableness, and grace, that my whole soul may be truly brought over from dead works to serve the living and true GOD.

In the death of Zechariah let us behold the real, solid, and substantial worth of true faith. Oh! for grace to be *the followers of them who now through faith and patience inherit the promises!* See my soul, what a precious testimony the LORD JESUS in ages after gave to this his faithful servant's death. And thou, who livest in happier times, and art not called upon to resist unto blood, see that thou art always ready to bear testimony to *the truth as it is in JESUS. Be strong*

in the LORD, and in the power of his might. Like Paul, count not thy life dear unto thyself, so that thou mayest finish thy course with joy, in fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life. Surrounded with such a cloud of witnesses, learn to run with patience the race that is set before thee, looking unto JESUS the author and finisher of faith. Precious LORD! in all things do thou have the pre-eminency.

CHAPTER 25

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This chapter records the reign of Amaziah: his wars, his idolatry, the LORD'S displeasure against him; his combat with Joash: his death.

2 CHRONICLES 25:1-2

(1) ¶ Amaziah *was* twenty and five years old *when* he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. (2) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.

This expression of Amaziah's doing right in the LORD'S sight, *but not with a perfect heart*, throws a light upon his whole character. What he did in a way of worship was in mere form and ceremony. He found it to be a matter of state policy to keep up the temple service. His interest was concerned, and therefore he followed it. And, no doubt from the same motive, had his interest lay the opposite way, Amaziah would have been as much alive to have pursued it. Alas! what is man!

2 CHRONICLES 25:3-4

(3) Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to

him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father. (4) But he slew not their children, but *did* as *it is* written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.

There was justice as well as suitable respect to the divine command in this preservation of the children of his father's murderers. The *LORD* had said this, Deuteronomy 24:16.

2 CHRONICLES 25:5

(5) Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their* fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield.

If we compare the army of Judah as mentioned in this place, with the army as it stood in the days of Jehoshaphat, we find a sad decrease. See 2 Chronicles 17:12-18. The whole of Jehoshaphat's subjects at that time were little less than six million, including men, women, and children. But this will be explained when we consider what are the sad consequences of sin. *The LORD turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Psalm 107:34.

2 CHRONICLES 25:6

(6) He hired also an hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for an hundred talents of silver.

See, Reader, how prone man is to look to an arm of flesh, to anything, rather than the *LORD*. And spiritually considered, doth not the believer do this when not living wholly upon JESUS?

2 CHRONICLES 25:7-13

(7) But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not

the army of Israel go with thee; for the LORD *is* not with Israel, *to wit, with* all the children of Ephraim. (8) But if thou wilt go, do *it*, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down. (9) And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this. (10) Then Amaziah separated them, *to wit*, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger. (11) And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand. (12) And *other* ten thousand *left* alive did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces. (13) But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Bethhoron, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.

Observe how very gracious the *LORD* was, to send a message for safety to such a character as Amaziah. Yes! in the worst of times the *LORD* hath an eye to his people. *Nevertheless* (saith GOD) *I wrought for my name's sake*. Ezekiel 20:22. There is a blessed *nevertheless* whereby the *LORD* will look with mercy upon his people for his great name's sake, and for his covenant righteousness sake, with his dear Son. How beautiful a thought is introduced in the midst of this treaty between the man of GOD and the king; of GOD'S all-sufficiency in making up all our losses which we at any time sustain in obeying his voice. Reader, do not fail to remark this as you go along. The indignation of the distressed army, and the revenge they took, may serve to teach us what dreadful effects break out among the carnal: potsherds striving with potsherds. Alas! did not the *LORD* restrain, what would be the bloodshed deluging the earth, from the proud, imperious, angry passions of man against man!

2 CHRONICLES 25:14

(14) ¶ Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.

Was there ever a more glaring instance of wickedness and folly? He is permitted to scourge Edom for idolatry, and then sets up idols himself.

2 CHRONICLES 25:15-16

(15) Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? (16) And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that *the king* said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.

Wherein did Amaziah differ from his father? Joash did indeed kill Zechariah; but Amaziah would have done the same had not the prophet held his peace. Reader! do not fail to remark the awfulness of such characters.

2 CHRONICLES 25:17

(17) ¶ Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face.

What advice could this be? Not of GOD, nor his prophets, for he had despised both.

2 CHRONICLES 25:18-28

(18) And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down

the thistle. (19) Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to *thine* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee? (20) But Amaziah would not hear; for it *came* of God, that he might deliver them into the hand *of their enemies*, because they sought after the gods of Edom. (21) So Joash the king of Israel went up; and they saw one another in the face, *both* he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Bethshemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah. (22) And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to his tent. (23) And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Bethshemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits. (24) And *he took* all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obbedom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria. (25) And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. (26) Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? (27) Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there. (28) And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.

Much of this history we have 2 Kings 14. But we shall do well to observe in the sad history of the termination of his life, what is said; *it came of God*. Yes! when sinners reject the counsel of GOD, it is against their own souls, how frequently are they made to do the very reverse of what they intend!

REFLECTIONS

WE ought to pause over the view of such characters as Amaziah, and gather instruction from the very awful representation of the corrupt and fallen nature they afford. How in direct opposition to duty, to interest, to happiness, is

all their conduct. Making a profession of godliness, but denying the power of it. At length breaking out in open rebellion, and closing life in all the bitterness of sorrow. How dreadfully painful are the embassies of faithful servants to such men; and how sure are their reproofs to bring upon them their hatred. But whether the *Amaziah*s of the present day will hear, or whether they will forbear, they must be found faithful. And however slighted, or despised, or even brought into peril by their integrity, still they are to go on *through evil report and good report*. The injuries they sustain GOD will recompense. He that despiseth them despiseth him that sent them. And in the end GOD will judge their cause, and bring forth their integrity as the light. JESUS looks on, and knows all. *He will come with vengeance, even GOD will come with a recompense.*

CHAPTER 26

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This chapter contains the history of the reign of Uzziah. He invadeth the office of the priesthood, and is smitten with leprosy. He dieth, and is succeeded by Jotham.

2 CHRONICLES 26:1-5

(1) ¶ Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. (2) He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. (3) Sixteen years old *was* Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jecoliah of Jerusalem. (4) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. (5) And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

We must interpret what is here said of Uzziah, in doing that which was right in the sight of the *LORD*, in the same sense as we did of Amaziah: that is, he kept up a form of religion in the land in opposition to idols. Not that he was a regenerate man, or had any vital godliness. The sequel of his life proves the reverse. His searching after God means his study of the things of God. Thousands in all ages have done this, whose knowledge hath been of the head and not of the heart. Of such God speaks in Zechariah, Zechariah 7:5, 6.

2 CHRONICLES 26:6-15

(6) And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. (7) And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. (8) And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly. (9) Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall*, and fortified them. (10) Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry. (11) Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. (12) The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred. (13) And under their hand *was* an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. (14) And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings *to cast* stones. (15) And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

During the time that Uzziah favored the service of the temple the *LORD* made his way prosperous in temporal things. This is the sense of what is meant by the *LORD'S* helping him.

2 CHRONICLES 26:16-23

(16) ¶ But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the *LORD* his God, and went into the temple of the *LORD* to burn incense upon the altar of incense. (17) And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the *LORD*, *that were* valiant men: (18) And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the *LORD*, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the *LORD* God. (19) Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the *LORD*, from beside the incense altar. (20) And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the *LORD* had smitten him. (21) And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the *LORD*: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land. (22) Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. (23) So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged* to the kings; for they said, He *is* a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

We that live in gospel times can better conceive the cause of this awful visitation on Uzziah in invading the priests office. As the offering incense typified the *LORD* *JESUS*, because none but *JESUS* can approach *JEHOVAH* to make intercession, and to offer sacrifice, for the sins of the people; so the daring act of any going in themselves, with their own offering, implies a despising the way of salvation the *LORD* hath appointed. And

who, in the present hour, is in this awful state, but the man who presumptuously draws nigh in his own righteousness, and makes light of the righteousness of the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Such are under this dreadful leprosy of the soul, and live in a separate house, without GOD, and without CHRIST in the world. LORD! preserve men from this dangerous delusion!

REFLECTIONS

HERE would I meditate over the wretched, ruined, and undone state of *Uzziah*. A leper to his grave. Cast out and forsaken both of GOD and man. Loathsome in the sight of both; and living and dying universally unpitied, unhelped, and unreclaimed. And are there any *Uzziah's* of the present hour? Do any count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite to the SPIRIT of grace! how desperately lost to a real sense of their own state by nature? How totally unconscious of the infinitely precious value of the blood of JESUS; how wretchedly mistaken as to their own filth, corruption, lusts, and universal depravity. What strangers to themselves, to JESUS, to the necessity of the work of GOD upon the soul, and the absolute expediency of being washed from the leprosy of sin in the blood of CHRIST! blessed, thrice blessed GOD, who in mercy led me to see the preciousness of salvation, and as graciously led me to seek it in the way the LORD himself appointed. Never, blessed JESUS, may my soul invade thy office, but rejoice to come under the censer of thy righteousness. Oh! give me to see that I am indeed sheltered from the wrath to come, from the leprosy of this life, and the miseries of another, being found in thee and under thy precious all-atoning sacrifice, whereby thou hast for ever done away the sin and uncleanness of thy people.

CHAPTER 27

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The reign of Jotham is recorded in this chapter. He obtains a victory over the Ammonites. He is succeeded by Ahaz.

2 CHRONICLES 27:1

(1) ¶ Jotham *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.

It may be proper to observe that the relation given in the Chronicles and in the book of Kings concerning this prince, is nearly one and the same. 2 Kings 15.

2 CHRONICLES 27:2

(2) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD. And the people did yet corruptly.

Though Jotham did not invade the priests office as his father had done, yet what is said of him concerning his doing right in the sight of the *LORD*, must be accepted much in the same sense as what was said of Uzziah. The people, it is said, did corruptly. I think it important that the Reader should be reminded that it was during this man's reign, and in the latter part of the reign of his father, that the prophet Isaiah flourished and delivered his prophecy, which he calls a vision. See Isaiah 1:1.

2 CHRONICLES 27:3-9

(3) He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel he built much. (4) Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers. (5) He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon

pay unto him, both the second year, and the third. (6) So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God. (7) Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. (8) He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. (9) And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

Nothing particularly interesting, more than the common events in the records of the kings of Judah and Israel, meets us in these verses. That they lived, and fought, and built, and died, seems the great outline of their general character.—Let the Reader recollect the one great cause for which their history is preserved; namely, to lead in the succession of the line of David to CHRIST. It is this which makes the record precious: for this terminates not in an endless genealogy after *the law of a carnal commandment*, but in JESUS it is plainly *after the power of an endless life*.

REFLECTIONS

IN the quick succession of kings which this part of the word of GOD brings forward to view, it is profitable to pause and consider, how transient those characters were in their power and influence, which during their government, no doubt, made a mighty bustle in life, and moved up and down as beings highly important. But alas! what is all human greatness but as a bubble on the mighty waters! precious JESUS! what would the whole earth, with all its greatest monarchies and men be, void of an interest in thee and thy great salvation! How bounded within a short space their lives! how insignificant their existence! how trifling and childish their pursuits! Without thee, thou dear Redeemer, no hopes beyond the grave, no prospect of immortality; no redemption from sin; no resource from the fears of death, nor from the

alarms of conscience! wishing to live after death, and yet dreading the hereafter; hoping there might be a place of rest; but in the midst full of a thousand forebodings concerning it! Oh! thou glorious, gracious, precious JESUS! it is thou which hast *brought life and immortality to light by thy gospel*. And by thy great undertaking thou hast not only opened to thy people clear and distinct views of the everlasting mansions of the blessed, but by thy finished redemption hast purchased eternal happiness for them, and art gone before to take possession of it in their name. Now, *LORD*, we hail thy glorious person, and adore thee for thy finished work. All thy people are by thee made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER. *We have received a kingdom by thee, and in thee, which cannot be moved*. Oh! for grace whereby we may serve thee acceptably in this life *with reverence and godly fear*; until we come to reign with thee in the life that is to come in glory forever.

CHAPTER 28

CONTENTS

This chapter contains the history of the reign of Ahaz and a melancholy relation of his wicked reign it furnisheth. He is afflicted by the Syrians. His death, and successor in the kingdom, is also related.

2 CHRONICLES 28:1-4

(1) ¶ Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father: (2) For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. (3) Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before

the children of Israel. (4) He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

What a melancholy account is here given in a few verses of the life and conduct of Ahaz! had we not the authority of GOD'S sacred word it would be incredible to read of the degeneracy both of king and people respecting idolatry. But Reader! what must have been the forbearance, mercy, and long suffering, of the *LORD*. Oh! for grace to contemplate this with an eye to JESUS!

2 CHRONICLES 28:5-8

(5) Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. (6) ¶ For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. (7) And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was* next to the king. (8) And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

Both Syrians and Israelites shall become instruments in the hand of GOD when the *LORD* will punish Judah. And in the private afflictions of GOD'S people the severity of our trials is doubly increased when it comes from a quarter where we least expected. When *a man's foes shall be they of his own household*.

2 CHRONICLES 28:9-11

(9) But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye

have slain them in a rage *that* reacheth up unto heaven. (10) And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: *but are there* not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God? (11) Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you.

Was it not most gracious in GOD to send this message to the sinners in Israel? And was not the man of GOD most faithful in the delivery of it! Here is no congratulation of their victory, but reproof and an alarming assurance of the LORD'S displeasure in consequence of their sins!

2 CHRONICLES 28:12-15

(12) Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war, (13) And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to add *more* to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel. (14) So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation. (15) And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

I feel delight in the perusal of those verses in that they plainly manifest the grace of the *LORD* had not totally departed from Israel. Certain persons among them still felt the sovereign grace of the *LORD*. How precious is it to behold that in the worst of times, *there is* (as the apostle expresses it) *a remnant according to the election of grace*. Romans 11:5.

2 CHRONICLES 28:16-19

(16) ¶ At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. (17) For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. (18) The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there. (19) For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD.

It is hardly possible to read this account of Ahaz's distress, and behold at the same time the sad cause of all in his multiplied and aggravated transgressions, without being struck with a renewed conviction, of the hardness and impenitent state of the heart under sin. Though he had made Judah naked, and the *LORD* had brought Judah low; yet we hear of no remorse, no sorrow, no desire in the heart of Ahaz to turn to the *LORD*; nay, we only find the poor wretch hardening himself in his wickedness, and looking to Assyria, to any power in short but the right power, even to the *LORD*, to deliver him out of his affliction. But Reader! is Ahaz's case singular? Is not this the conduct of all sinners until grace reclaims them!

2 CHRONICLES 28:20-25

(20) And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not. (21) For Ahaz took away a portion *out* of the house of the LORD, and *out* of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave *it* unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not. (22) And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this *is that* king Ahaz. (23) For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. (24) And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of

the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. (25) And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

Observe the progression of sin when the mind is hardened under its influence. You see Ahaz robs GOD'S house to purchase man's arm against him; sacrificeth to devil's to gain human interest. And thus goeth on from bad to worse, until the measure of his iniquity is full. And observe, Reader! for it is an observation highly proper to be connected with it, how disappointment, vexation, and ruin, accompany the steps of such transgressors. The king of Assyria takes his gifts but laughs at his calamity. Such invariably is the friendship of sinners in every instance. And as Ahaz's distresses and disappointments increased, so his sins multiplied, and he transgressed yet more against the *LORD*. And do remark how the HOLY GHOST hath branded forever his character in those few words; *This is that king Ahaz*. As if the *LORD* meant thereby to make his memorial detested forever.

2 CHRONICLES 28:26-27

(26) Now the rest of his acts and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. (27) And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, *even* in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

The mind feels relief when arriving at the close of such an history and such a character. I cannot dismiss the relation of this impious prince's life without desiring the Reader to compare it with the seventh chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah; in the perusal of which he will discover, not only the graciousness of the *LORD* in sending to his people, even during the reign of so wicked a prince, a renewed instance of

his love; but opening to the views of the faithful in Judah blessed intimations of the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. It forms a most precious consolation to every one to consider that at a time when *sin abounded grace did much* more abound; for never during the Old Testament days were there afforded clearer promises concerning JESUS than the prophecy of Isaiah contained; and delivered at a time when the most daring rebellion against GOD marked both Israel and Judah.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE! my soul, over the perusal of this chapter, and in the conduct of Ahaz behold the lost, depraved, hardened, and wretched state of human nature. See, my soul, to what sin hath reduced every man? and remark also how deluded to his own ruin is the sinner, who, when the *LORD* is coming forth as his enemy, is vainly looking to an arm of flesh to become his friend; as if a man would set the briars and thorns against *JEHOVAH* in battle! But while contemplating man's worthlessness, oh for grace to admire and adore *GOD'S* faithfulness. Was it not enough, oh! thou most gracious *LORD*, that immediately upon the fall of man redemption was promised; and that from age to age thou shouldst send thy servants to keep alive the remembrance of this unspeakable mercy promised in the minds of thy people; but that, at a period when they were all sinning with an high hand, and living as if regardless of all thy love, that then thou shouldst magnify the exceeding riches of thy grace, and then commission thy servant the prophet to tell Ahaz that redemption was approaching, and *EMMANUEL* should appear as the son of the virgin. *LORD!* help me to adore, to magnify, to rightly understand and prize those depths, and heights, and breadths, and lengths, of such peerless, matchless love! And *LORD*, amidst all the unworthiness, and coldness, and

deadness, and undeservings of my heart, let such views of thy grace comfort and refresh my soul. Yes! thou blessed JESUS, thou precious EMMANUEL, amidst all my sorrows let me derive my highest consolation from any interest *in* thee, my relation *to* thee, my hopes and expectations *from* thee, and my whole salvation *of* thee, the LORD my righteousness. Thou art indeed *EMMANUEL*, GOD with us, GOD in us the hope of glory.

CHAPTER 29

CONTENTS

The subject of this chapter is the chronicle of the reign of Hezekiah. He restoreth the true worship of GOD, and cleanseth the LORD'S house.

2 CHRONICLES 29:1

(1) ¶ Hezekiah began to reign *when he was* five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

We may have reference to the recital of the reign of Hezekiah, 2 Kings 16 and a very interesting account we have of a part of it, Isaiah 36, and 3 following chapters.

2 CHRONICLES 29:2-11

(2) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. (3) He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. (4) And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, (5) And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy *place*. (6) For our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was* evil in the

eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned *their* backs. (7) Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* unto the God of Israel. (8) Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. (9) For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this. (10) Now *it is* in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. (11) My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.

His address to his people in the very opening of his government implies that his soul had been grieved for the dreadful conduct of his father during his minority. Reader! how evident it is that grace is not hereditary. How many a graceless father hath had a gracious son! and how many a gracious father a graceless child. What a contrast is here between Ahaz and Hezekiah!

2 CHRONICLES 29:12-19

(12) ¶ Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites: and of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel: and of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah: (13) And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimri, and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah: (14) And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; Shemaiah, and Uzziel. (15) And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. (16) And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse *it*, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it*, to carry *it* out abroad into the brook Kidron. (17) Now they began on

the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end. (18) Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof. (19) Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they *are* before the altar of the LORD.

The purification of the house of the *LORD* may serve to remind us of the yet more infinitely important work of GOD the HOLY GHOST in his cleansing work of the heart by his power.—What a sweet scripture that is to this effect; *When the LORD shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion with the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.* Isaiah 4:4. Reader! seek for those precious effects in your own soul. Have you the spirit of judgment to enlighten the understanding in the knowledge of JESUS? And have you the spirit of burning, to make your heart burn within you while JESUS draweth nigh in making himself known by the way and opening the soul to the apprehension of the scriptures?

2 CHRONICLES 29:20-30

(20) ¶ Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. (21) And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. (22) So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. (23) And they brought forth the he goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them: (24) And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the

king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *should be made* for all Israel. (25) And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for *so was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. (26) And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. (27) And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel. (28) And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: *and all this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. (29) And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. (30) Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

It is astonishing to observe in this solemn service what an eye to JESUS and his salvation this whole service had. Here was the sin-offering; and CHRIST, *who knew no sin, was made sin for us: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. Here was the king and the people laying their hands upon the goats, as an intimation that their sins were to be laid upon the sacrifice. And were not the sins of the people all laid upon JESUS when JEHOVAH laid on him *the iniquities of us all?* Isaiah 53:6.

2 CHRONICLES 29:31-36

(31) Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings. (32) And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs: all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. (33) And the consecrated

things *were* six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. (34) But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites *were* more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests. (35) And also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. (36) And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was *done* suddenly.

How beautiful and interesting to behold the joy both of king and people in the view they now had of the house of GOD being cleansed; and that peace being made with GOD, they had now free access to the temple service as heretofore. But Reader! how infinitely more beautiful is this subject considered as typical and figurative, with an eye to JESUS. Having peace with GOD (saith an apostle) in the blood of his cross, we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. Romans 5:1, 2. Seen with an eye to gospel times, and to gospel mercies in JESUS, how truly interesting the Old Testament church history appears, and how evidently the whole proves that it was GOD prepared the people, and that GOD the SPIRIT hereby glorified CHRIST JESUS.

REFLECTIONS

How beautiful the face of things appears in Judah under the reign of Hezekiah, compared to the deplorable state in which we behold it under the reign of his father Ahaz. And oh! how much the conduct of men in power, and in exalted stations, operates upon all the inferior departments, both in church and state. But chiefly, my soul, let the improvements which arise out of this chapter tend to lead thee to the precious JESUS.

And conceive how infinitely interesting and important must be that salvation of his, which was so uniformly made in all ages of the church the great means and end of purification, unto which, by faith, the people all directed their religious services. Oh! thou blessed reconciler, *who hast made our peace in the blood of thy cross!* by virtue of thy atoning blood and righteousness it is, that after all our unworthiness and the setting up of idols in our hearts, we are like the house of Judah under Hezekiah, again consecrated unto the *LORD* to approach in the name and the rich sacrifice of JESUS. Thou art the author and finisher, the means and the end, the sum and substance of all consolation to thy church, both militant and triumphant, by peace here and glory hereafter. Hail! blessed JESUS! *I will love thee, O LORD, my strength; thou art my song of rejoicing all the day, for thou art become my salvation.*

CHAPTER 30

CONTENTS

This chapter relates the continuance of Hezekiah's good reign. He proclaims a passover. The people are earnest in destroying the idols.

2 CHRONICLES 30:1-5

(1) ¶ And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. (2) For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month. (3) For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. (4) And the thing pleased the king and all the

congregation. (5) So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done *it of a long time in such sort* as it was written.

It should seem that in consequence of the general defection of the people from the worship of the *LORD*, the holy service of the passover had not been punctually observed. And at the time when Hezekiah set up this reform in the opening of his reign the season of the paschal feast was over. Unwilling to let so refreshing a service pass by until another year, the king availed himself of a permission in the law which was made for persons under uncleanness, that when by reason of this they could not observe it at its proper season, they might keep it in the *second* month instead of the first. Numbers 9:10, 11. The king therefore having taken counsel on this subject, and it meeting the general approbation both of the princes and the congregation, the celebration of the passover was determined upon. Reader! what a superiority in point of privilege are we of the gospel church called to, in that we have our holy supper, in commemoration of CHRIST our passover sacrificed for us every month, and if occasion offers, every day, and like the primitive church may *daily in the temple, or from house to house*, be engaged in the sweet service *of breaking of bread and of prayer*. Yes! dearest JESUS! thy people whom thou hast made kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER, are supposed to be daily carrying about in their body *the dying of the LORD JESUS!* Acts 2:46. 2 Corinthians 4:10.

2 CHRONICLES 30:6-9

(6) So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the

hand of the kings of Assyria. (7) And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, *who* therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. (8) Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers *were*, *but* yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. (9) For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children *shall find* compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn away *his* face from you, if ye return unto him.

I admire the conduct of Hezekiah on this occasion. He not only invites his own subjects of Judah, but *all* Israel. For both Israel and Judah had alike revolted; and a return to the LORD GOD of their fathers was as much the duty and interest of Israel as of Judah.

2 CHRONICLES 30:10-11

(10) So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. (11) Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

How awful a state was Israel now in! if the Reader makes a calculation of time he will discover that this happened not above two or three years, at the most, before the captivity of Israel by the king of Assyria. Hence their hearts were infatuated and blinded to their ruin. It is refreshing, however, amidst this general depravity, to observe that there were some whose hearts were inclined to seek the *LORD*. Hosea was king of Israel at this time; but it doth not appear that he either accepted the king of Judah's invitation himself to go to Jerusalem at this pass over, or that he forbade any of his subjects from going.

2 CHRONICLES 30:12

(12) Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.

This is a beautiful account of Judah; and their unanimity on this solemn occasion. No doubt the thing was of the LORD. Oh! dearest JESUS! how sweet is it when thy churches, like that of old, are of one heart and one soul; all striving for the faith of the gospel. Acts 4:32.

2 CHRONICLES 30:13-14

(13) ¶ And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. (14) And they arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast *them* into the brook Kidron.

What a beautiful representation is here made of the church. Who but must have prayed for the sanctifying influence of the divine presence in such an assembly?

2 CHRONICLES 30:15-20

(15) Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. (16) And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, *which they received* of the hand of the Levites. (17) For *there were* many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one *that was* not clean, to sanctify *them* unto the LORD. (18) For a multitude of the people, *even* many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one (19) *That* prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he be* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary. (20) And the LORD

hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

There are several most interesting things observable upon this occasion. The people first put away all the idolatrous altars before they proceeded to their pure worship. The old leaven of malice and wickedness must be put away by the followers of the LORD JESUS before they keep the feast of unleavened bread on the body and blood of CHRIST. 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8. The sprinkling of the blood, according to the original institution, plainly shows that amidst the long dreadful reign of idolatry there were some precious souls who by faith looked to the blood of sprinkling in JESUS. Hebrews 12:24. The zeal of many upon this occasion outdoing the priests and Levites, is a delightful testimony also that the *LORD* had a seed alive in the midst of that degenerate nation, which though to the eye of men unknown like as it was in the days of Elijah, yet to the *LORD* were known, and by the *LORD* reserved from the general corruption. Romans 11:3, 4. The unseasonable appointment of this passover which necessity had induced, and the quickness with which it was brought forward after it was determined upon, not allowing space for the usual preparation, the king implored the *LORD* to pardon, and to accept the people according to what they had, and not what they had not. And the *LORD*'S gracious attention to the king's prayer and healing the people; these things, beheld with an eye to JESUS, are sweet gospel blessings veiled under these law dispensations. Reader! do not overlook your own personal concern in this. After all your preparations what sanctification is there in your best prayers and services. Need not the holiest of men to cry out, *The good LORD pardon every one?* Oh! how precious, how infinitely precious, is the thought, that the same worth, the same sin-atonement efficacy is in the Lamb that was slain, though there be new guilt and new defilement in our hearts and in our poor services, from day to day. The virtue and merits of JESUS'S blood become the

sanctification and cause of acceptance of his people forever.

2 CHRONICLES 30:21-27

(21) ¶ And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* with loud instruments unto the LORD. (22) And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. (23) And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept *other* seven days with gladness. (24) For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. (25) And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. (26) So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel *there was* not the like in Jerusalem. (27) Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came *up* to his holy dwelling place, *even* unto heaven.

This feast, agreeable to the original appointment by Moses, followed up the holy service of the passover. And the joy of the people, of all ranks and orders among them, can better be conceived than expressed. It may serve to show the holy joy that is in the heart of one poor sinner in an house, in a family, in a nation or kingdom, when a real conversion takes place in the soul, and amity and friendship, are again restored between heaven and earth. Then everything is sanctified. The most ordinary enjoyments are sanctified. When the *LORD* hath blessed a soul with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS; he blesses him in making a covenant with every thing and every creature, both in his basket and in his store. Reader! if JESUS

be yours, all things are yours. *He that overcometh* (saith JESUS himself) *shall inherit all things; and I will be his GOD; and he shall be my son.* Revelation 21:7. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for GOD now accepteth thy works.* Ecclesiastes 9:7, 8. The garment the sinner wears of JESUS'S righteousness is always white; and his head lacks no ointment, because the HOLY GHOST sheds abroad his grace abundantly upon him in CHRIST JESUS. Hosea. 2:18-20. Observe in this account of the close of this great festival how the priests blessed the people. Long neglected as this divine service had been, even from the days of Solomon, yet the form appointed by the *LORD* (see Numbers 6:22, &c.) had not been forgotten. Oh! how sweet is it to bless the people in the joint name of the FATHER, SON and SPIRIT. And how sure is it when done by his authority, that the blessing pronounced on earth will be confirmed in heaven.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while we pay all due respect to this beautiful piece of history in the church, and find cause to bless GOD for raising up his servant Hezekiah in such a time for the recovery of the land from idols, let you and I have our thoughts exercised in the contemplation of the mercies we are called to in the free, and full, and seasonable enjoyment of our gospel ordinances under the rich profusion of the means of grace the *LORD* our GOD hath reserved to us. Are we as a nation, as a people, better than our fathers? Have we merited the blessings we possess in our hallowed things? Are we not gone away in a thousand instances from his sacred word, from the love of his truth, from the grand distinguishing doctrines of the gospel; from the love of ordinances and from a well-grounded confidence in him? And doth the *LORD* amidst all our provocations, still preserve to us those best of all privileges,

our sacred things, our sabbaths; his holy word and ordinances. Oh then, let the example of Hezekiah and his people stir us up to an earnest, hearty, and sincere return to the *LORD*. Let us send out missionaries to the various kingdoms of the earth, as he did his posts to Israel, and invite all ranks and orders of people to come to JESUS. And oh! let our return to the *LORD* be with an eye to the person, blood, and righteousness of JESUS. He is our passover, he is our peace, our propitiation, our altar, our sacrifice, our righteousness, our all. Yes! blessed JESUS! thou art divinely prepared and graciously furnished by GOD our FATHER, a suited Saviour for fallen, sinful men. Sweetly and secretly in thy person are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*: and in thy finished work the life, safety, present peace, and everlasting happiness of thy people is contained. *LORD!* to whom shall we go but unto thee, *thou hast the words of eternal life*. Thou art our passover sacrificed for us. In thee, and on thee, we would keep an everlasting feast. And oh! do thou bless us as a High Priest of our calling, and may our GOD and FATHER answer it, and confirm it in heaven his dwelling place, the habitation of his holiness and his glory.

CHAPTER 31

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The prosecution of Hezekiah's history is carried on in this chapter. He puts down the remains of idolatry. The character of Hezekiah in his sincerity is briefly spoken of.

2 CHRONICLES 31:1

(1) ¶ Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and

Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities.

This chapter opens in a delightful account of what followed the great festival Hezekiah and the people had observed. Reader! I know not know not what *your* view of things may be; but I confess that I love to see the LORD'S days followed up with gracious days through the week. It is a pity, methinks, when the sabbath is past that the impressions of it should be over. Ought not the sweet savor of the sanctuary to be as ointment poured forth in all we say or do; that the world as well as our own hearts may know that *we have been with JESUS?* The captivity of Israel and Judah, in this one case of destroying the remains of idolatry, became a convincing proof how sincere they were in what they had embarked. I do not presume to say as much, but yet I venture to think that this remnant of Israel, which came up to Judah upon this solemn occasion, were led there by the *LORD*; and if so, were of the LORD'S secret ones preserved amidst the rubbish hastening to captivity. It is worthy the Reader's observation, that the prophet Isaiah who ministered during the reign of Hezekiah, as well as before him, spake of this destruction of idols. And though no doubt the great feature of this man's prediction painted gospel times, yet not without an eye to the present circumstances also. Isaiah 2:20.

2 CHRONICLES 31:2-19

(2) And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD. (3) *He appointed* also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings, *to wit*, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as *it is* written in the law of the LORD. (4) Moreover he commanded the people that

dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD. (5) And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all *things* brought they in abundantly. (6) And *concerning* the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid *them* by heaps. (7) In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished *them* in the seventh month. (8) And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD, and his people Israel. (9) Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. (10) And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left *is* this great store. (11) ¶ Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared *them*, (12) And brought in the offerings and the tithes and the dedicated *things* faithfully: over which Cononiah the Levite *was* ruler, and Shimei his brother *was* the next. (13) And Jehiel, and Azariah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, *were* overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God. (14) And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter toward the east, *was* over the freewill offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the LORD, and the most holy things. (15) And next him *were* Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in *their* set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small: (16) Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, *even* unto every one that entereth into the house of the LORD, his daily portion for their service in their charges according to their courses; (17) Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses; (18) And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the

congregation: for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness: (19) Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, *which were* in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were expressed by name, to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

The liberal supply which both the king and people made for the maintenance of the priests and Levites, is another proof how much the service of the sanctuary lay in the hearts of the people. Those only can have a real sense of the value of ordinances who have been deprived of them. I cannot pass over this long account of the liberality of the people towards their priests, without remarking the grateful conduct of Azariah the chief priest upon the occasion. We have not only had enough to eat (said he) but we have left plenty. It were devoutly to be wished that while the people are liberal to their ministers, all ministers were liberal to them. An idle priest is of all characters the most odious. And what Paul hath said of men in general, ought in a most special manner to be followed up in law concerning the supposed servants of the sanctuary; *If any will not work neither should he eat.* 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

2 CHRONICLES 31:20-21

(20) And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought *that which was* good and right and truth before the LORD his God.

(21) And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart, and prospered.

This is but a short account of Hezekiah's character, yet is it a very precious one. What he did was with a single eye to the glory of God. Reader! it is a great thing to have a heart not divided. Few know what this means. The LORD gives an account what it means when he saith concerning Israel; *he is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself; their heart*

is divided. Hosea 10:1, 2.

REFLECTIONS

I pass over several otherwise interesting reflections which this chapter ministereth unto in the zeal of Hezekiah and the people to put idolatry out of the land, in order to attend to what the HOLY GHOST hath here so largely dwelt upon, the liberality of the people providing for their clergy, and the faithfulness of the clergy in the moderate use of the good things of GOD'S providence, and their zeal and services in the LORD'S work among the people. In whatever character the ministers of JESUS are considered as servants and laborers, as watchmen or stewards, they are uniformly held forth as exercising a most solemn and awful office, for the faithful account of which they are responsible at the judgment-seat of GOD. *We watch* (saith one of them, well taught in divine things) *for your souls, as they that must give account, that we may do it with joy, and not with grief.* Called to the great work and labor of the ministry; solemnly engaged in it; intrusted by the LORD with the charge of his word, his people, his house, his ordinances, and family; the grand object should be how to promote his glory in the salvation of men; and by every means in their power to win souls unto CHRIST. Every faithful servant is bound to advance his LORD'S interests. How much more every faithful servant of JESUS, in that the salvation of the souls of poor perishing sinners is so intimately connected with the glory of his master. Oh! LORD JESUS! do thou in compassion to the perishing state of sinners all around, call such to thy service whose hearts, like thine own, may be moved with compassion in the contemplation of a lost world. And to those whom thou hast called, or shalt call, be pleased to give the sweet communications of thy HOLY SPIRIT. Make them more anxious to win souls to JESUS than to win

kingdoms to themselves. And let the same gracious frame of mind mark all thy sent servants, which the apostle, Paul felt when he could and did appeal to his people, and say, *I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you.* 2 Corinthians 12:14.

CHAPTER 32

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In this chapter we arrive in point of history to the close of Hezekiah's life and reign. He meets with a sharp trial in the approach of the Assyrian army. His sickness and death. Manasseh his son succeeds him in the throne.

2 CHRONICLES 32:1

(1) ¶ After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself.

We have the history of this war so much more fully related in the 2 Kings 18 and 19 chapters, that I shall have only to notice some few points not mentioned there, and then refer the Reader wholly to that account both in the sacred text and in the commentary. There is a great beauty in the opening of this chapter, concerning the exercise of the minds of Hezekiah and his people by this Assyrian. *After these things and the establishment thereof;* that is, after Hezekiah had thus cleansed the sanctuary and the land of idolatry. In the first view of things one might have thought, that now he and his people would have sat down under the blessing of the *LORD*, and all would be peace and happiness. Reader! do not fail to mark from it that GOD'S people must be an exercised people. Our LORD'S motto, which all his soldiers should wear in their

banner is, *In the world ye shall have tribulation. In me ye shall have peace.* John 16:33.

2 CHRONICLES 32:2-8

(2) And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, (3) He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which *were* without the city: and they did help him. (4) So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water? (5) Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised *it* up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo *in* the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. (6) And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, (7) Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that *is* with him: for *there be* more with us than with him: (8) With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

This is an interesting account of the plan Hezekiah pursued against the invader; and which is not related to us in the parallel history in the book of the Kings. But what I most admire is Hezekiah's faith in the LORD, and by which he animated the minds of his people. Reader! it is one of the highest acts of faith to lean upon JESUS as the FATHER'S salvation, when matters are most unpromising in ourselves.

2 CHRONICLES 32:9

(9) ¶ After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem, (but he *himself laid siege* against Lachish, and all his power with him,) unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that *were* at Jerusalem, saying,

It is remarkable that about this time great revolutions were

accomplishing in the earth. Rome, the mistress of the world as she afterwards became, was about this period built by *Romulus*, of whom profane historians speak so largely; and which indeed I should not have mentioned in this place, but for the part which the church of GOD in the days of our *LORD* had to do with it. Rome at this time begun in its infancy. Seven hundred years after she was arrived at her plenitude, when the *LORD JESUS CHRIST* was born.

2 CHRONICLES 32:10-23

(10) Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem? (11) Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The *LORD* our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (12) Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it? (13) Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of *other* lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand? (14) Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand? (15) Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand? (16) And his servants spake yet *more* against the *LORD* God, and against his servant Hezekiah. (17) He wrote also letters to rail on the *LORD* God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand. (18) Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that *were* on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city. (19) And they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, *which were* the work of the hands of man. (20) And for this *cause* Hezekiah the king, and the

prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven. (21) And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword. (22) Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side. (23) And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

By this time Israel had been carried away captive. And Sennacherib thought to do the same by Judah. The HOLY GHOST hath considered this part of the church's history so important, as to cause three records to be made of it. In the 2nd book of the Kings, chap. 18:19. in this place of the Chronicles; and by the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. 36—39. Let the Reader remark the mighty contrast between the horrid blasphemy and the impiety of Sennacherib and his army, and the piety and faith of Hezekiah and his people. And let the Reader mark the sequel in the deliverance of his servants, and the total ruin of his foes.

2 CHRONICLES 32:24

(24) ¶ In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.

We have here the LORD'S servant under another trial, that of sickness. Sweet are all the exercises of GOD'S people when sanctified. The event of this is more particularly related, 2 Kings 20. Isaiah 38.

2 CHRONICLES 32:25-31

(25) But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. (26)

Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, *both* he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah. (27) And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; (28) Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks. (29) Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much. (30) This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. (31) Howbeit in *the business* of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was *done* in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

The HOLY GHOST hath been pleased to give us in those Chronicles the most interesting account concerning Hezekiah in the causes of his trials, and which the other records, though relating the historical part more copiously, have not done. The grand design was to show Hezekiah what was in his heart. The miracle GOD had wrought in the dial of Ahaz, suffered to go back so many degrees, was the wonder done in the land. And as the Assyrians foolishly worshipped the sun, probably Hezekiah vaunted himself not a little on this account. Be this as it may, certain it is, that the *LORD* thus humbled his servant, in order to bring him acquainted with the real state of his heart, as it was in the sight of God. Reader! do not let this part of Hezekiah's history pass before you without your making the suitable improvements from it. What doth it show but this, that all men, the best of men, are but men full of infirmities, and nothing to boast of before GOD. Oh! precious JESUS! whenever we look, to whomsoever we direct our researches, where shall we find any but thee that art holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and

without guile?

2 CHRONICLES 32:32-33

(32) Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

(33) And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Here's the end of Hezekiah, which forms the final end of end of all. *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt, thou return. But the memory of the just is blessed!*

REFLECTIONS

So royal a character as Hezekiah, and especially after the view we have had before of his father Ahaz, demands our thankfulness to the GOD of our mercies, who maketh one to differ from another, and by his grace forms all the difference between the precious, and the vile. And while we look at Hezekiah, let us not overlook all the offspring of JESUS, our almighty king. Is it not he who hath begotten us unto this royal state, and made all his children kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER! Think, believer, what an honored, what a royal state you are *new* born to in CHRIST JESUS! he hath made us (saith an apostle) *partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*. You are called to a princely service also; for his service is perfect freedom. And how noble is the clothing of the king's daughter, which is *all glorious within*. How royal their state; how truly kingly their dignity, *which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD*. Hail! thou holy, blessed, royal LORD JESUS! by whose complete salvation we are thus begotten to the privilege of children of

GOD, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST. Oh! for grace to live up to our high and glorious privileges. *Beloved! now are we the sons of God! and it doth not appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.* 1 John 3:1, 2.

CHAPTER 33

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We enter in this chapter upon the history of the reign of Manasseh; and a most wicked reign it proved. He is carried into Babylon. In prison his heart is changed. He is liberated from prison. At his death he is succeeded by Ammon his son. He dies also, and Josiah his son becomes his successor.

2 CHRONICLES 33:1-10

(1) ¶ Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: (2) But did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. (3) For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. (4) Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever. (5) And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. (6) And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. (7) And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes

of Israel, will I put my name for ever: (8) Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses. (9) So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, *and* to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. (10) And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.

We had this history of Manasseh before, and with so little variety, that I think it unnecessary to dwell upon it. See 2 Kings 21. Never, surely, was there a record more painful to go over. What an awful picture doth this man hold forth of the desperately wicked state of the human heart?

2 CHRONICLES 33:11-14

(11) ¶ Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. (12) And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, (13) And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he *was* God. (14) Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

The most remarkable circumstance here related is, that the change wrought upon Manasseh is not so much as mentioned in the parallel history in Kings. It hath afforded great comfort, and no doubt encouragement, to many a sinner. And therefore probably the HOLY GHOST thought proper to have it recorded. Reader! let you and I make this use of it, and behold in it what grace can do; what mercy there is in GOD;

what efficacy in the blood and righteousness of JESUS; and what power in the work of GOD the HOLY GHOST. Here, surely, that sweet scripture was fully proved, *where sin abounded grace did much more abound*. Romans 5:20. And however high and aggravated the transgressions of our nature are, almighty grace will yet as infinitely transcend our offences as the heavens are higher than the earth.

2 CHRONICLES 33:15-20

(15) And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast *them* out of the city. (16) And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. (17) Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the LORD their God only. (18) Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they *are written* in the book of the kings of Israel. (19) His prayer also, and *how God* was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they *are* written among the sayings of the seers. (20) So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

There is a prayer among, the books of the apocrypha said to be this prayer of Manasseh. But the matter is questionable. Happy is it to observe, that a life which begun so unpromising, did yet find mercy from the *LORD*.

2 CHRONICLES 33:21-25

(21) ¶ Amon *was* two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. (22) But he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; (23) And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had

humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more. (24) And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house. (25) But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

The short, sinful, and unworthy life of Ammon, terminating as it did by a violent death, opens but little subject for meditation. Alas! how wretched and hopeless for the most part are all such men. How hath the Psalmist marked them, and how true a portrait hath he drawn. *Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.* Psalm 37: 10.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! in the contemplation of such characters as are here represented, behold the awful situation of the wicked. **How** by sin they destroy themselves, ruin their friends, involve their dearest connections in evil, and beginning in sin, for the most part terminate their existence in vanity and vexation of spirit. But think, my soul, what a miracle of grace must it be, when any, like Manasseh are delivered out of the snare of the devil, *who were taken captive by him at his will.* Surely none will venture to dispute here the sovereignty of grace, or to put that down to man's free will which can belong to none but the undeserved; unsought for, unexpected, mercy of GOD in CHRIST. And hast thou, LORD, brought my soul out of the prison house, out of Satan's empire; and washed me from my sins in thy blood! Hast thou made me a rich partaker of the grace which is in CHRIST JESUS! Oh! blessed, forever blessed, be the means in affliction like Manasseh's, and yet more blessed be the GOD of the means, who remembered me in my low estate, *for his mercy endureth for ever.*

CHAPTER 34

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This chapter brings us acquainted with the reign of Josiah. He destroyeth idolatry; repaireth the temple; the book of the law being found in the house of the LORD, Josiah causeth it to be read. The king reneweth the covenant.

2 CHRONICLES 34:1-2

(1) ¶ Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. (2) And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined *neither* to the right hand, nor to the left.

The parallel history of this we have, 2 Kings 23. to which I refer the Reader, and for shortness sake shall only call the attention of the Reader to such points in the history as were not noticed in that.

2 CHRONICLES 34:3-7

(3) For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. (4) And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that *were* on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust *of them*, and strowed *it* upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. (5) And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. (6) And *so did he* in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. (7) And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

The younger part of his reign no doubt was agreeable to his childhood, but very tender and imperfect in divine things; yet what an interesting account the HOLY GHOST hath given of Josiah, in that while he was yet young we are told, he began to seek after the GOD of David his father. What an unspeakable mercy it is, and I cannot forego the opportunity which here presents itself of noticing it, that in this land of bibles our children are from their youngest years taught, as far as the outward teaching of the scriptures can lead, the things which concern the LORD GOD of our fathers. O thou HOLY SPIRIT! whose gracious office it is to illumine the understanding within; do thou condescend to be the Almighty teacher of our youth, and let the rising generation be a seed to seek the *LORD*, and to serve the *LORD* from their earliest years.

2 CHRONICLES 34:8

(8) ¶ Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

I admire the expression, the LORD *his* GOD. As if it meant to say, that young as Josiah was, he had now acquired a knowledge of his own personal interest in the covenant of the *LORD*. And what was this but the covenant of redemption in JESUS? Genesis 12:3. The HOLY GHOST hath expressly shown this, when he saith by his servant the apostle, that the gospel was then preached unto Abraham when he said, *in thee* (that is) *in thy seed*, and which seed is CHRIST, *shall all nations be blessed*. Galatians 3:8. 2:16.

2 CHRONICLES 34:9-13

(9) And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh

and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem. (10) And they put *it* in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house: (11) Even to the artificers and builders gave they *it*, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. (12) And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them *were* Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set *it* forward; and *other of* the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick. (13) Also *they were* over the bearers of burdens, and *were* overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites *there were* scribes, and officers, and porters.

I admire the fidelity and honesty of those workmen who did the work faithfully, and with whom the money was intrusted. How delightful a thing it is to have gracious men about us, in whom we can confide. Well might David say, *Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me.* Psalm 101:6.

2 CHRONICLES 34:14-25

(14) ¶ And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses. (15) And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. (16) And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do *it*. (17) And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. (18) Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. (19) And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. (20) And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a

servant of the king's, saying, (21) Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book. (22) And Hilkiah, and *they* that the king *had appointed*, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that *effect*. (23) And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, (24) Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: (25) Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched. (26) And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel *concerning* the words which thou hast heard; (27) Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard *thee* also, saith the LORD. (28) Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again. (29) ¶ Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. (30) And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD. (31) And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. (32) And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of

God, the God of their fathers. (33) And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. *And* all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

The relation here given so much corresponds to what was before related, 2 Kings, that I think it necessary only to direct the Reader to look back, and consult what was there said, in our humble commentary upon it. I would only in addition remark, that if the discovery of the book of the *law* produced such effects upon the minds of the king and the people, what ought the perpetual use of the book of the *gospel* to have upon the minds of men in the present day, Surely we shall be of all men most inexcusable if we neglect so great salvation. Reader! how stands the word of GOD in your estimation, and what are the effects wrought in your heart from the perusal of it! Is it your meditation all the day; and can you say as one of old did, *Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate on thy word.* Psalm 119:148. How delightful a view have we of the prophet in his love of GOD'S word, when he said, *thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.* Jeremiah 15:16.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let our improvement of this chapter, under the SPIRIT'S teaching, be to remark from the early call of Josiah to the knowledge of the LORD GOD of his fathers, the blessedness of those who are brought betimes to a saving view of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and redemption in his blood. It is an unspeakable mercy, no doubt, and a miracle of grace, at any period, and at any time, when souls are truly converted to JESUS. The laborers in the vineyard at the sixth, and ninth,

and eleventh hour, which were called and equally recompensed in the close of the day, give us a rich representation of the free, sovereign grace of our most compassionate and gracious FATHER. Surely it is a very glorious proof of the sovereignty of GOD'S love and mercy, when we behold men in the meridian of life, and in the midst of all their pursuits of business, or of worldly pleasure, taken aside by the kind hand of the LORD, and brought to the knowledge and love of JESUS. And surely the grace of GOD is magnified in the conversion of old sinners, who are grown old in sin as well as years, And yet the long current and tide of their affections is made to turn at the command of his voice, who raiseth the dead in trespasses and sins. But we behold with peculiar loveliness the grace the LORD bestows on those whose tender years are seasoned with the love of JESUS. Reader! how doth your experience correspond with either? Hath JESUS, the morning star, risen upon *your* soul? Hath JESUS the day spring from on high visited *you*? Can you trace your knowledge of this light and life of man, like Josiah, from your youth? Oh! the unspeakable felicity of knowing him from a child, and becoming acquainted with JESUS from our earliest years? What can equal that joy of the soul arising out of the LORD'S manifestation, when speaking to a believer, as he did to Josiah; *Because thine heart was tender and thou didst humble thyself before me, I have heard thee also, saith the LORD.*

Blessed JESUS! let it please thee to make continued manifestations of thyself to all thy people. Visit our souls in thy word, in thine ordinances, in all thy means of grace, by providences, in blessings, in mercies, in all thy sovereign appointments. And as thou hast given us to see thy beauty, thy loveliness; thy grace, thy suitableness and all-sufficiency; and won our affections to thy love in the moment of

conversion; so, LORD JESUS, let us day by day have renewed discoveries of thy love, until at length, after the various manifestations and the sweet visits which thou makest us, we are growing up into an increasing knowledge *of* thee, an increasing desire *after* thee, an increasing confidence *in* thee, and an increasing longing *for* thee and thy glory, thou wilt take us home to thyself to behold thy fair beauties, and to dwell with thee for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER 35

CONTENTS

This chapter concludes the history of Josiah. He keeps a solemn pass over. He goes to battle at Magiddo, and is slain. Is deeply lamented at his funeral by his people.

2 CHRONICLES 35:1

(1) ¶ Moreover Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

The passover which Josiah observed is mentioned in the parallel history, 2 Kings 23; but not so particularly recorded in all the circumstances of it. As this solemn service is by the HOLY GHOST himself, through the apostle Paul's ministry, explained to have been typical of JESUS, perhaps it would not be unprofitable if we were to mark some of the more prominent features with which that service was observed in the Jewish church in those days of Josiah, by which we shall learn how highly the LORD prized it as an institution to lead the soul in type and shadow to the contemplation, by faith, of him who was the substance of the whole, even the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

2 CHRONICLES 35:2-6

(2) And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD, (3) And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; *it shall not be* a burden upon *your* shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel, (4) And prepare *yourselves* by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son. (5) And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and *after* the division of the families of the Levites. (6) So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

First; the ministry of the priests and Levites being arranged, we find the placing the ark, taking up the most important concern, as preparatory to the service. JESUS must be first beheld in the believer's view, as the grand object of all,—the altar, the sacrifice, and the priests; for it is by virtue of him, and his all-atoning offering, we draw nigh to GOD.

2 CHRONICLES 35:7-10

(7) And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these *were* of the king's substance. (8) And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave unto the priests for the passover offerings two thousand and six hundred *small cattle*, and three hundred oxen. (9) Conaniah also, and Shemaiah and Nethaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover offerings five thousand *small cattle*, and five hundred oxen. (10) So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.

The offerings of the people very properly came *next* in order, preparatory to the service. *The LORD will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.* Leviticus 10:3.

2 CHRONICLES 35:11-17

(11) And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled *the blood* from their hands, and the Levites flayed *them*. (12) And they removed the burnt offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as *it is* written in the book of Moses. And so *did they* with the oxen. (13) And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the *other* holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* speedily among all the people. (14) And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests the sons of Aaron *were busied* in offering of burnt offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron. (15) And the singers the sons of Asaph *were* in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters *waited* at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them. (16) So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah. (17) And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

Matters being thus prepared, the service began. And let not the Reader overlook the employment of the priests, who it is said were busied in offering burnt-offerings and the fat until night. The sufferings of JESUS opened at the evening if we take in the garden scene, which as it formed so interesting a part undoubtedly we must. And the priests were alone engaged in this service preparatory to the great day. The sprinkling of the blood after killing the lamb, were certainly striking circumstances appointed by the HOLY GHOST to lead by faith to the Saviour. Indeed everything in it was typical of the

LORD JESUS. A lamb of the first year, without blemish and without spot; the setting it apart four days before; the slaying it and roasting it whole; and not a bone of it to be broken; all these were very highly significant of JESUS. And as the paschal lamb was to be eaten, and wholly eaten, nothing of it being to be left, what could more decidedly speak in reference to JESUS, who as CHRIST our passover is not to be looked upon only, but by faith fed upon, and lived upon, and wholly so; *all* CHRIST, and all *in* CHRIST, to form a complete Saviour: surely such views held forth to the church, both at the original institution of it after coming out of Egypt, and now again in the days of Josiah so fully revived, at a period distant from the deliverance out of Egypt of at east 850 years; nothing can more fully display the vast importance of the thing itself, and of the sense in which the HOLY GHOST was pleased the church should consider it with reference to the body of JESUS CHRIST in his offering upon the cross for human sin once for all.

2 CHRONICLES 35:18-19

(18) And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (19) In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

What an high encomium is this in the character of Josiah! and what a proof of the faith of Josiah's mind which he had with an eye to CHRIST.

2 CHRONICLES 35:20-24

(20) ¶ After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. (21) But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? / *come* not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee

from *meddling with* God, who *is* with me, that he destroy thee not. (22) Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. (23) And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. (24) His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in *one of* the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

We have here, as in all men, a shade to the character of Josiah. The sequel in Josiah's death proves that what Necho, king of Egypt, told Josiah, was well founded. Such a message therefore he ought to have regarded. But Josiah is in this instance a renewed evidence of the universal corruption of human nature. Where, blessed JESUS, shall we look but to thee for perfection?

2 CHRONICLES 35:25-27

(25) And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they *are* written in the lamentations. (26) Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to *that which was* written in the law of the LORD, (27) And his deeds, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

We have here introduced to us Jeremiah, whose prophetic writings make so important a part in the sacred canon of scripture. This prophet began his ministry in the 13th year of Josiah, and continued it until the carrying away of the people into Babylon. The character of Josiah cannot be better ascertained than by his lamentation of Judah. For though the times were so degenerate, yet Josiah was dear to them.

But no doubt the gracious souls lamented his death, in that

they considered it as a certain presage that ruin was at hand. *The righteous is taken away* (saith the prophet) *from the evil to come.* Isaiah 57:1.

REFLECTIONS

READER! in the view of this passover, and the religious observance of it by the whole kingdom of Judah, let you and I learn to prize our gospel privileges. They had the shadow, we have the substance. They looked to good things to come; we celebrate mercies fulfilled. They looked through the passover to redemption by JESUS'S blood; we commemorate in the Holy Supper that redemption completed, and have our feast upon the sacrifice. Blessed JESUS! thou art the passover, the sacrifice, the altar, the ark, the whole of all the types under the law. For all pointed to thee, and in thee had their completion. Offered up upon the altar for our sins a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of GOD our FATHER, thou wert roasted in the flames of his just indignation against our sins; and thy person becomes the everlasting nourishment, the wholesome, saving, healthful food of our souls, the bread of GOD for poor sinners, on which they may feed, and feast, and live forever. Bread of GOD, I would call thee, that camest down from heaven, be thou my portion now, and to all eternity. On thee would I feed: to thee would I come, and make thee my passover, not only to preserve me from the destroying angel, and from the wrath to come, but to be my glorious entrance, and my everlasting security, joy, and happiness in the presence of GOD for evermore.

CHAPTER 36

CONTENTS

This chapter brings us to the conclusion of the Chronicles. Here is contained the history of Jehoahaz, and his being deposed by Pharaoh. Jerusalem taken. Jehoiachin made king. Zedekiah's short reign. The proclamation by Cyrus.

2 CHRONICLES 36:1-4

(1) ¶ Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem. (2) Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. (3) And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. (4) And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.

The very short reign of Jehoahaz furnished but little subject of observation. The time was now hastening when Judah, like Israel, should cease to be a kingdom. Here is the Egyptian king triumphing over Judah, putting down one king and setting up another, and changing his name at his pleasure. Is this God's Judah? alas! what hath sin wrought! Here Jeremiah's account appears to have been marked with truth when he said, *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron.* Jeremiah 17:1.

2 CHRONICLES 36:5-8

(5) Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God. (6) Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. (7) Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. (8) Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they *are* written in the book of the kings of

Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Though this king reigned longer than his brother, even to *eleven* years, yet it should seem it was more at the pleasure of the king of Babylon than from any real power or authority he himself possessed. His taking him away to Babylon is a proof of it. Poor Judah, to what a miserable state art thou now reduced!

2 CHRONICLES 36:9-10

(9) Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD. (10) And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Here is a three month's reign, like his uncle; but a period of evil it should seem also. Misery and trouble had no effect upon his mind. And indeed, awful as it is to think, yet the fact is undeniable; if affliction be not sanctified to soften the heart, it will be sure to harden it. Those vessels which Nebuchadnezzar dared to carry away out of the temple of the *LORD*, became a dreadful scourge in after times to Belshazzar his son. See Daniel chapter 5.

2 CHRONICLES 36:11-21

(11) ¶ Zedekiah *was* one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. (12) And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet *speaking* from the mouth of the LORD. (13) And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. (14) Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. (15) And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his

messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: (16) But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy. (17) Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave *them* all into his hand. (18) And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Babylon. (19) And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. (20) And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: (21) To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for* as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Here we arrive to the sad page of Judah's history. To enter into a full detail of this history of the church we must connect with it the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. The character of Zedekiah, and his court, and servants, is there more fully exhibited in the preaching of the mournful prophet, and the sad treatment he met with from all parties. To this therefore I refer. And it will be highly profitable for the Reader, in order to have a clear apprehension of the ministry of the several prophets, to remember, according to the prefaces of their writings, with which, for the most part, they open their commission, at what period of the several kings they ministered. But as I have already marked this in a distinct page in the very commencement of this Commentary, where the names of all the books of the Old Testament are set down according to the order in which they are supposed to have been written, I think it unnecessary to make any further observations upon them in this place. The history of Judah as

a kingdom is now closed, and the Babylonish captivity begins.

2 CHRONICLES 36:22-23

(22) ¶ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD *spoken* by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, (23) Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. Who *is there* among you of all his people? The LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up.

We have made a long stride in history from the close of the last verse to the beginning of this: no less than 70 years are at once leaped over. To fill up this chasm the Reader must look into the writings of Ezekiel and Daniel. Those men were carried away captives at the general captivity and taken to Babylon. And the *LORD* commissioned those servants of his to carry on the history as far as the spirit of prophecy, wherewith their writings abound, would permit, or in fact was necessary. From this proclamation *Ezra* begins in the book that bears his name the history of the church after the return of the people from Babylon. Sweet it is to see, and highly consolatory and refreshing, that amidst all the desolations of Jerusalem and the bondage of his people, the *LORD* had his eye upon them for good. Though they were cast down, yet not totally cast off. Jacob shall still again revive, and Israel be remembered. They are still beloved for *JESUS* sake, how unworthy soever in themselves. *GOD* hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Jeremiah 29:11. And Reader! what a wonder-working *GOD* is Israel's *GOD*! Abraham, the father of the faithful, is called from Ur of the Chaldees, made a great nation, and brought into Canaan. And now again his seed are carried back again into Chaldea for their faithlessness and unbelieving. *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, Romans 11:33.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, Reader! and before you close the book of the Chronicles, which contains a faithful register of events both of men and things, think what desolation sin hath introduced into the circumstances of mankind; nay, even into the church of God! Who but must tremble in the relation of what is here recorded! and though here and there, in the character of some few gracious souls, we discover that the *LORD* hath not left himself without witness, which act as the salt of the earth to preserve the whole from universal putrefaction; yet *how* (as the prophet speaks) *is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed!*

And Reader! when you have duly contemplated this faithful portrait of man by nature, turn your eyes and behold what that same nature is when recovered by almighty grace in the person, purchase, blood-cleansing, soul-justifying, and soul-adorning righteousness of God our Saviour. Yes, blessed JESUS! I would behold thy church, not as it is in itself, but as it is united to thee, and made all glorious within; and also comely without, from *thy comeliness which thou hast put upon it*. Didst thou not at infinite expense, from infinite love, and by infinite power, purchase her to thyself? And dost thou not now watch her, water her every moment, and keep her night and day, lest any hurt her. Hast thou not for her unfaithfulness and departures from thee suffered, in different ages, *the wild boar out of the wood to root her up?* But in the midst of all thou hast brought her again in, and planted her in thine holy mountain. There may be, and there will be, the desolations of threescore years and ten; shaking dispensations, trying afflictions, and much tribulation; but

though thou wilt *sift thine Israel as corn is sifted, yet* (thou hast said,) *a grain shall not fall to the ground.* Oh! thou the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof! be thou the Refuge of all thy people in the day of their adversity. And when the wealthiest empires of the earth have had their day, which thou hast appointed; when thy church scattered as it now is, amidst the various monarchies of the world shall be gathered together, and the time of her dispersion is over: Then oh! blessed, mighty, glorious LORD JESUS, then let that auspicious promise be fulfilled and realized over the wide universe of GOD, in which it is said *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our LORD and of his CHRIST, and he shall reign for ever.* The peaceable kingdom of righteousness in JESUS, shall extend over all the habitable earth, and *all flesh shall see the salvation of GOD.* Amen.

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE BOOK OF *EZRA*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

There can be no question who was the penman of this book of GOD. *Ezra*, whose name it bears, was evidently the writer of it. Though indeed if he literally was the scribe of the whole, he must have been an ancient man at his death, for it contains in point of history a period of at least 80 years. It begins with the first year of the reign of Cyrus, which was about 536 years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and closeth somewhat about the 456th year before the Christian era.

The name of *Ezra* is not without signification, for it implies an *helper*. And certain it is that he well answered to this name, for his ministry must have been highly beneficial to the church of GOD in the critical period in which he lived. And I conceive the LORD hath made his labors a blessing and an help to the church, in all the intermediate periods, to the present hour.

The Reader will have a better apprehension of the several contents of this book, and will enter with more clearness of understanding into the design of the HOLY GHOST in causing

this faithful record to have been committed to writing, and handed down to the church, if he considers before he begins the perusal of it, the precise time of the church to which it refers, and connects also with the reading of it the view of the several contemporary writers in the church, whose ministry and labors were exercised much about the same era. What *Ezra* hath here stated, as an history, will have great light thrown upon it, if the Reader consults what the prophets, who ministered in the successive ages before, had predicted should be accomplished. If he looks no further back than the ministry of *Isaiah*, and traces in the writings of the prophets that follow to *Micah*, the sacred writings of those inspired men will be of great use to the advantageous reading the book of *Ezra*. And although the prophets *Haggai* and *Zechariah* did not begin their ministry so early by many years as *Ezra*, yet as they were both engaged in the LORD'S service before that *Ezra* finished his labors, a reference to those parts of scripture will be highly profitable.

Another interesting point for the pious Reader to observe before he enters upon the perusal of this book of GOD, will be to call to mind the state of the church at this period of its history. The Babylonish captivity was now over. The church was liberated from Babylon, though still tributary to the Persian government which succeeded it. And such of the people as the LORD had inclined to return to Jerusalem, were now inhabiting again their beloved city, though all in ruins. But the kingly government which their fathers possessed, was lost. Such was the state of GOD'S Israel at the period when *Ezra* wrote and begun this scriptural record.

I have only to detain the Reader with a request, before he enters upon the perusal of the book of *Ezra*, that both at the commencement and through every part of it, he will be on the

lookout in every chapter and verse, more or less, as the several portions may direct, for a glimpse, (if it be but a glimpse), of him to whom the whole is intended to minister, and on whose account alone it becomes most highly interesting. The HOLY GHOST hath never, in any one period of the church, left himself without witness that it is to JESUS he is ministering, and all the records he hath graciously given the church, by whatever servant he hath thought proper to send, they all, like so many rivulets directing their course towards the sea, point to JESUS. This was he *of whom Moses and the prophets did write*. This was he *whose day the patriarchs saw afar off, rejoiced in the prospect, and was glad*. And this was he for whose sake JEHOVAH declared himself to *Cyrus* two hundred years before *Cyrus* was born, that *he had called him by name*, and commissioned him to the deliverance of his people, when *opening before him the two-leaved gates* into Babylon. See Isaiah 45:14. And the same is he whose redemption we are equally interested in, whom the fathers looked forward to, and whose faith we would desire to follow, considering the end of their conversation; JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Reader! let you and I pray the Almighty SPIRIT, even GOD the HOLY GHOST, who caused this scripture to be written, that he will bless it to our perusal, and more especially in that sweet and most precious part of it which contains JESUS; that in whatever part of scripture he is spoken of, or under what shadow soever he is veiled, like *Ezra*, we may be scribes, as he was, *well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, to find and bring forth out of the treasury *things new and old*. And, as *Ezra*, it is said, (Chap. 7:10, 16,) prepared his heart to teach in Israel, and was a ready scribe in things which are divine; so may we be prepared, from the same gracious source, to discover somewhat in every page of him, in whom

are hid *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Oh! LORD! do thou, *with whom is the residue of the SPIRIT*, grant both to him that writes, and the eye that reads, increasing testimony *to the truth as it is in JESUS*; that as *these things are written that we might believe that JESUS is the Son of GOD*; so *in believing we may have life through his name*, Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

The book of Ezra, from the commencement of it to the conclusion, contains a very interesting record in the history of the church. It opens with the proclamation of Cyrus, king of Persia, to permit the Jews to return from their captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem. Here is an account of the return of certain of the people. The rebuilding of the temple; and the vessels of the temple, carried away in the captivity, brought back and restored.

EZRA 1:1

(1) ¶ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying,

This first year of Cyrus was immediately upon the finishing the 70th year of Israel's captivity. This is a great point in this history to attend to, inasmuch as it becomes a confirmation of the word of GOD concerning the desolation of Jerusalem. Jeremiah 25:11, 12. Now, whoever is desirous to make the

calculation will find, that it corresponds; perhaps to a day, as the case of Egypt, in the deliverance of Israel from thence, did before. Exodus 12:40-42. Calculating by the reigns of the several kings of Judah, and comparing with the reigns of the kings of Babylon from the first of Judah's captivity, it will be found completing the seventy years exactly. Jeremiah 52. with 2 Kings 25:27-30. The captivity of the people began in the first year it should seem, of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who reigned 45 years. To him succeeded his son *Evilmerodach*, who reigned twenty-three years. And after him his son Belshazzar, whose reign was about two years. So that those periods added together make seventy years. But what is worthy also of equal regard is, that the end of Israel's captivity was the end of the Babylonish empire. The LORD had taken Babylon as a rod to correct his people; but when that purpose was accomplished, the rod is cast away. No doubt Babylon mightily oppressed poor Israel, as we read in that pathetic mournful song of the church on the occasion, Psalm 137. And Daniel intimates as much when standing up before Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:27. But Reader! perhaps the most interesting account of any to be attended to in this wonderful subject, was concerning the instrument by whom the LORD wrought the deliverance of his people, I mean *Cyrus*, concerning whom the prophet Isaiah had been commissioned two hundred years before Cyrus was born, to tell the church both of his name and the deliverance he should accomplish. Before you go further in the history, I beg you to pause here, and to read the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, and diligently attend to what the prophet, or rather the HOLY GHOST by the prophet, tells the church. The *two leaved gates*, which the LORD promised to open him, were probably those mighty gates under the walls of Babylon which had no entrance but through the great river. And the *loins of kings the LORD promised to loose*. Now was this astonishing

prediction accomplished when Belshazzar trembled in the very night when the impious monarch was slain and Babylon taken? Daniel 5:6, 30. And may we not add, that as the LORD condescended to call Cyrus his anointed on this grand concern, was he not a type of our adorable anointed JESUS, whom the FATHER from everlasting anointed to deliver the prisoners out of prison, and them that sat in darkness out of the prison house? Isaiah 42:6, 7. Reader! never lose sight of this, I beg of you. For what a sweet testimony is here afforded of JESUS, that everything, and all events, had a reference to him. And is not this indeed the first and principal sense and meaning of what JEHOVAH said to Cyrus on this occasion before he was born, (*calling, as the apostle saith, things that are not as though they were*) when the LORD said, *For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect.* Isaiah 45:4. Is not Jacob here named for JESUS? And was not Jacob's seed blessed in and for JESUS'S sake? Yes! JESUS is the Holy One, the elect, the beloved of the FATHER. And in his name, and for his sake, both Israel and his seed are blessed.

EZRA 1:2-4

(2) Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah. (3) Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he *is* the God,) which *is* in Jerusalem. (4) And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

I think it is probable that some of the LORD'S hidden ones might have painted out to Cyrus what the LORD'S prophet Isaiah had predicted concerning him. But that Cyrus knew

nothing of the LORD in a way of grace, though the LORD stirred up his mind to those acts of clemency, seems decided, Isaiah 45:4, 5. And it is possible from the awful end of Belshazzar, who died in the very act of profaning the holy vessels of the temple, that Cyrus sent away those sacred things from a dread and fear.

EZRA 1:5-6

(5) ¶ Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all *them* whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem. (6) And all they that *were* about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all *that* was willingly offered.

It should seem that many of the people remained in Babylon reconciled to their captivity, and had mingled with the Chaldees. An awful representation of characters, in all ages, whose condemnation is *that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* John 3:19. And those precious souls whose spirits God had raised up to return to Jerusalem, what a sweet representation are they of all that through the blessed recoveries of grace emerge out of the captivity of sin and Satan, and seek JESUS, of whom Jerusalem, the holy city, was a type. Reader! see in this the blessed lesson the HOLY GHOST teacheth. Jerusalem was in ruins at this time; the temple destroyed, the walls thrown down. But amidst all this discouragement the people willingly, and with joy, returned. And doth not the poor sinner, when once his eyes are opened, his prison-doors thrown open, and the LORD'S grace leading him by the hand, *ask the way to Zion with his face thitherward, to join himself to the LORD in a covenant that cannot be forgotten?* Jeremiah 50:5.

EZRA 1:7-11

(7) Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; (8) Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. (9) And this *is* the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, (10) Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second *sort* four hundred and ten, *and* other vessels a thousand. (11) All the vessels of gold and of silver *were* five thousand and four hundred. All *these* did Sheshbazzar bring up with *them* of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

Was not Cyrus a type, in this instance, of the gentile church, concerning whom it was said that *they should bring of their abundance to beautify the place of GOD'S sanctuary*. Isaiah 60:3-14. And it is remarkable, as if the LORD meant from the earliest days of the church to point out his holy will and pleasure, in making the Jew and Gentile church at length one in JESUS, that in the first wilderness church after the people departed out of Egypt, the church was supplied from the spoils of the Egyptians, Exodus 12:35, 36. But I wish the reader to make another observation which those verses suggest, namely, amidst all the impiety and profaneness of the kings of Babylon, in desecrating the holy vessels of the temple, how did the LORD watch over both the people and the temple treasures. Yes! the LORD'S eye was upon them, and according to his own precious word, their memorial was always before him: *In my wrath I smote thee, saith the LORD; but in my favor have I had mercy upon thee*. Isaiah 40:10. How sweet a lesson this to the long and painful exercises of his afflicted ones now. He knows all they feel; hears every groan, and is speaking to them in the same gracious words; /

the LORD do keep it. I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Isaiah 27:2-3.

REFLECTIONS

HERE let our contemplations be called forth in the account given of Cyrus, and behold in him a lively type of the truly anointed of the LORD, full of grace and truth, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. *Cyrus* was foretold two hundred years before he came, that he should deliver the LORD's people froth Babylon, But JESUS was held forth as a deliverer of the LORD's people from sin and death, from everlasting. The *one* ministered to a temporal salvation; the *other* to an eternal. The *one* proved a blessing for a time; the *other* forever. The *one* saved from this world's sorrow; *the other* from all the evils of this life and that which is to come. Hail! all-glorious, almighty Deliverer! the LORD of hosts is thy name.

But, my soul, did Cyrus proclaim deliverance to captives? Did the Persian king cause it to be published that everyone with whom GOD was might go out free, and return to Jerusalem from their captivity? And did the people willingly offer themselves, in whose hearts the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH was, to avail themselves of these privileges? And shall JESUS, whom the FATHER hath anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, and to give liberty to the captives, issue forth his proclamation and none regard it? Oh! LORD GOD! thou who didst graciously put thy SPIRIT into the minds of the chief of the fathers; put forth thy SPIRIT now. LORD incline the hearts of sinners, that they may see and know the year of jubilee is come. Let that precious promise be fulfilled in which thou hast said, In the day that the great trumpet is blown, *they shall come that are ready to perish*. Do thou, precious LORD JESUS! do thou work

in the minds of sinners both *to will and to do of thy good pleasure*. And LORD in mercy grant, that none of thine may remain in the Babylon of this world, nor be fond of the chains which sin and Satan hath cast around them. Let them hear thy voice thou Son of GOD. for thou hast said, *all that hear shall live, By the blood of thy covenant bring forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water*. Take to thyself thy great name, and reign and rule the Almighty, universal LORD, of all. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

This chapter contains the record of the number which returned of the people from Babylon. Of certain priests, which could not show their pedigree.

EZRA 2:1

(1) ¶ Now these *are* the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

We are not to suppose that these were individually the very same persons which were carried away and all lived to return. Seventy years must have produced both deaths and births in the several tribes. But I rather conceive, by this register, is meant the exact number of those in each tribe that survived to return.

EZRA 2:2-35

(2) Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: (3) The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two. (4) The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. (5) The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five. (6) The children of Pahathmoab, of the children of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve. (7) The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. (8) The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five. (9) The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. (10) The children of Bani, six hundred forty and two. (11) The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three. (12) The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two. (13) The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six. (14) The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six. (15) The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four. (16) The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. (17) The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three. (18) The children of Jorah, an hundred and twelve. (19) The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three. (20) The children of Gibbar, ninety and five. (21) The children of Bethlehem, an hundred twenty and three. (22) The men of Netophah, fifty and six. (23) The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight. (24) The children of Azmaveth, forty and two. (25) The children of Kirjatharim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three. (26) The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one. (27) The men of Michmas, an hundred twenty and two. (28) The men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred twenty and three. (29) The children of Nebo, fifty and two. (30) The children of Magbish, an hundred fifty and six. (31) The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. (32) The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. (33) The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five. (34) The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five. (35) The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.

No doubt during the captivity a faithful register was kept of

the several families, and therefore their number was the more clearly ascertained. Chiefly with an eye to the promised Messiah, each father of the tribe carefully preserved his record. One feature in this record of the families of Israel I cannot help remarking. I mean the smallness of the children of Bethlehem compared to some;—only 123. This was what the prophet *Micah* had before noticed. *And thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.* Micah 5:2. What a sweet thought this suggests, not to despise the day of small things!

EZRA 2:36-39

(36) ¶ The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. (37) The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. (38) The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. (39) The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

This list is of the priests. And a very large proportion they were to the whole mass; somewhat about a tenth part.

EZRA 2:40-58

(40) The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four. (41) The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred twenty and eight. (42) The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in* all an hundred thirty and nine. (43) The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth, (44) The children of Keros, the children of Siah, the children of Padon, (45) The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub, (46) The children of Hagab, the children of Shalmi, the children of Hanan, (47) The

children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah, (48) The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam, (49) The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai, (50) The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim, (51) The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, (52) The children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, (53) The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Thamah, (54) The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha. (55) The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda, (56) The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, (57) The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami. (58) All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

I include the whole of these in one list, for Levites, Nethinims, and the Singers, with the children of Solomon's servants, may be summed up as bearing offices in one and the same household, though in different departments.

EZRA 2:59-60

(59) And these *were* they which went up from Telmelah, Telharsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, and their seed, whether they *were* of Israel: (60) The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.

This inability to prove their stock of Israel is mentioned as a reproach. But yet we find that they were of those whose hearts the LORD had inclined to go to Jerusalem; were they not types also of those concerning whom we read in the last call of the Jews, *who shall take hold of the skirts of a true Israelite, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that GOD is with you.* Zechariah 8:23.

EZRA 2:61-63

(61) And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name: (62) These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. (63) And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.

It is delightful to observe even in these times of deep poverty, how tenacious the Israelites were of their true origin and descent both from Israel and among the order of Aaron. And this is to be referred into an higher cause than merely human considerations or human wisdom. The hand of the LORD was in it that every tribe, and especially the tribe of Judah, might have a clear unquestionable descent from father to son.

EZRA 2:64-65

(64) ¶ The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred *and* threescore, (65) Beside their servants and their maids, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and *there were* among them two hundred singing men and singing women.

If the Reader will compare accounts in this of the return with that of their carrying away, he will find that they had multiplied as they had done in Egypt under all their affliction. Precious thought! the church may be, must be, oppressed, assaulted, persecuted; but it is JESUS'S church, and she shall increase. *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.* Isaiah 60:22.

EZRA 2:66-67

(66) Their horses *were* seven hundred thirty and six; their mules,

two hundred forty and five; (67) Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; *their* asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

Their treasures of cattle make no inconsiderable figure, considering that they came out of a long captivity.

EZRA 2:68-69

(68) And *some* of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which *is* at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place: (69) They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

Their liberal offerings are taken notice of because they were given with a liberal heart, though compared to former gifts in the building of the first temple, their whole collection was small indeed. There they gave in *talents*. Now only in *drachms*. The widow's mite was a costly offering in the sight of the LORD.

EZRA 2:70

(70) So the priests, and the Levites, and *some* of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

Their residence is noticed inasmuch as it implied, amidst all the desolations of their cities, that they were delighted to be in Jerusalem once more. The prophet had said, that *the LORD'S servants should take pleasure in the very stones of Zion, and favor the dust thereof*. And here we see it fulfilled. Psalm 102:14. But Reader! think with what holy joy and rapture will the redeemed of Zion return to their Jerusalem, which is above, when the captivity of sin, and Satan, and

death, and the grave, is forever over! Oh! what unknown, inexpressible, inconceivable delight will break in upon the soul when they shall *come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads*; when all those enemies shall be known, and felt, and feared no more. In the blessed prospect of it I would say, *Haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether*. Song of Solomon 2:17.

REFLECTIONS

VERY precious, and very highly interesting, are the thoughts which arise out of this chapter under the blessed SPIRIT'S teaching. And Reader! let you and I see that we do not lose sight of them.

Behold, then, how careful the fathers were to preserve, amidst the most calamitous times, a faithful record that they were of the stock of Israel, and had Abraham for their father. Though living in Babylon, they had not incorporated with the seed of Babylon; but though cast down for their sins, they considered themselves not finally cast off. GOD was still their GOD, and his covenant engagements not broken. Let us interpret this of gospel-times, and see how highly it speaks to the true children of promise in JESUS. We are not simply recorded in the genealogy of families if we are children of GOD in CHRIST JESUS, but our record is on high, and our names written in the LAMB'S book of life. And though we, like the church of old, live in the Babylon of this world, yet, blessed be GOD, JESUS tells us we are not of this world. And if Israel were saved and brought home, because of GOD'S covenant promises to Abraham, think how everlastingly certain and sure must be the covenant engagements of JEHOVAH with his

dear Son, purchased and confirmed by his blood, and all his people justified in his righteousness. Oh! the precious, precious privileges JESUS hath secured to his church to insure their final triumphs over all the captivity of sin and Satan. And oh! Reader! let us be highly jealous of these vast privileges. See, day by day, that we do not lose sight of our interest in them, but live in the constant use of them; and not like some of the priests and people, unable to prove their pedigree. Oh, dearest JESUS! may it be my daily delight, with the first of the morn and the last of the night, to look again and again over the love-tokens of thy favor. Surely I may say of thee as the church of old, *Oh! that thou wert (for thou art) as a brother to me, that sucked the breasts of my mother; when I should find thee without I would kiss thee, yea, I should not be despised.*

And while I am upon these sweet thoughts, suggested by the view of the church as here numbered in their return from Babylon, do I not behold in it also a blessed and a glorious type of the whole nation of the redeemed on earth returning at the last day, when Babylon, the great mother of harlots, shall be cast down, *and the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of JESUS, shall fall to rise no more.* Precious, precious LORD JESUS! ride forth now thou Almighty LORD of all, and win the nations to the sceptre of thy grace. Proclaim, as Cyrus thy type did, for thy people to return. Let the enemies of thy cross fall before thee, and dare no longer to retain thy captives. Bring them, LORD, to thine home, to build thee a spiritual temple, in thy strength, riches, and power. In every age make up the register of those whose names are written in thy book, until at length all that the FATHER hath given thee are gathered to thee, and the millions whose bodies sleep under the altar in heaven in hope, shall at thy call arise to all the wonders of

futurity, and the whole purposes of creation and redemption being fully answered in the union of thy glorious body being brought to thee, the song of everlasting, unceasing praise and hallelujahs, shall fill the realms of bliss to the HOLY THREE in ONE, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, for evermore.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENTS

This chapter opens with an account of the zeal of the fathers and the people to begin the temple. They set up the altar; renew their offerings; and the foundation of the temple is laid.

EZRA 3:1

(1) ¶ And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.

This seventh month was probably at the time of gathering in their summer fruits. What the country had produced of them is not said. But it was a fit season for assembling upon the great purpose they had in view. I would not have the Reader, methinks, overlook the unanimity which subsisted among them; for we are told they gathered themselves together as one man. Reader! it is this sweet feature of JESUS'S gospel which makes both him and his blessed cause so dear. Oneness with him will be sure to make the same with his members. If I love him I must love my brother that is part of him.

EZRA 3:2

(2) Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as *it is* written in the law of Moses the man of God.

I must beg the Reader very particularly to mark this verse. Here we find that before they begun, or even had power to begin, the foundation for the temple, the altar was set up. Was not this typical of JESUS? Is he not, and was he not ever, the Altar, the Sacrifice, and Priest? What a precious allusion then was this to him, in whom all sacrifices had their substance, and to whom they all referred.

EZRA 3:3-6

(3) And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening. (4) They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as *it is* written, and *offered* the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; (5) And afterward *offered* the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. (6) From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not *yet* laid.

Observe the morning and evening sacrifice. Here again remember, Reader, as this was according to the law of Moses, the lamb of the morning and evening sacrifice was offered. And what could more fully shadow forth the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world?* Observe what is said of the fear of the people. They were surrounded with foes

ready to take advantage of their present defenseless state. But yet in the midst, the LORD'S services shall not be neglected. Recollect, Reader, how it is said that the SPIRIT of the LORD was upon them, in inclining their hearts to the business. It is always profitable to eye the HOLY GHOST in his gracious ministry.

EZRA 3:7

(7) They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

The assistance they obtained from *Tyre* and *Zidon* in building the temple, suggests to us once more how the LORD had a continued reference to the poor Gentiles of the earth. They shall have somewhat to do with JESUS even before they know the LORD JESUS, or are conscious of their want of him. For the LORD JEHOVAH, our FATHER, had given the ends of the earth to his dear Son from the moment he set him up as King in Zion. This the LORD JESUS assured the church of when he said, *I will declare the decree*. Psalm 2:6-8.

EZRA 3:8-9

(8) ¶ Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. (9) Then stood Jeshua *with* his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

If the Reader will peruse with this account what *Haggai* hath recorded concerning the building of the temple, the one scripture will, as it is designed, throw great light upon the other. And this will be *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, 1 Corinthians 2:13.

EZRA 3:10-11

(10) And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. (11) And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is good*, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

There is an uncommon degree of sweetness in this account. *The mercy of God endureth for ever*. Surely this mercy is JESUS. And did not the Israelites consider it so when they sung the hymn? JESUS is the firstborn in the womb of mercy. He is emphatically called mercy; even *the mercy promised*. Luke 1:72. And as all mercies are folded up in him, and can only be opened from him, and by him; this makes the song sweet indeed, and may well be sung everlastingly, for this mercy of JEHOVAH in JESUS endureth forever. It endured even while in Babylon; for the efficacy of redemption by him was as great in that season as in any other. Reader! shall not you and I join the song, and shout aloud in praises from the same cause, JESUS, the mercy of JEHOVAH, endureth for ever.

EZRA 3:12-13

(12) But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers,

who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: (13) So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

This account affords an interesting moment of history, and furnisheth out as beautiful a representation of the love and zeal of both characters. It must have been a striking sight to have beheld those who were clamorous with holy joy, as well as those who were grieved with holy sorrow. The prophet Haggai was commissioned to quiet the minds of the afflicted ones with that precious promise; that notwithstanding all outward splendor was wanting in this second temple, compared to the first, yet *the glory of the latter should be greater than the glory of the former*. And was it not so, when in after ages the LORD JESUS came, in the substance of our flesh, into it? Haggai 2:9. Precious promise then to quiet the minds of the afflicted. And oh! how infinitely more precious now, who have lived to see it fulfilled. Blessed be the LORD, who hath come to his temple, *even the messenger of the Covenant, whom we delight in*. Malachi 3:1.

REFLECTIONS

SEE, my soul, in those perilous, poor times of the church, yet amidst all their poverty, the altar was set up, and the foundation of the temple laid. But thine Altar is forever established, and thy foundation from everlasting laid; even JESUS, who is the sum and substance of every altar, sacrifice, and priesthood, and the whole of the temple, foundation, and top-stone, brought forth *with shoutings of grace, grace unto it*. Yes! thou dear Redeemer, in the secret and mysterious nature of thy person, work, and office, thy blood and

righteousness, do thy people find the Altar, on which all offerings can alone be offered. *On* thee, and *in* thee, and *by* thee, all the presentations of thy people's persons and prayers come up with acceptance. And thou art the foundation on which is built their life, safety, happiness, and comfort, both in time and eternity. And, LORD, grant that in the view of thee and thy finished work, I may lose sight of all outward things; for neither the splendor of Solomon's temple, nor the want of splendor in the second temple, is anything, for thou art *All, and in all*.

Where thou art, blessed JESUS, thou givest glory indeed, to the service, to the offering, in the church, in the heart of all thy people; and without thee what is all the outward adorning, or inward parade of church or worship? My soul therefore will weep like those men if thou art not present, and shout for joy when thou art with me. Everywhere, and in all things, be thou my portion; and then in all things my happiness will be complete. Thou art my dwelling place, my church, my temple, my altar, my sacrifice: for how full of all things art thou to supply every spiritual necessity? And while my soul is sweetly solacing herself in thee and on thee; while CHRIST is my home, my house, my habitation; his flesh my food; his blood my drink; his righteousness my covering; and all that belongs to JESUS my treasure; angels will be my ministering spirits; and JEHOVAH, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, my companions both here and forever.

CHAPTER 4

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This chapter relates an interruption to the labours of the people in building the temple from their enemies. Commandment issued from the king to put a stop to the work.

EZRA 4:1-2

(1) ¶ Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel; (2) Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye *do*; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

I beg the Reader to remark with me the several interesting circumstances which occur in this chapter. As an history they are deserving attention; but as a spiritual subject in reference to the building of the temple of GOD, they become much more so. Let the Reader observe how the adversaries of Judah speak of GOD'S people reproachfully, in calling them *the children of the captivity*. And are not GOD'S people in all ages branded with some reproachful name of contempt? And let the Reader remark further who those adversaries were. Not the Chaldeans, their old masters, nor the Persians, their new ones; but those of the land. Persons who lived near them, and carried on a mungrel kind of religion; who professed to call upon the LORD, and yet served their idol gods? Alas! who are the greatest enemies gracious souls have to contend with now? Not open ones; not professed Infidels. *A man's foes* (says one that could not be mistaken) *are they of his own household*. Matthew 10:36. And if possible nearer yet than this, in a spiritual, sense: what greater foes hath a follower of JESUS than the opposers in his own heart from sin and unbelief, and the corruptions of his own nature. But Reader! doth not the gospel of JESUS in building the spiritual temple to

his glory, meet with the same opposition all over the earth? And wheresoever the true gospel of JESUS is preached, doth not the enemy raise up foes either subtle, insinuating, or more open and bold, continually to oppose it?

EZRA 4:3

(3) But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

No doubt the LORD was their guide in this wise counsel. And we have need of much grace to be always upon our guard against the sly advances of the enemy under feigned affection. The devil never more artfully deceives than when *transformed into an angel of light*. JESUS is the whole sum and substance of the gospel. The smallest departure from him is more to be guarded against than all the daring attacks of infidelity. For this latter is manifest, that it comes from the devil: but the former is not so speedily discovered.

EZRA 4:4-5

(4) Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, (5) And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

By weakening the hands of the people, perhaps is meant, alarmed some weak minds to relax in their service. And by continually thwarting the people, no doubt it operated to their great discouragement. Such is not unfrequently the case now. But the LORD overrules these oppositions not unfrequently to good. Reader! mark it down as a certain truth, whatever

drives a child of GOD to a throne of grace, and makes his visit's there more frequent than otherwise they would be; these things must be mercies.

EZRA 4:6-16

(6) ¶ And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they *unto him* an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. (7) And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter *was* written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue. (8) Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort: (9) Then *wrote* Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, *and* the Elamites, (10) And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnappar brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest *that are* on this side the river, and at such a time. (11) This *is* the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, *even* unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. (12) Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls *thereof*, and joined the foundations. (13) Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up *again*, *then* will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and *so* thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings. (14) Now because we have maintenance from *the king's* palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; (15) That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city *is* a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed. (16) We certify the king that, if this city be builded *again*, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

It should seem that Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes are both names of the same person: probably meaning the same as King. And it should seem that the enemies of the church caught at the first moment in the opening of this man's reign to throw down the temple. There must have been a period of at least 12 years in this interval. And Reader! do not overlook (for it is a feature which hath in all ages marked the character of GOD's enemies) how disaffection to government is urged by way of exciting the displeasure of the court against GOD's faithful servants. And was not our LORD JESUS accused in the same manner as if he forbad to give tribute to Caesar? Whereas JESUS paid the tribute, and those that accused him hated the Roman government, under whom Judea was in tribute, and would not have paid it if they had dared to refrain. Witness their hatred to the tax-gatherers the publicans.

EZRA 4:17-24

(17) ¶ *Then* sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and *to* Shimshai the scribe, and *to* the rest of their companions that dwell in Samaria, and *unto* the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time. (18) The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me. (19) And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and sedition have been made therein. (20) There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all *countries* beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them. (21) Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until *another* commandment shall be given from me. (22) Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? (23) Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter *was* read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and

power. (24) Then ceased the work of the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

The accomplishment of their wicked purpose may serve to show us how the LORD is pleased sometimes, for the exercise of faith in his people, to let the enemy triumph. And when the short-lived victories of our deadly foes have this blessed effect upon our hearts to make us more sensible of our nothingness, and to make JESUS and his fulness more precious; even our foes become instruments in the LORD'S hand to his glory and our greater good. When the Jews had nailed JESUS to the cross, how distressed must have been the minds of all his followers. But behold, that cross soon after became his people's glory, and now it is the everlasting joy of all his followers, and will be the song of redemption in heaven with all the ransomed of JESUS for evermore.

REFLECTIONS

WE have a very beautiful instruction given us by the HOLY GHOST, in what this chapter holds forth to us of the opposition the people of GOD receive from false friends, as well as open enemies, in the progress of the divine life. *They that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS must suffer persecution.* It is a mark of the christian character, and impossible wholly to avoid it. But, my brother, in the spiritual building, whether far advanced in the superstructure, or whether the foundation be but just laid, yet if JESUS be the foundation stone, depend upon it it is *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, to all carnal characters around you. Do not forget therefore, your high calling; but seek grace to go on with the building, being more and more established in your most holy faith, praying in the HOLY GHOST. Look daily to your foundation, even to JESUS; *for*

other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, JESUS CHRIST. On him rest the whole weight and burden of your salvation, and let him too bear all the glory. And as stones highly polished, let one grace be added to another, and one ordinance make way for another. In nothing being terrified by your adversaries; but living upon, walking with, rejoicing in, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And depend upon it, however apparently the work may seem hindered, yet JESUS is secretly carrying it on, and his people are growing unto an holy temple in the LORD, for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT. And as the apostle in his sweet consolation speaks, the LORD JESUS CHRIST himself, and GOD, even our FATHER, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, will comfort our hearts, and stablish us in every good word and work.

CHAPTER 5

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The affairs of the Church put on a better aspect than in the foregoing chapter. Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume the building, and Zerubbabel and Joshua are animated to the work.

EZRA 5:1-2

(1) ¶ Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that *were* in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them. (2) Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem: and with them *were* the prophets of God helping them.

We shall do well to compare the prophecies of *Haggai* and *Zechariah* with this part of the history; for both scriptures will mutually explain each other. How beautiful it is when the LORD at any time stirreth up his people. And how important a part it must be of a gospel-ministry, to stir up the minds of the saints of GOD by way of remembrance. And how doubly beautiful is it, when the church is supported by the civil power, as was the case here; when *Zerubbabel* the governor, as well as Joshua, put their shoulders to the work. It should seem, by what the prophet Haggai said, that there were some that concluded the time was not come to build the temple, by which the minds of others were discouraged. Haggai 1:2-8.

EZRA 5:3-5

(3) ¶ At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall? (4) Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building? (5) But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this *matter*.

I think it an object of considerable moment to remark on this part of the history, that the enemies of Israel made no interruption to their building houses for themselves, though this was contrary to the king's commandment; but no sooner were their hands engaged to the work of the LORD'S house, than the adversaries came forth to oppose them. Chap. 4:21. And is it not exactly the same now, and in all ages particularly concerning the chief features of the gospel. Satan never rages at the preaching of a flimsy morality, for he well knows that this never did nor ever will, make a man moral, or form the foundation even for morality in the heart. It is *by the SPIRIT*

only that sinners can *mortify the deeds of the body and live*. Romans 8:13. But the moment the cross of CHRIST is held up, and atonement by the blood of JESUS is declared to be the only salvation for a poor sinner, all hell is up in arms to interrupt the spiritual building.

EZRA 5:6-17

(6) The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which *were* on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king: (7) They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus; Unto Darius the king, all peace. (8) Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands. (9) Then asked we those elders, *and* said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls? (10) We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that *were* the chief of them. (11) And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up. (12) But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. (13) But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon *the same* king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. (14) And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that *was* in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto *one*, whose name *was* Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; (15) And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. (16) Then came the same Sheshbazzar, *and* laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and *yet* it is not finished. (17) Now therefore, if *it seem*

good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there at Babylon, whether it be *so*, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

The LORD had certainly softened the minds of those men, that though they sent an accusation against the people to the king, yet the LORD overruled the inditing of it. When *a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*. Proverbs 16:7. But I beg the Reader to observe further what confidence the people had taken from the consciousness that the eye of the LORD their GOD was upon them. No doubt the LORD blessed the words of his servants the prophets unto them. I cannot sufficiently praise the firmness and zeal of the people in stating their just pretensions to prosecute the work; not only because Cyrus the king had tolerated, but from an infinitely higher cause, that the king of kings, even the GOD of heaven and earth, they were servants to. And they had suffered his displeasure in the captivity they were lately brought out of, for neglecting what they now were determined to engage in. Oh! how precious it is to find souls faithful to GOD and CHRIST, and determined to persevere in his service, be the consequence what it may. Reader! make your just observations upon the same characters, as they appeared in the foregoing chapter and in this. *There* through fear of man, which bringeth a snare, they ceased from the work. *Here*, through fear and love of GOD, which giveth confidence, they set up their banners. But Reader! do not fail at the same time to put down this different conduct to the right cause. Left to themselves in the former instance, we see what human strength is. Aided and encouraged by the LORD'S prophets, and more especially the LORD'S grace, in this latter instance, we see what man can do, the LORD helping. Precious JESUS! I can do nothing by

myself except to sin and forget thee. But I can do all things when thou art by and guidest me on, and enablest me.

REFLECTIONS

BLESSED JESUS! do I not behold thee even in this chapter, when I perceive thy servants stirring up the minds of thy people to thy cause. Surely thou art the LORD GOD of the prophets, and when thou didst influence the several characters in thy church, both ministers and people, was it not a plain manifestation that thou wast speaking in them and by them in procuring peace to the prosecution the work of thy temple. Indeed, from everlasting thou, and thou alone, art the peace, and the peace maker, in all cases, and upon all occasions. Thou hast made our peace with GOD by thy blood. Thou hast made our peace with ourselves, and with our own consciences. All nature, and all things, by the fall were at enmity with man; and all the inferior orders instantly arose in rebellion against him, because he had rebelled against GOD. But when JESUS came he restored all things: To GOD his glory—to man his peace—to all creation order and regularity. And as thou hast purchased our peace by thy blood; so by thy continual advocacy thou livest to render it effectual. And now in thy blessed gospel thou comest to preach peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh. Hail! glorious, almighty, blessed Prince of peace! LORD, in thy peace make me to go on in defiance of the opposition of hell and the world, in building thine house; and being myself built up in my most holy faith. And let devils assault, or the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST fail; yet, LORD, speak but thy peace to my soul, and all shall be well. Say unto me as thou didst to thy disciples; *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall*

have peace.

CHAPTER 6

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This Chapter relates an event of great joy to the people of God. Darius commands the building to go on. It is finished. They celebrate the Passover, and make a feast of dedication.

EZRA 6:1-5

(1) ¶ Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. (2) And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein *was* a record thus written: (3) In the first year of Cyrus the king *the same* Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof threescore cubits; (4) *With* three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: (5) And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which *is* at Jerusalem, *every one* to his place, and place *them* in the house of God.

Surely the LORD'S hand was in this, for otherwise when the decree of *Cyrus* was not found in Babylon, what could have prompted the mind of *Darius* to have had search made for it in another of his provinces, especially as no doubt *Tatnai* and the enemies of the cause would have been very forward to

have prevented it, had not some overruling power led on to the enquiry. How precious is it, dearest LORD, to trace thy steps going before thy church and people everywhere? And indeed must it not be so? Didst thou not sing to thy church, *A vineyard of red wine?* And didst thou not say, *I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night, and day.* Isaiah 27:3. Reader! let us seek grace never to lose sight of this in all the circumstances of the church; and in all our own private trials.

EZRA 6:6-12

(6) Now *therefore*, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which *are* beyond the river, be ye far from thence: (7) Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. (8) Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, *even* of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. (9) And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which *are* at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: (10) That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. (11) Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. (12) And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter *and* to destroy this house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

Observe how the hand of the LORD is with this decree. *Tatnai* and his companions are reproved for opposing GOD's work. *Darius* not only commands the temple to be built, but at his

own cost and charge. Nay more, he makes allowance for the daily sacrifice; and desires that in this temple prayers and sacrifices may be continually offered for the life of himself and his sons. Yea, as if under the spirit of prophecy, he looks up to GOD to vindicate his own cause in destroying kings as well as people, whosoever shall put forth an hand to the ruin of the temple. Surely one is led almost to believe, that such a friend to GOD'S cause must be a partaker of GOD'S grace. Was not this another instance of the Jew and Gentile being alike interested in JESUS? Solomon's temple had a *Hiram*, king of Tyre, to give aid: and here is a *Darius*, king of Persia, contributing to the second temple. Were not both, blessed JESUS, meant by thee to prefigure the united church of thy glorious redemption, as including both the Jew and the Gentile?

EZRA 6:13

(13) ¶ Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shetharboznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily.

See how the LORD can change the face of things in a moment. The very men that went forth for the ruin of GOD'S cause are made unwilling instruments for the promotion of his glory. And thus, Reader! depend upon it, will even the malice of Satan be made subservient to the greater glory of JESUS and the joy of all his people. *Fear not, little flock.*

EZRA 6:14

(14) And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of

Persia.

How truly beautiful in their place are GOD'S ministers, when they *strengthen the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees.*

EZRA 6:15

(15) And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

I think there must have been a space of nearly 20 years from the foundation of the temple to the finishing of it. And in the building up of every individual of CHRIST'S mystical temple, how long sometimes, how frequently interrupted, and in some instances, how apparently given over, as it was here, doth the work seem to many precious souls, in their own ease and in that of others! Oh! precious, precious JESUS! well is it for thy people that both the work and the glory is thine. The spark of grace thou preservest from being extinguished. The incorruptible seed thou keepest from rotting.

EZRA 6:16-22

(16) And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy, (17) And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. (18) And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which *is* at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses. (19) And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth *day* of the first month. (20) For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them *were* pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

(21) And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat, (22) And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

How beautiful and truly interesting is it, to discover, more or less, through the Bible, from the first forming of the church on our fathers coming out of Egypt, even to the days of the LORD JESUS, how this great typical feast of the passover was kept and most religiously observed. Surely nothing upon earth can more decidedly prove the vast and infinite importance of the thing signified, when the sign was thus preserved with such solemnity of holiness from generation to generation. Think, Reader, I charge you, how vast, how infinitely momentous must be the passover of JESUS'S blood, when through so many ages the shadow of it was thus religiously observed with the most scrupulous exactness. Oh! Sir! *how shall we escape*, how shall any man escape, *who wilfully neglects so great salvation?* Hebrews 2:3.

REFLECTIONS

AT length we have seen, after many years expectation to the people, and much opposition from their enemies, the temple built and dedicated; and once more the church enjoying unmolested the privilege of her ordinances. But while we bless GOD for thus watching over his people for good, and in his own good time doing good to Zion; let us look to him whom that temple, and whom every ordinance, points to, and in whom all have their meaning and completion. Yes! precious

JESUS! I would desire grace to look unto thee; for on thee all the eyes of saints and angels are unceasingly fixed with delight. And well may a poor sinner therefore look with delight on thee, since but for thee, and thy great salvation, he must have been looking up in the misery of the damned for evermore. Help me, then, thou precious LORD, to contemplate thy beauties, thy glories, thy loveliness, in thyself; thy loveliness and suitableness to thy people. Surely thou art *the LORD our righteousness*. Thou art indeed the temple, the altar, the sacrifice, the High Priest, the offering, the Lamb of GOD, and the all-sufficient propitiation; the advocate, the intercessor of thy people. Angels are gazing on thee, thou peerless beauty! the spirits of just men made perfect have their eyes fixed on thee. Every redeemed soul now in glory among the ransomed in the Zion which is above, is looking on thee with love, with rapture, with unspeakable, undescribable delight! LORD JESUS! make me one of the blessed multitude, and keep my heart, my soul, mine eyes, forever and forever gazing on thee. And while on earth my poor feeble frame is on the stretch to see thee in everything, to bless thee for every mercy, and to enjoy thee in all; oh! let me live near thee, and to thee, and with thee, day by day in a life of faith, until at thy second coming faith shall be swallowed in sight, and my soul sit down at the fountain head of everlasting enjoyment, in the presence of GOD and the LAMB for evermore, Amen. Hallelujah.

CHAPTER 7

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We are here brought more particularly acquainted with Ezra,

the writer of this book. He had modestly said nothing of himself in the opening of his records of the church; but here he is obliged to say somewhat concerning his own history, from the part he took in the public service. He is represented as going up to Jerusalem; obtains a commission from the king for that purpose; and he enters upon it with blessing God for the appointment.

EZRA 7:1-5

(1) ¶ Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, (2) The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, (3) The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, (4) The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, (5) The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest:

We cannot too particularly bless GOD that amidst all the darkened days of the church in Babylon, a secret work of the HOLY GHOST upon the minds of the people, prompted them to be very tenacious of the records of each tribe and family. For had this not been the case, how should we have traced our LORD'S genealogy so as to ascertain the accomplishment of the promise. Hail! holy, blessed SPIRIT! be thou adored for this precious instance of thy mercy in watching over the church when our fathers merited so justly thy displeasure!

EZRA 7:6-10

(6) This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he *was* a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. (7) And there went up *some* of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. (8) And he came to

Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king. (9) For upon the first *day* of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. (10) For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

We ought to pause over this account, short as it is, of Ezra's character. A scribe was one conversant with the Scriptures; and as Ezra was a ready scribe, and had dedicated himself particularly to this service, no doubt the thing was of the LORD. For as the HOLY GHOST hath caused his writings to be so faithfully preserved and handed down to us, and as from their great importance in this part of the church's history they form so interesting a portion of GOD'S sacred word, we cannot be at a loss to discover the work of the blessed SPIRIT accompanying all his labours with success. Reader! think if Ezra was so earnest in the study of the books of the scripture which were extant in his day, and in which JESUS was so little known, compared to our vast privileges in this gospel day in which we live; how ought we to be alive in searching those precious scriptures, where JESUS forms the sum and substance of every book and chapter! Dear LORD! grant me grace to be unceasingly enquiring after thee in the word of thy truth, that *I may be made wise unto salvation through the faith which is in CHRIST JESUS!* It is somewhat remarkable that Ezra should have been left so long in Babylon after the return of the children of the captivity. But it should seem that the LORD had work for him there to do. The obtaining this commission from the king for the great purposes conceived in Ezra's mind, seems to explain the cause of his detention there very fully. From all calculations, however, as the temple was now built, it must have been many years.

EZRA 7:11-13

(11) ¶ Now this *is* the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel. (12) Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, and at such a time. (13) I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and *of* his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

The kindness of the Persian king was very great. For not only Ezra, but as many as had a mind to accompany him, were permitted to join in this expedition.

EZRA 7:14-26

(14) Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which *is* in thine hand; (15) And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation *is* in Jerusalem, (16) And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which *is* in Jerusalem: (17) That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem. (18) And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. (19) The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. (20) And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king's treasure house. (21) And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which *are* beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily, (22) Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil,

and salt without prescribing *how much*. (23) Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? (24) Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. (25) And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know *them* not. (26) And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

The several features in this grant were all in favor of the church. And how strange would it seem did we not look deeper than the surface of the matter, and behold the LORD's hand in the direction, to view an idolatrous heathen giving assistance to the church of JESUS. John saw *a wonder in heaven* when he saw *the earth helping the woman*. Revelation 12:16. And surely it is a wonder which grace only can explain, when men become the unwilling instruments of accomplishing the very reverse of what they intend. Witness the sons of Jacob in their intended ruin of Joseph. And yet infinitely higher and more important, and never to be lost sight of, when the Jews crucified the LORD of life and glory, how little did they consider what blessings they became the instruments to accomplish! I have to call upon the Reader to admire and adore the LORD GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, for the wonderful change which must have been wrought in the minds of Artaxerxes and his princes, to favor the cause of GOD so very highly. Not only giving Ezra authority to take with him all as many as felt inclined to go up to Jerusalem, but also to grant him money so liberally to do all that was in his heart. And to impose upon all his subjects an obedience to whatever Ezra should demand in favor of the

cause he was engaged in. Surely no higher proof can be required that the hearts of all men are at the LORD'S disposal, and that like *rivers of water he turneth them whithersoever he pleaseth*. Proverbs 21:1.

EZRA 7:27-28

(27) ¶ Blessed *be* the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem: (28) And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

How beautiful is this ascription of praise in the mouth and heart of Ezra. How lovely is it to see when men have grace to pass by second causes and look wholly at the first. Joseph's history affords a memorable instance of this, when referring the unkind behavior of his brethren unto the kind ordination and predisposing government of the LORD. *So now* (said he) *it was not you that sent me hither, but GOD*. Genesis 45:8.

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How truly lovely doth Ezra the scribe appear in the view here given of him! a scribe indeed well instructed in the law of GOD. Trained in a foreign land, and under captivity, yet still his attachment to his beloved Jerusalem, and the people of his fathers, and yet above all to the GOD of his fathers, how near at heart had Ezra an interest in all that concerned the welfare of Zion. Truly might he say, *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning: If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my*

mouth; if I do not prefer Jerusalem before my chief joy.

But while we pay all due respect to a character of such eminency as Ezra, how is the mind directed in the view of him to the recollection of one, to whom Ezra was but as the faint shadow to the substance. JESUS came to his beloved Jerusalem with full commission from the King of kings, even GOD his father, and had all power given to him in heaven and in earth. And as many as were minded of their own will, when by his grace the LORD had made them willing in the day of his power, the FATHER gave to be his companions, that *JESUS might give eternal life, to as many as the FATHER had given to him.* And the LORD JESUS declared the decree which JEHOVAH had made for this express purpose. But with what power was JESUS vested; to what extent his commission; to receive all honor, that as the FATHER was honored, so also should be the SON! All his ministers and servants freed from tribute; for if *the Son had made them free, they then are free indeed.* And all who refuse to bow the knee to the sovereignty of his grace, must bend before the iron rod of his justice. Hail! thou Almighty JESUS! who camest to us in thy Father's name, and by his authority. All power, grace, and salvation be thine. May every knee bow before thee, and every tongue confess, *that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.* Amen.

CHAPTER 8

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We have here a further relation of Ezra's journey to Jerusalem. He begins it with prayer; the LORD conducts him and those who accompanied him in safety. An account of his

arrival, and his entrance on business.

EZRA 8:1

(1) ¶ These *are* now the chief of their fathers, and *this is* the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

It is to the honor of *Ezra's* company that the HOLY GHOST hath caused their register to be made in the book of GOD. Strange indeed it is, to consider that so long after the proclamation made by Cyrus, so many of the people remained in Babylon; and yet were afterwards to go. But is not this the case in the call of the gospel? The hour was not yet come. And the LORD by this testimony, plainly shows that the work is with him. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but neither is he that planteth, neither he that watereth any thing, but GOD that giveth the increase.*

EZRA 8:2-14

(2) Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; Hattush. (3) Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty. (4) Of the sons of Pahathmoab; Elihoenai the son of Zerariah, and with him two hundred males. (5) Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males. (6) Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males. (7) And of the sons of Elam; Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males. (8) And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males. (9) Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males. (10) And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males. (11) And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males. (12) And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten

males. (13) And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males. (14) Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

The whole number is fourteen hundred ninety and six, beside the heads of the houses themselves. A goodly company! How sweet is the gospel proclamation, when made successful to win souls unto CHRIST. Was it not in allusion to this, both in the Jewish and gospel church, that the prophet cried out, *The LORD shall make an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.* Isaiah 11:16.

EZRA 8:15

(15) And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

The pause that *Ezra* made before his departure, no doubt, was with *a* view to begin his journey in prayer. *Carry us not up hence, is*, or should be, the language of every truly regenerated believer, when like Moses we are about to set forth on any expedition; *unless thy presence goeth with us.* Exodus 33:15. Is it not a matter of great astonishment, that none of GOD'S ministers, the Levites, should, unasked, have been forward to go, especially as *Artaxerxes* had granted free permission? But, Reader, do not overlook the pious conduct of *Ezra* on this occasion, in his anxiety to have the ministers with him for the service of the house of GOD.

EZRA 8:16-20

(16) Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for

Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding. (17) And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, *and* to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God. (18) And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen; (19) And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty; (20) Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

I admire the promptness of the Levites in coming forward at the call. And I equally admire the piety of *Ezra* in ascribing this readiness of the sons of Levi to the good hand of God.

EZRA 8:21-23

(21) ¶ Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. (22) For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God *is* upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath *is* against all them that forsake him. (23) So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.

The prophet Jeremiah had predicted of the manner in which the people should return, both the dispersed of Judah and Jerusalem; *going and weeping*. Jeremiah 50:4, 5. Ezra therefore, in a most pious manner, proclaims a fast to seek the LORD'S presence, like the pillar to Israel, to go before them. And though the way from Babylon to Jerusalem exposed the people to much danger, from the several enemies through whose territories they must pass; yet, from

a well grounded confidence in the LORD, Ezra would not seek any convoy from Artaxerxes. And as Ezra confided in the LORD, the LORD honoured Ezra's faith. Oh! Reader! what hath a well grounded faith in GOD'S mercy in JESUS CHRIST accomplished in all ages? For I hope I need not remind the Reader that the confidence of Ezra in a GOD in covenant, implied the covenant made with Abraham. And what was that but, that *in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. Galatians 3:16.

EZRA 8:24-30

(24) ¶ Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them, (25) And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered: (26) I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, *and* of gold an hundred talents; (27) Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold. (28) And I said unto them, Ye *are* holy unto the LORD; the vessels *are* holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers. (29) Watch ye, and keep *them*, until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD. (30) So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

Is there not a sweet spiritual instruction here? Doth not the apostle, in allusion to gospel treasures for himself and his faithful companions, observe, *we have this treasure in earthen vessels*. 2 Corinthians 4:7. Indeed, are not all the precious truths of GOD considered as the treasures of his grace, *More to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold?* And is not JESUS the whole sum and substance of all the treasures

of wisdom and knowledge? Blessed Redeemer! commit thy treasure, O LORD, unto faithful men. And ye that are ministers, *be ye clean that bear the vessels of the LORD.* Isaiah 52:11.

EZRA 8:31

(31) ¶ Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

Was not this journey a type of the gospel pilgrimage—long, and dangerous, exposed to the *dens of lions, and the mountains of leopards*? And is not the hand of our GOD upon us, to deliver us from every foe? Precious JESUS! how art thou going before thy people, and protecting them continually!

EZRA 8:32-36

(32) And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days. (33) Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *was* Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites; (34) By number *and* by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time. (35) *Also* the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats *for* a sin offering: all *this was* a burnt offering unto the LORD. (36) And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river: and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

I admire the continual observance of the offerings, and the sacrifices; not for the multitudes of beasts slaughtered, but

for the evident reference the whole had to the person of the LAMB of GOD. Oh! how impossible must it have been for all the art and contrivance of man, in such a succession of ages, to have kept up so expensive a train of services, had not the LORD'S hand been evidently with them to testify of his dear Son. Yes! blessed JESUS! thy *one offering, by which thou hast for ever perfected them that are sanctified*, unfolds, and explains the whole, and carries a palpable demonstration with it, that all referred to Thee, *the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world*. Revelation 13:8.

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My soul! doth not this view of Ezra's return from Babylon, with the number of the people here named and recorded, suggest to thee the ransomed of Zion, which shall one day return with everlasting joy upon their heads; when JESUS shall again be seen on the holy mount, and with him, not only *the hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of Israel, but also a multitude which no man can number of all kindred's, nations, and languages!* Oh! how delightful will be that appearance; and how sure and certain is the journey to it now. There is an highway opened, and it is indeed called *the way of holiness*. And it is truly called the way of holiness, for JESUS is himself the way; and the holiness of his person and finished- work, is the holiness of his people. *The wayfaring men, though fools, cannot err therein*. Here, precious JESUS, may I be found, returning from the Babylon of this world to the Jerusalem of a better. Yes! thou dearest LORD, thou art indeed the way, the only way, the sure way. For in thy person, thy redemption-work, thy covenant righteousness, thy atoning blood, followed with all the promises, and invitations, and assurances of thy gospel, my soul finds a sure way, and

would walk in no other. Most fully convinced I am, that *salvation is in no other; neither is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Witness for me, that my soul is come in this way: And oh! fulfil that precious promise, LORD, to my soul, that *all that do come thou wilt in no wise cast out.*

CHAPTER 9

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In the prosecution of Ezra's commission, he makes discovery that the people of GOD had formed affinity with strangers. This calls forth great distress. Ezra seeketh to GOD in solemn prayer upon the occasion.

EZRA 9:1-2

(1) ¶ Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, *doing* according to their abominations, *even* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. (2) For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

The LORD hath expressly commanded (Deuteronomy 7:1-4.) that there should be no intermarriages between Israel and the nations around. Chiefly, no doubt, with an eye to CHRIST. GOD'S people were a nation of priests, an holy seed, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood. Therefore this mingling with the

heathens was a direct outrage to the divine law. Alas! what are we not capable of doing, when the LORD withholds his grace! And, Reader! have you never remarked in your own instance, how sometimes this is done to teach us what we are, and to cause us to look back again to *the hole from whence we were digged*. Isaiah 51:1.

EZRA 9:3-4

(3) And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. (4) Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

What a finished picture hath the HOLY GHOST here drawn of a saint of GOD; silent under the heavy affliction of soul, arising from indignation at the awful calamity. The rending the garment, and the plucking of the hair, were strong expressions of an holy zeal for GOD'S honor, and an holy sorrow for man's transgression. But what I most particularly desire the Reader to notice, is the silent humblings of Ezra, until *the evening sacrifice*. That grand, and all-important hour, which in all ages of the church, and in every sacrifice, pointed to JESUS. Most probably the ninth hour, the very hour in which JESUS on the cross finished redemption-work, and gave up the ghost, when he offered himself a sacrifice for sin. I cannot but still consider this hour (which corresponds, in point of time, to our three o'clock, in the afternoon) as a most important hour, in reference to JESUS, and with an eye to his sacrifice. For as the several ages, from the time of the first institution of sacrifices to the death of CHRIST, set apart this hour with peculiar solemnity, as the hour for offering the evening sacrifice; so from the death of CHRIST, believers now, in

looking back to the great event then accomplished, find peculiar comfort in the exercise of faith, in all their prayers and ordinances, which have an eye to the thing signified.

EZRA 9:5

(5) ¶ And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God,

I would have the Reader observe, that until the hour of the evening sacrifice, the man of GOD expressed the perturbations of his mind in humble silence. Neither the rending of the garment, nor the mantle, could expiate the offence. Not all the silence, and humbleness of soul, could atone for it, or do it away. Neither tears, nor prayers, nor repentance, sweet signs as they are of the humbled state of the soul, can wash away sin. But JESUS alone, in his complete salvation, can make up the deadly breach. Oh! Reader! how precious is it to see JESUS, and his atoning blood, thus looked to by faith, in ages so long before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Doth it not comfort your heart in the review? I profess, with all thankful acknowledgment to the LORD, it doth mine. We have another beautiful example, which the LORD favored the prophet Daniel with, in the preceding generation to this of Ezra, while in Babylon. Daniel 9:3-21.

EZRA 9:6-15

(6) And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. (7) Since the days of our fathers *have we been* in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, *and* our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as *it is*

this day. (8) And now for a little space grace hath been *shewed* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. (9) For we *were* bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. (10) And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, (11) Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. (12) Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave *it* for an inheritance to your children for ever. (13) And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities *deserve*, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this; (14) Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed *us*, so that *there should be* no remnant nor escaping? (15) O LORD God of Israel, thou *art* righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as *it is* this day: behold, we *are* before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

Reader! what sweet and gracious signs of sorrow, and of real communion with GOD. The blushing, and dropping countenance, under the conscious sense of the divine presence, are among the truest tokens of this state of the soul. Reader! do not fail to remark the precious lesson held forth to all true believers in CHRIST in this example. We as fully enjoy the manifestations of JESUS, and the love of JEHOVAH in him, when we lie low in the dust before him, as when in those rapturous moments we are like the apostles in the mount of transfiguration, and the Son of GOD unveils to us his glories,

and our interest in him. Matthew 17:4, 5. I stay not to particularize the several features of Ezra's devotion: I rather desire the Reader to mark, in his own view of things, the leading points in it, which bespeak the gracious impressions he was under. The general confession of the sins of Israel he dwells upon, and takes care to point out the part he himself took in them. Every gracious soul doth this, and in his approaches to the mercy-seat feels his own as if they were the heaviest. And how sweetly doth he dwell upon the divine mercies, in their abundance, fulness, and continuance: as if the LORD had taken occasion, from man's undeservings, to magnify his mercy, and the exceeding riches of his grace; that where *sin abounded, grace did much more abound*. Never, blessed JESUS, was there an instance like to thine, when thou camest to seek and save *that which was lost!* I beg the Reader to notice these precious things in Ezra's holy mourning before the throne and mercy-seat. A more beautiful instance of the powerful effects of grace upon the soul, except in the parallel humblings of Daniel, (Chap 9.) is not to be found in the Bible. But I cannot dismiss this view of Ezra, without calling on the Reader to mark one feature more in his approach to GOD upon this occasion, and the more so because it leads my soul to yet an higher subject, from whence if I mistake not, the whole virtue and efficacy of Ezra's devotion derived its strength, I mean *the spreading* out his hands unto the LORD his GOD, meaning GOD in covenant, as his GOD in CHRIST. Doth it not carry the Reader's mind, on the wings of faith, to Calvary, where JESUS arms were stretched out on the cross, as if in a twofold posture of entreaty, both with GOD and man. Can we behold Ezra stretching forth his hands in supplication for Israel on this occasion, and shalt we forget, or overlook thee, thou blessed JESUS, whose precious feet were fixed to the cross, while thine arms were stretched forth, at once looking up to the FATHER in intercession, and spread

abroad below to embrace all that came to thee, as if saying, *Behold me, behold me; look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am GOD, and there is none else, and beside me there is no Saviour.* Isaiah 65:1 45:21, 22.

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PAUSE, Reader, over this chapter, and mark in strong characters on your mind the distinguishing love of GOD to Israel. The LORD by prophecy had pointed out their distinction ages before. They were *to dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations.* And from everlasting it had been so determined upon. In the gracious purposes of GOD in covenant relation, they were set apart to be known by their distinguishing peculiarity and character. And their happiness consisted in this; their singularity was to be their singular honor. They were to be a nation of priests, distinguished with peculiar sacrifices, peculiar duties, peculiar privileges, peculiar blessings: a people near to GOD and set apart for himself. Judge, then, the awful apostacy when Israel forgot her blessings, mercies, privileges, and above all, the GOD of her fathers, and mingled the holy seed with the idolatrous nations around. Reader! let the thought be suitably impressed upon your mind as one of the spiritual seed of Israel. Are not believers in CHRIST peculiarly set apart and formed for JESUS glory? Are they not *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.* Doth not JESUS mark them for his own; make them *kings and priests to GOD and the FATHER;* the purchase of his blood, the subjects of his grace, and the token, gift, and pledge of the FATHER'S love? And what ought to be the immediate consequence of these distinguishing mercies, but *to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous*

light. Who in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Let me only add one thought more on this sweet chapter. Who can behold Ezra thus acting as the intercessor for Israel, but must instantly call to mind that Great High Priest, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in this glorious, all-prevailing office, in whose eventful death and intercession all the high priests under the law found favor and acceptance with GOD. Yes! blessed JESUS! to thee would I unceasingly direct my attention. Now, even now, thou wearest thy priesthood still; appearest in a vesture dipped in blood, to denote the sure efficacy of thine high office, and that *thou ever livest to make intercession for sinners*. Let me never open thy blessed scriptures at any part, read a page, or verse, of thy several servants ministering, without an eye to thee. Thou art the sum and substance of all their services. The whole law, and the whole priesthood, were *but a shadow of good things to come*. In thee the whole centers; and the whole is completed for the salvation of sinners, and the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER 10

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This Chapter gives us the history which followed Ezra's prayer. Shecaniah encourageth Ezra to set about a reform. Ezra with fasting begins it. The people feel suitable sorrow, and the strange wives are put away.

EZRA 10:1

(1) ¶ Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people wept very sore.

There is somewhat truly interesting in this account of Ezra. His great concern manifested in those several acts of sorrow and humiliation, show what a holy zeal he had for the glory of GOD, and Israel's prosperity. But we must look deeper than the surface to discover the grand motive of Ezra's concern. The preservation of the holy seed from intermarrying with other nations of the earth, was one of the most important precepts of the law, and evidently given and made important with an eye to JESUS CHRIST. The prophets had it in commission to tell the church where CHRIST was to be born, and from what stock he was to proceed. *Isaiah* pointed to him as the seed of *David*: *Isaiah* 11:1. And *Micah* pointed to the place of his birth, *Bethlehem*; *Micah* 5:2. Hence, when the LORD JESUS came, though the Jews confounded their views by imagining CHRIST was *of Galilee*, because he came *from Galilee*, after the flight of his mother there on account of Herod, *Matthew* 2:1, 22. yet they uniformly bore testimony that CHRIST was, according to the scripture, to come of the seed of *David*, and from the town of *Bethlehem*, where *David* was. *John* 7:41, 42. Hence *Paul* is express to confirm this grand truth, for he calls upon *Timothy* to remember that *JESUS CHRIST* was of the seed of *David*; *2 Timothy* 2:8. Now from all these views of scripture together, we behold the great testimony to prove the descent of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, after the flesh, from the stock of *David*. But Reader! how should this have been ascertained and proved, if the children of Israel had intermarried with heathen nations? Oh! how sweet is it to behold GOD the HOLY GHOST watching over the church of JESUS! And oh! how sweet is it to observe such lively faith

as we behold in *Ezra*, and the mourning people, in looking forward to the *promised seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head*. I desire, HOLY SPIRIT, to adore thy love and mercy in those precious views here given of both.

EZRA 10:2-4

(2) And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one of the sons of Elam*, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. (3) Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. (4) Arise; for *this matter belongeth* unto thee: we also *will be* with thee: be of good courage, and do *it*.

No doubt in the evil already induced from these improper connections, the HOLY GHOST had guarded the stock of David from any evil consequences in this grand matter. But it was high time that Israel should be made sensible of the sin, and be divorced from all such alliances. Here is a sweet spiritual improvement arising out of this subject. Believers in JESUS must be divorced from all carnal connections, in order to their union with the LORD. Hence Paul saith, that *he was jealous over the church*, because he had *espoused her to Christ*. 2 Corinthians 11:2. And with what tears and vows do true believers in CHRIST engage in his service, when turning our back upon the world, we resolve to be wholly JESUS'S? This *Shechaniah* is honorably spoken of in this place by the HOLY GHOST. Oh! how truly valuable thus to be honorably recorded in the book of GOD.

EZRA 10:5-9

(5) Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware. (6) ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and *when* he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. (7) And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; (8) And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away. (9) Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth *day* of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter, and for the great rain.

Who but must admire the holy zeal of Ezra? What a wonderful attempt it must have been? What a crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts? Do, Reader, observe how the LORD seemed to answer the droppings of his people's tears by the droppings of the heavens in rain. This heavy rain is spoken of as being evidently a peculiar manifestation, intimating that GOD looked on and took part in the reform of the people.

EZRA 10:10-14

(10) And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. (11) Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. (12) Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do. (13) But the people *are* many, and *it is* a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither *is this* a work of one day or two: for we are many that have transgressed in this thing. (14) Let now our rulers

of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

No doubt the hand of the LORD was upon them, and with them, so that grace triumphed over nature, that all the people, as the heart of one man consented unto the thing. Oh! how delightful is it, when grace enters the heart, and the soul melts before GOD in consequence of it.

EZRA 10:15-17

(15) ¶ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah were employed about this *matter*: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them. (16) And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by *their* names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. (17) And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

The HOLY GHOST hath thought proper to be particular in stating the precise time this great reform took to make it effectual and complete. Mark, Reader! how attentive the LORD is to all the circumstances of his people. *He telleth the wanderings of his people; he putteth their tears into his bottle; they are noticed in his book.* Psalm 56:8.

EZRA 10:18-44

(18) And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. (19) And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being guilty, they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass. (20) And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and

Zebadiah. (21) And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uziah. (22) And of the sons of Pashur; Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasa. (23) Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same *is* Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer. (24) Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri. (25) Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah. (26) And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah. (27) And of the sons of Zattu; Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza. (28) Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai. (29) And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth. (30) And of the sons of Pahathmoab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh. (31) And *of* the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, (32) Benjamin, Malluch, *and* Shemariah. (33) Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, *and* Shimei. (34) Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel, (35) Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh, (36) Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, (37) Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau, (38) And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei, (39) And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah, (40) Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, (41) Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah, (42) Shallum, Amariah, *and* Joseph. (43) Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah. (44) All these had taken strange wives: and *some* of them had wives by whom they had children.

Observe, Reader, how the names of the offenders are recorded. No doubt both in judgment and in mercy. How fully doth it show forth the covenant love of GOD in CHRIST, while it fully sets forth also his people's sin and depravity. Oh! what could have atoned for this dreadful rebellion, but the blessed provision made for Israel's sin in the redemption by Israel's GOD. Here, blessed JESUS, as in every other case, we see the glorious resource in thy salvation. In every age, and upon every occasion, the precious truth is read and confirmed again and again; *Where sin abounded grace did much more*

abound, that as sin hath reigned, and doth reign, unto death; so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Romans 5:21.

REFLECTIONS

PAUSE, my soul, over this chapter, and before I close this book of divine inspiration, and shut up the view of this great man's history and reform; see, and consider what the HOLY GHOST graciously intended to teach the church from it of a spiritual, gospel nature.

And here, my soul, stand still and consider how much of thine own life and conduct is strikingly set forth. Have I not from the womb been seeking out and forming strange alliances, and taking up connection with anything, and with everything, rather than being married to CHRIST? In Adam and his stock, fallen, sinful, and polluted I was born; by nature closely attached to him, and seeking nothing but what proved my alliance to him. Married to the law, wedded to my own righteousness, (or rather my fancied righteousness, for in reality righteousness I had none); how did I seek to find justification before GOD by the works of the law? And though that law became only the ministration of death; though its demands of unsinning obedience, making no one allowance whatever, might have made my very soul tremble under its universally condemning power; yet notwithstanding its rigour; notwithstanding the dreadful condemnation it held forth; still infatuated to my own present and everlasting ruin, never should I have put away those strange wives had not JESUS, like another *Ezra*, have come with grace in his lips, and love in his heart, and by his HOLY SPIRIT *convinced me of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, and divorcing me from every

other alliance, betrothed me to himself, and made me his forever. Oh! thou almighty Bridegroom of thy church and of thy people! what unknown, unexplored riches are contained in that tender character. Yes! my soul! *thy Maker is thine husband, the LORD of Hosts is his name. And thy Redeemer, the GOD of the whole earth, shall he be called.* Help me, JESUS, my LORD and my GOD, to put away all the strange alliances my poor sinful heart hath been making. Do thou, dearest JESUS, hedge up my path, my way, with thorns, if at any time my wandering soul should be going away from thee after my old lovers! oh! draw me, thou dear LORD JESUS, that I may run after thee; and be thou my *Ishi*, my husband, my Holy One, the LORD my righteousness.

Farewell, *Ezra*, faithful servant of my GOD! I bless thy LORD, and my LORD, that he was pleased to sanctify thy ministry in this sweet book of thine, under GOD the SPIRIT, in showing so much of JESUS shadowed forth in the several parts of it. And, blessed LORD GOD, be thou eternally praised, when from the services of thy inspired ministers glory thereby reverts to JESUS; everlasting glory be to the holy undivided Three in One, for all salvation. Amen.

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE BOOK
OF
NEHEMIAH

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of, Nehemiah takes up the history of the church very nearly from the close of that of Ezra; at least, not more than ten or twelve years after. The design of the HOLY GHOST in giving this memoir of the Church's history, among other divine causes, was, no doubt, to carry on the progress of the church's account in a regular order. It compriseth a period of not more than *twelve* years. And as far as the connection of history can be preserved, at should seem that this record of Nehemiah opens about ninety years after the return of the people from Babylon; and closes about 433, years before the coming of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It is well worthy the Reader's attention, that small and inconsiderable as those records of the church appear at this period, and especially if compared with other nations; yet not a word doth the scripture contain of the mightiest monarchies then existing, excepting in such things as are necessary to relate, from their occasional transactions with the church. The kingdom of *Persia*, which succeeded in the sway of the then

known world that of Babylon, had now flourished for a century; and *Greece* began to make a conspicuous figure in the earth. *Rome* also was in her infancy about this time under which *Judea* at length became tributary as a province. Yet not a word of either, unless (as I said before) in a collateral way, from having to do with GOD'S people. It is the seed of Abraham, the church of JESUS, the HOLY GHOST records the memoirs of, whether Jerusalem be in adversity or prosperity; as if (and which is indeed the case) all the rest were regarded no more, or less, but as they ministered to GOD'S people. What a thought to exalt our ideas of the nature and tendency of distinguishing grace! well might the man of GOD exclaim, *Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD!*

The principal subjects in the book of Nehemiah are—the zeal and concern of Nehemiah, under a commission he received from the king his master, to repair to Jerusalem for the rebuilding the wall of it; redressing the grievances of the people; registering the people; setting up a reform, and following up the plan of Ezra in the dissolution of unlawful marriages.

We cannot help admiring, as we prosecute the history, the very affectionate attachment of Nehemiah to his people; and yet more how much the LORD had imparted to him of his HOLY SPIRIT. Surely the LORD had heard and answered the fervent prayer the man of GOD had put up, even before he called, agreeably to his own most gracious promise, and remembered him for good.

I must still beg the Reader before he enters upon the perusal of this precious fragment of the church's history, to keep in memory the request I have all along been making him, namely, to search for JESUS through the whole. I should be

tempted to question the authenticity of the book of Nehemiah, if nothing could be found in it either in direct reference, or in secret allusion, to his sacred and most endearing person, to whom all scripture ministers, Reader! depend upon it, JESUS is here. And if here, he will be found of them that seek him. Oh! then for increasing grace, both to Writer and Reader, to search and find him whom GOD the FATHER delighteth to honour, and GOD the HOLY GHOST is engaged to glorify. Oh! LORD JEHOVAH! give us to see him, to know him, to love him, to live to him, to rejoice in him, to hang upon him, and to cleave to him, that he may be our portion in life, in death, and to all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

The book of Nehemiah opens with an account of Nehemiah's grief at the relation he received of the calamities of the people at Jerusalem, Here is the account also of his fasting and prayer upon the occasion.

NEHEMIAH 1:1-2

(1) ¶ The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, (2) That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

There is somewhat which in the opening of the history tends to endear Nehemiah to our affection, in that we find his fulness and enjoyments at court did not shut out, or make him forget his affection to the people of GOD. Nehemiah was a true Israelite, though serving an heathen prince. The LORD, in

his providence, frequently caused his dear people to be servants to those that know him not. But it is charming to see their love to him and his.

NEHEMIAH 1:3-4

(3) And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. (4) And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

This was a melancholy account of GOD'S heritage. One should have thought that when the captivity was over, and the LORD had brought home his chosen, prosperity would have followed. Reader! mark it down. JESUS'S people are to have tribulation in the world. And hereby indeed they will better know how to value his peace; *In me ye shall have peace*. Yes, blessed LORD! it is *in* thee; not *from* thee only, but in thee also. John 16:33.

NEHEMIAH 1:5-11

(5) ¶ And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: (6) Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. (7) We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. (8) Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations*: (9) But *if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there*. (10) Now these *are* thy

servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. (11) O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Reader! look out for JESUS, and see whether in the several parts of this most fervent prayer, the plainest allusions be not made to him, and the plainest intimations of seeking mercy *in* him, and *through* him. Mark how Nehemiah opens his devotion with an eye to the LORD in his covenant character. And what was this but the covenant of redemption in JESUS? The first branch of GOD'S covenant with Abraham, with whom the promise was made, was, that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. And that none might mistake, the HOLY GHOST explains this with a direct reference to CHRIST: Galatians 3:16. Observe, moreover, that blessed gospel feature of confessing iniquity, and accepting the punishment of it; and all this not with an eye to the merit of repentance, but to GOD'S promises of acceptance. Leviticus 26:41, 42. Add another precious consideration in this view of Nehemiah's prayer, and remark that he puts GOD in mind of his covenant engagements. If when Israel for sin was scattered, still having an eye in their sorrow to JESUS by faith in a covenant GOD, they were to expect deliverance, Solomon was commissioned to hold forth a yet stronger representation of JESUS in his temple, to which Israel when scattered in distant countries, was to look by faith when brought acquainted with the plague of their own hearts. And this more fully held forth a covenant GOD in CHRIST. I Kings 8:29, 30. I think these are sweet things in the prayer of Nehemiah in allusion to the LORD JESUS. The particular petition of the LORD'S giving Nehemiah favor with the king his master, that he might be the LORD'S instrument for good, is a noble example of the loveliness of Nehemiah's

faith. Surely the HOLY GHOST consulted the comfort and encouragement of the church when he caused this prayer to be recorded!

REFLECTIONS

How truly lovely doth Nehemiah appear in the account here given of him. Not all the splendor of a court, nor the favor of a king, could make him forget the interests of his own country, or prevent tears from running down when he considered the affliction of Zion. Think of this, my soul, in the best moments of any outward providences, and take part in the concerns of the church of JESUS. Doth the church of JESUS lay waste? Are the dear members of his mystical body in affliction? Do they hunger while thou art full? Are they oppressed, and thou takest no part in their oppression? Oh! how canst thou be counted part of JESUS. Oh! gracious GOD and Saviour, grant to me such a sympathizing spirit in all that concerns thy cause and interest in the earth, that I may never, never lose sight of the wonderful price thy church cost thee, when for redemption thou didst shed thy precious blood. Animate, my soul, I beseech thee, thou HOLY SPIRIT of grace, with the same fire from thine holy altar, as thou didst thy servant the prophet, that like him I may besiege the mercy-seat with clamorous and unceasing petitions, resolving, *for Zion's sake, never to hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake never to rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.*

Behold, my soul also, in this sweet chapter, the mighty privilege of a throne of grace. Behold in this instance of Nehemiah, that no place, no clime, no country, no situation, is in itself able to keep the awakened soul from GOD. That throne which John saw surrounded with a rainbow is accessible on every side. JESUS, the Lamb, is in the midst of it.

He still hears prayers; still feeds the church which he hath purchased with his blood; still acts as a priest upon his throne; wears thy nature and the priesthood still; and is infinitely more ready to take in petitions and bestow blessings than his people are to ask or receive. Oh! LORD JESUS! I would say, hear me then for myself, for my country, for thy church, for thy people! *do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build up her walls and love her still.*

CHAPTER 2

CONTENTS

Nehemiah appearing with a sad countenance before the king his master, occasions the monarch to ask the cause. Upon being informed, and Nehemiah making request to go to Jerusalem, the king graciously grants it, and furnisheth him with all suitable things for his journey.

NEHEMIAH 2:1

(1) ¶ And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was* before him: and I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence.

It is a remark of no small importance to the gracious Reader, in that the HOLY GHOST hath caused the names of the two months to be marked in this history. The former chapter tells us that the month in which Nehemiah offered up his earnest supplications on account of the desolations and miseries of Jerusalem, was *Chisleu*. And we are carefully informed in this that the month *Nisan* was arrived before the LORD'S merciful answer came to Nehemiah's petition. If I mistake not *Chisleu*

corresponds to our *November*, and *Nisan* to our *March*; no less than four months between. Thus, Reader, our gracious God, though hearing, and sometimes answering prayer, before his people ask, according to his promise, yet is pleased even when he hath determined to fulfil their desires, not unfrequently by way of giving occasion to exercise faith upon his covenant faithfulness and love in his dear Son, to make the blessing by delay yet more sweet and precious.

NEHEMIAH 2:2-9

(2) Wherefore the king said unto me, Why *is* thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, (3) And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? (4) Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. (5) And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. (6) And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. (7) Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; (8) And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. (9) ¶ Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account; the fear of Nehemiah lest the king should take offence. And as these monarchs of the east were absolute, and the lives of their subjects were at their disposal, there seemed cause for fear.

But this fear gave rise to a short but fervent prayer, silently, but powerfully sent up, for grace in the king's sight. Oh Reader! what blessed privileges are ours. To have a throne of grace to fly to; a propitiation always set forth; and an advocate always to plead: how can we fail of success in all our supplications, when we ask in the name of JESUS according to the mind and will of GOD? If *Artaxerxes* so readily answered Nehemiah's petition, let us never doubt but ours will always be answered, since we have one at the court of heaven whom the FATHER heareth alway.

NEHEMIAH 2:10

(10) When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard *of it*, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

Israel, in all ages, met with *Ammonites* and *Moabites* to vex and oppose them. And what is it otherwise now? JESUS gives a sweet testimony concerning this when he saith, 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 its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* John 15:18, 19.

NEHEMIAH 2:11-18

(11) So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. (12) And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. (13) And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. (14) Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast *that was* under me to pass. (15) Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and *so* returned. (16) And the

rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work. (17) Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. (18) Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good *work*.

Probably the three days before Nehemiah entered upon the great object of his journey, were spent in prayer. His night visit to the walls of Jerusalem serves to convince us, that the cause he had before him would meet with much opposition. His convening the people, and informing them what was in his mind, seems to intimate his great wisdom and good conduct. But let the Reader look through the historical part, to discover the great object intended from the whole as it concerned the church of GOD. The LORD had prophesied that *Jerusalem should again be built; that old men should dwell in the streets.; and boys and girls yet play there.* Zechariah 8:4, 5. And more than this, the temple should be built, and the glory of it should exceed the former splendid temple of Solomon. And so it did when the Son of GOD came into it. Compare Haggai 2:7, with Luke 2:26-32. Hence, therefore, the good hand of the LORD was upon Nehemiah, and the SPIRIT of the LORD was directing him to the work with an eye to JESUS. Oh! how blessed it is to observe all things, and all providences, in the Old Testament scripture, ushering in the mercies of the New; and all directed to this one, and this only purpose, to introduce JESUS the Son of GOD, that we might *believe in him, and that in believing we might have life through his name.* John 20:31.

NEHEMIAH 2:19-20

(19) But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? (20) Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

There is somewhat very striking in Nehemiah's answer to the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST. Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem. And another authority confirms the same truth; the want of a memorial in the book of life, subjects all of this description to the awful doom mentioned by John: Revelation 20:15. Men may despise and laugh GOD'S people to scorn; but the day of decision must come; and an awful decision it will be. Reader! have you the smallest, even but the smallest evidence, that you love GOD'S cause and GOD'S people, though you fear you have no portion, no interest, no right or memorial among them? Let this comfort and encourage your soul. None ever truly loved the cause of JESUS, and the people of JESUS, but secretly loved JESUS himself. And John was authorized by the HOLY GHOST to mark this down as a standing cause of comfort, when higher evidences were wanting; *We know (says he) that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.* 1 John 3:14.

REFLECTIONS

MARK, my soul, the very different characters which distinguish men of the world from real lovers of GOD. Their features, manners, customs, pursuits, habits, pleasures, all differ. Whatever root of bitterness it is, I do not presume to say, but certain it is that there is a root of bitterness springing within them, both the blossom and the baleful deadly fruit appear in all their branches. But while these marks plainly

testify whose they are, and in whose cause they are planted; how blessed is it to see that they can extend their luxuriancy no farther than the LORD allows. And how further blessed it is to see, that the LORD makes use of them medicinally to his people for good. *Sanballat* and *Tobiah* meant not so, neither did their heart intend it; but yet, in reality, all they did, and all their scoffs and oppositions, only tended to make Nehemiah more assiduous, and more earnest in his recourses to a mercy seat. Reader! when our enemies do this; when they drive us to a throne of grace, when otherwise we should not go there, surely the LORD, by his overruling wisdom converts their very evil into good, and compels them, contrary to their wishes and intent, to prove our kind friends.

Mark, my soul, in Nehemiah, the portrait of GOD'S children. While the LORD'S house lies waste, they take no pleasure. While JESUS and his people are oppressed, there is no joy in a gracious soul. See then, my soul, whether, like Nehemiah, thou art anxious for the prosperity of Zion? Can a throne of grace witness for thee, that thy petitions are lodged there for her welfare? Dust thou love her courts, her ordinances, her servants, her ministers, her people? Is the LORD himself precious to thee, and dearer than the golden wedge of Ophir? Oh! thou dear Redeemer! let thy name, thy person, thy work, thine offices, thy character, relations; all, all that belongs to JESUS, be as ointment poured forth. And oh! grant, my LORD, that I may be a sweet savor of JESUS, as Nehemiah, to all around.

CHAPTER 3

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This Chapter is chiefly directed to record the names of those

who arose to build the walls, and the order in which they proceeded in the work.

NEHEMIAH 3:1

(1) ¶ Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

It is no small commendation of the priesthood, that we find the high priest putting his hand first to the work of the LORD. The sheep-gate led to the temple, and hence here their office particularly called them. And was not this typical of the ever blessed JESUS? His almighty hand must be first with all spiritual builders; for *except the LORD build the house, they labour but in vain that build it.* Psalm 127:1

NEHEMIAH 3:2-4

(2) And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri. (3) But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who *also* laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. (4) And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.

The relation here made, seems to be with a design to manifest the cheerfulness of the people in the services. No doubt the LORD inclined their heart. When JESUS our High-Priest goeth before us by his SPIRIT, he will incline believers to follow.

NEHEMIAH 3:5-11

(5) And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord. (6) Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors

thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. (7) And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river. (8) Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of* the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall. (9) And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem. (10) And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabniah. (11) Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.

The work must have been generally interesting; for we find goldsmiths and apothecaries engaged in it. Such, blessed JESUS, are thy servants in thine house and family. We find apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors, and teachers; but all with one view, *for the edifying of the body of CHRIST*. Ephesians 4:11, 12.

NEHEMIAH 3:12

(12) And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Haloresh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.

The service of *Shallum's* daughters in this work, carries with it a conviction how much the general mind was engaged in this public good. It reminds us of the women Paul speaks of, *who laboured with him in the gospel*. Philippians 4:3.

NEHEMIAH 3:13-32

(13) The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate. (14) But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. (15) But the gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it,

and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David. (16) After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty. (17) After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part. (18) After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah. (19) And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the turning *of the wall*. (20) After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. (21) After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib. (22) And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain. (23) After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house. (24) After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning *of the wall*, even unto the corner. (25) Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning *of the wall*, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh. (26) Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto *the place* over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out. (27) After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel. (28) From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. (29) After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate. (30) After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber. (31) After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner. (32) And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

I stay not to mark the several particulars in this account. The laborers were all worthy of being recorded, or their names would not have been so noticed by the HOLY GHOST. But the only improvement which seems to be generally designed from the relation here given, is that none, who minister in the service of GOD and his people, shall be overlooked. The smallest offering, in his cause, becomes a precious one: and GOD is not unrighteous to forget the labour of love, in those who offer it with a willing heart.

REFLECTIONS

I HOPE the Reader will not peruse this chapter, without gleaning much improvement from it, though the subject relates to nothing more interesting than the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem. But in the repairing the walls of Jerusalem, we must look beyond the mere letter of the word, and consider that Jerusalem is the city of the great King, and the people of it the nation whom GOD hath taken into covenant with himself. Were the walls of Jerusalem laid waste? Did the enemy enter in by her gates? Was she carried into captivity by the foe? Yes! all this was done. But by whom was it done, and for what cause? The prophet hath answered; *He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.* Doth the enemy say, *Is this Zion, whom no man looketh after?* Let them know that the LORD doth look after Zion, and *will comfort her waste places.* For he hath said, *I will make you a praise among all people of the earth, when I have turned back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.*

But sweet as these considerations are, in reference to the LORD'S mercy manifested to Israel of old, how infinitely more interesting do they become, if viewed through the gospel medium, and having their accomplishment in the recovery

from the captivity of sin and Satan, the rebuilding the walls of the church of JESUS, and the bringing home *the redeemed of the LORD to Zion, with songs of everlasting joy upon their head*. Here the subject riseth to an higher degree of sublimity; and we may behold the several worthies in this chapter, headed by their high-priests, as the representatives of the church of JESUS, following the great and glorious High Priest of our profession, CHRIST JESUS, emerging out of all the ruins of the fall, and forming an holy temple to the LORD, through the SPIRIT. Even in the present day of grace, and beheld only with an eye to the recovery from the powers of darkness, and the dominion of sin in this life, the subject becomes beautiful and interesting. But looking forward to the eventual redemption from everlasting misery in the world to come, nothing can be more animating, nor delightful. Here it is the promise of GOD, by his prophet, receives its full accomplishment. In JESUS, and his finished redemption, when the LORD hath builded Zion, and made his glory to appear, JEHOVAH will indeed make every child of JESUS a praise among all people of the earth, in having forever turned back their captivity, and put a final close to all the oppressions the Israel of GOD hath sustained from all the enemies of her salvation, for evermore.

CHAPTER 4

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In this chapter we have an account of the opposition the builders of the wall met with from the common enemy. While they mock, Nehemiah takes refuge in prayer, and setteth a watch to prevent their evil designs.

NEHEMIAH 4:1-3

(1) ¶ But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. (2) And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? (3) Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

I would have the Reader look beyond the mere historical relation, to the matter couched beneath the several expressions. It was not simply the walls of Jerusalem which excited the displeasure and malice of their foes; but it was the church of GOD that those enemies hated, and wished to bring to nought. Reader! the same takes place every day in the world. Let a sinner be only once seriously set out for the salvation of his soul, and all hell is up in arms to oppose him. What the LORD JESUS declared, his people find to be true; *a man's foes are they of his own household*. Hence, saith CHRIST, *Think not that I am come to send peace, but rather division*. Luke 12:51.

NEHEMIAH 4:4-5

(4) Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: (5) And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked *thee* to anger before the builders.

Observe, in the conduct of Nehemiah, where the believer's resource is in the time of persecution: even at a throne of grace. Here we may lodge all our concerns. And here we are sure of success; for here is One, *whom the FATHER heareth alway*.

NEHEMIAH 4:6

(6) So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

This good will in the people to the work, and the prosperity of the work itself, were sure answers of prayer.

NEHEMIAH 4:7-8

(7) ¶ But it came to pass, *that* when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, (8) And conspired all of them together to come *and* to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

Evil men (saith an apostle) and seducers shall wax worse and worse. And here we see it.

NEHEMIAH 4:9-15

(9) Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. (10) And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. (11) And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. (12) And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you*. (13) Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, *and* on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. (14) And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is* great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. (15) And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

Observe how the LORD must have been with the people, when the work, in spite of all impediments, and the fatigue of the

people, was so shortly accomplished.

NEHEMIAH 4:16-23

(16) ¶ And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah. (17) They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, *every one* with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon. (18) For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and *so* builded. And he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me. (19) And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work *is* great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another. (20) In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us. (21) So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. (22) Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day. (23) So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, *saving that* every one put them off for washing.

I hope the Reader will again and again, as he passeth through this whole chapter, carry his thoughts beyond the literal relation, to the contemplation of the church of GOD as represented in it. The Christian is both a warrior, and a builder; and sure he is, in every stage of his pursuit, in building the temple of the LORD, to meet with opposition. In all ages there have been *Sanballats* and *Tobiah's*. Like Nehemiah's servants, GOD's people must have the sword of the SPIRIT to oppose the adversary; and the whole armour of salvation, *on the right hand, and on the left*. It is on this account the apostle admonisheth the Ephesian Church *to be strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might*. Ephesians 6:10, &c.

REFLECTIONS

READER! you and I shall derive very sweet improvements from this chapter, if, under the teaching of GOD the HOLY GHOST, we discover our personal interest in it, and amidst all the oppositions we meet with from the enemies of our salvation, like Nehemiah, we learn where our strength is, and from whence help is to be derived. We are building for eternity, and there are many foes to obstruct our progress. But if our foundation be JESUS; and if he who hath founded Zion, gives us, by his HOLY SPIRIT, to rest all upon this precious Corner Stone, then the promise is sure, *we shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.* Reader! are you thus engaged? Is CHRIST your foundation? Have you laid your rest upon him deep and firm? Have you quitted every other foundation? Do you heartily and cordially, lay the whole weight of your salvation on him? Do you live upon him, act faith daily, hourly, upon him? Do you not only live *upon* JESUS, but live *to* JESUS? These are heart-searching enquiries. But if the LORD enable you thus to build upon CHRIST, depend upon it, in defiance of all opposition, he that enabled you to begin, will help you to complete; *and the top-stone will be at length brought home with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.* Let a thousand Sanballats arise, or ten thousand Tobiahs mock; yet he that is with you, is more than all that are against you. *The LORD hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.* Go on, therefore, in the strength of the LORD; crying out in the words of the prophet; *Who art thou, O great mountain? before our Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain.*

CHAPTER 5

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In this Chapter we are led to behold Nehemiah reforming certain abuses which had crept in among the people. He sets a noble example of liberality.

NEHEMIAH 5:1-5

(1) ¶ And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. (2) For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, *are* many: therefore we take up corn *for them*, that we may eat, and live. (3) *Some* also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. (4) There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, *and that upon* our lands and vineyards. (5) Yet now our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and *some* of our daughters are brought unto bondage *already*: neither *is it* in our power *to redeem them*; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

Though in the laws by Moses, every provision was made for the happiness of Israel, in the several situations of poor and rich; yet there were then, as there is now, and from the same cause, the ruined state of our nature by the fall, many whose hearts felt not for the poor, but for the love of gain, and in direct defiance of GOD'S law, cared not but to oppose their brethren. We have here the complaint. The oppressed felt the evil, and cried out under it. What a sweet thought is it, under all the mortgaged state of our spiritual inheritance, our captive state to sin and Satan; we have a Brother, our next of kin, to redeem both our persons and our inheritance. Leviticus 25:25.

NEHEMIAH 5:6-13

(6) ¶ And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. (7) Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. (8) And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our

brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing *to answer*. (9) Also I said, It *is* not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? (10) I likewise, *and* my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. (11) Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. (12) Then said they, We will restore *them*, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. (13) Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

What a masterly speech doth Nehemiah here make! How unanswerable the arguments he adopted to induce tenderness in the minds of the people! And how successful his reasoning. But how infinitely superior is the lesson the LORD JESUS brought forward, in the days of his flesh, to the question of his servant the apostle, on the subject of offences. JESUS hath ransomed us when under a debt of ten thousand talents, which no human ability could ever pay. And therefore to bear hard upon a brother of poorer circumstances, in the paltry debt of an hundred pence, must imply a cruelty unsuited to a regenerated mind. According to Nehemiah's strong figure of shaking the lap, we may well conclude GOD will shake off, and shake out, all merciless characters of this description; or to use the higher and better words of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, every such wretch will be delivered to the tormentors; and so will GOD our heavenly FATHER do unto us, if we from our hearts forgive not every one his brother his trespasses. Matthew 18:34, 35.

NEHEMIAH 5:14-18

(14) ¶ Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. (15) But the former governors that *had been* before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God. (16) Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants *were* gathered thither unto the work. (17) Moreover *there were* at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that *are* about us. (18) Now *that* which was prepared *for me* daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

There is much to admire in this liberality of Nehemiah, who would not avail himself of his office, as governor under the king of Persia his master, to take money or goods from the people. He lost sight of his authority in this particular, in his affection as a Jew. He considered himself as a brother, and as such acted the brotherly part. He must have been a noble character. But oh! at what an infinite distance doth Nehemiah stand, in this nobleness of soul, when we look at the LORD JESUS CHRIST. He who was rich, yet *for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*. It was generous for Nehemiah to leave the court of Persia to visit Jerusalem in ruins. But what was this, in point of greatness of love, compared to thine, thou adorable, blessed JESUS, in that thou didst leave the court of heaven, and the bosom of thy Father, and camest not *to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give thy life a ransom for many!* Oh! matchless love! Oh! unequalled, unheard of grace!

NEHEMIAH 5:19

(19) Think upon me, my God, for good, *according* to all that I have done for this people.

Nehemiah's petition, to be remembered for good, was not offered up as if he looked for a reward from the LORD for his good services; but only implied that he himself might receive from a gracious GOD the favor of his good will and pleasure. That GOD who had inclined his heart to love GOD's people, would remember that his love to the people arose from the love the LORD had put in his heart to the LORD himself, and that GOD would bless him with the kindness he manifested to Israel, and remember him in his covenant mercy.

REFLECTIONS

WHAT a blessing to every state, and to every people, are faithful governors! placed by a gracious GOD in the supreme department of magistracy, like the beneficent planets of the earth, they shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And when the LORD JESUS, who places them where they are, graciously furnishes them with hearts, and heads, and hands, to minister to his glory, and the people's welfare, like Nehemiah, their government becomes a blessing, and their persons sacred and beloved.

But, my soul, while thou art contemplating the happy state of an earthly governor, a faithful magistrate, like Nehemiah, among men, look to thy JESUS, the Almighty supreme LORD of heaven and earth, *by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice*. All the good that is done upon earth he doeth it himself. Yes, blessed JESUS! it is thou that by the sweet and secret influences of thy SPIRIT dost order, regulate, appoint, and give blessings to the whole events of justice, truth, and faithfulness found among men. In thee, and from thee every

source of blessing must flow. Nay, thou thyself art the everlasting glory, the honor, beauty, and loveliness of all merciful dispensations. And art thou, then, my governor, my LORD, my GOD, my Holy One? Oh! give me to hail thee, and to acknowledge thee LORD of all. And while I bend the knee before thee, do thou bring *every thought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST*. LORD, let me dwell *under thy shadow; revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; that the smell of fragraney in thy sweet sacrifice may be as the wine of Lebanon*.

CHAPTER 6

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We have revived here the persecution of Sanballat against the church. The work, however, is completed. A secret correspondence is carried on between Tobiah and some of the nobles of Judah.

NEHEMIAH 6:1-4

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and *that* there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) (2) That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one of* the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. (3) And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? (4) Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

It is worthy observation what a obstructions the people of GOD meet with in every age to hinder their progress in the LORD'S service. Sanballat and Tobiah first began to show their

ill designs against Nehemiah and his cause with ridicule and laughter. A fox would be enough they said, to make breaches in the wall. When this failed, they now adopt another plan. Under pretence of much kindness, they invite Nehemiah to a conference, with a view to do him some mischief. So, Reader, are the devices of Satan against the spiritual building of the LORD'S household. Satan is a subtle foe. By private fraud, and by open stratagem, as best suits his hellish policy, he attacks GOD'S people.

NEHEMIAH 6:5-9

(5) Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; (6) Wherein *was* written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith *it, that* thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words. (7) And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is* a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. (8) Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. (9) For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands.

Here is a yet deeper-laid plot of Nehemiah's foes, out of which the LORD brought him. Reader! it is sweet and profitable to watch our deliverances. Some, indeed, nay multitudes, no doubt, of JESUS'S gracious interpositions, we are unconscious of. But some are revealed to us. And oh! how precious they are. When a soul can look back and say, *Here* my God interposed; and *there* he rescued me from the temptation of the devil. It realizes that blessed promise. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

NEHEMIAH 6:10-13

(10) ¶ Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of

Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. (11) And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there*, that, *being* as I *am*, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. (12) And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. (13) Therefore *was* he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and *that* they might have *matter* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

It is more than probable that this *Shemaiah* acted as a prophet. But he could not have received his commission from the LORD. Nehemiah visited him, it seems, for he came into his house. But though set on by Sanballat and Tobiah, yet the LORD gave Nehemiah to discover that his advice was not from the LORD. Reader! what an awful thing is it when men assume the ministerial office, run unsent, and speak unauthorized; and yet worse, if possible, utter lies in the name of the LORD. From all such, of whatever name, or by whatever denomination distinguished among men, I would say for myself and all poor sinners, *good LORD deliver us*.

NEHEMIAH 6:14

(14) My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

Observe how the open or secret plots of the enemy drive Nehemiah to his knees. Reader! think only how a gracious GOD in CHRIST overrules even the malice of the devil to his people's good and his own glory. For if the devices of Satan compel me to go to a throne of grace for strength to resist his temptation, when without this attack of the foul fiend I should not have gone there; and if GOD my Saviour converts his very ill design into the means of producing greater good, so that

thereby my own poverty and weakness is more discovered, and the Redeemer's strength made more precious and interesting: surely even our temptations are blessings in disguise, and are among the *all things which work together for good to them that love GOD*. Romans 8:28. James 1:2-4.

NEHEMIAH 6:15

(15) ¶ So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth *day of the month* Elul, in fifty and two days.

See what a short work was made of it when the hand of the LORD was upon them, and with them. So is it in divine things. Oh! how often do we find a few days, nay sometimes a few hours, sufficient in the LORD'S hand for awakening, convincing, converting, and establishing a poor sinner in the knowledge of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and redemption by him. When GOD works he works as GOD.

NEHEMIAH 6:16

(16) And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard *thereof*, and all the heathen that *were* about us saw *these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

So in the last day will all the enemies of GOD and of his CHRIST be confounded, when the LORD shall bring home *the top-stone of the spiritual building with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it*. Zechariah 4:7.

NEHEMIAH 6:17-19

(17) Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and *the letters* of Tobiah came unto them. (18) For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. (19) Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. *And* Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

That the nobles of Judah should have been in this base conduct against Nehemiah, must have occasioned many painful feelings in his mind. *We wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers.* Ephesians 6:12.

REFLECTIONS

IT is hardly possible to read this Chapter, and behold the various methods which the enemies of Nehemiah made use of to draw him from the work he had engaged in for GOD'S glory, without immediately having our minds led forth to contemplate the still more plausible and subtle devices which Satan and his agents are unweariedly engaged in to harass and afflict the people of GOD. What fiery darts of temptation do they throw forth from the quiver of their hellish malice? And if at anytime they are successful, which the LORD sometimes graciously may permit, for our greater advantage and his glory in the end; oh! how do they triumph in our fall. But Reader! there is a way, and it is indeed the only way of counteracting all the subtlety and malice of Satan; namely, as the redeemed now in heaven are said to have done; *they overcame by the blood of the LAMB.* Yes! blessed JESUS! thy name, thy cross, thy precious blood and righteousness; these are the ensigns of victory, by which alone we can resist the devil, and cause him to flee from us. And like Nehemiah we shall finish the wall, subdue all oppositions and be more than conquerors through thy grace helping us, when by thy blessed SPIRIT we are made *strong in the LORD and in the power of his might.*

CHAPTER 7

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This chapter contains the account of the government of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. A register also of the genealogy of them, who returned first from the captivity of Babylon, both of the people, priests, Levites, and Nethinims.

NEHEMIAH 7:1-4

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, (2) That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a faithful man, and feared God above many. (3) And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be* over against his house. (4) Now the city *was* large and great: but the people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded.

It is to be supposed that the holy city of Jerusalem, stood upon the very same ground as before its desolation. And though at present not peopled as heretofore with a multitude of inhabitants, yet looking for the accomplishment of GOD'S promises, the same room as before was taken in. Zechariah 7:4-7. and Chap. 8:3-6. By the appointment of Hanani and Hananiah to the government, it seems probable that Nehemiah was looking forward to his return to the court of Persia. This is the same Hanani which brought tidings to Nehemiah concerning Jerusalem, as mentioned in the first chapter, verse 2. The faithfulness of his partner Hanamah is honorably mentioned. May we not spiritualize the passage in reference to the faithful ministers of CHRIST, and remark, that if the security of Jerusalem, in its frontiers and gates, became so important, how much more should those who stand at the doors of the LORD'S heritage use vigilance and circumspection, to see who are admitted, and that they are indeed of the *true household of faith*.

NEHEMIAH 7:5-69

(5) ¶ And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein, (6) These *are* the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city; (7) Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel *was this*; (8) The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two. (9) The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. (10) The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two. (11) The children of Pahathmoab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred *and* eighteen. (12) The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. (13) The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five. (14) The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. (15) The children of Binnui, six hundred forty and eight. (16) The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight. (17) The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two. (18) The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven. (19) The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven. (20) The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five. (21) The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. (22) The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight. (23) The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four. (24) The children of Hariph, an hundred and twelve. (25) The children of Gibeon, ninety and five. (26) The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight. (27) The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight. (28) The men of Bethazmaveth, forty and two. (29) The men of Kirjathjearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three. (30) The men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred twenty and one. (31) The men of Michmas, an hundred and twenty and two. (32) The men of Bethel and Ai, an hundred twenty and three. (33) The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two. (34) The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. (35) The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. (36) The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five. (37) The children of Lod,

Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one. (38) The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty. (39) The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. (40) The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two. (41) The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. (42) The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen. (43) The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, *and* of the children of Hodevah, seventy and four. (44) The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and eight. (45) The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, an hundred thirty and eight. (46) The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth, (47) The children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon, (48) The children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmal, (49) The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, (50) The children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, (51) The children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah, (52) The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim, (53) The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, (54) The children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, (55) The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah, (56) The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha. (57) The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida, (58) The children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, (59) The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon. (60) All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two. (61) And these *were* they which went up *also* from Telmelah, Telharsa, Cherub, Addon, and Immer: but they could not shew their father's house, nor their seed, whether they *were* of Israel. (62) The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two. (63) And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took *one* of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name. (64) These sought their register *among* those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

(65) And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood *up* a priest with Urim and Thummim. (66) The whole congregation together *was* forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore, (67) Beside their manservants and their maidservants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women. (68) Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five: (69) *Their* camels, four hundred thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.

Here is a register exactly corresponding to the one made in the days of Ezra, though this must have been at least 40 years after. Ezra 2. When I say exactly, I mean in all the great and leading points in which the value and faithfulness of the record is made to depend. Though I think it not necessary to detain the Reader with making the same observations upon it which I did on that chapter, yet I cannot help observing that as the HOLY GHOST hath thought proper to have this register faithfully handed down to the church both by Ezra and Nehemiah, it may serve to show us its great importance. And next to the one grand cause of all records of families among GOD'S people, which is wholly with an eye to JESUS, it is not, I think, a subject of small moment to consider also how sweetly it testifies of the love of GOD the HOLY GHOST to the people of JESUS, in that the genealogy is thus twice put down. As if to teach every poor, despised and humble follower of the LORD JESUS, that how little soever esteemed he may be among men, yet is he of great price in the sight of GOD. Think of it, my brother, I beseech you. The Reader will not fail to remark also, as a further confirmation of this subject, that Nehemiah expressly saith *the thing was from the LORD. My GOD* (said he) *put it into my heart.* Oh! how sweet is it to trace all gracious dispositions up to their source!

NEHEMIAH 7:70-73

(70) And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. (71) And *some* of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pound of silver. (72) And *that* which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pound of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments. (73) So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and *some* of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

The liberal gifts of the people plainly testify their sense of the LORD'S presence, and his blessing upon them. In all ages these testimonies are among the truest tokens of the real work of grace upon the heart.

REFLECTIONS

LEAVING the subject of Jerusalem's safety, and the means the zealous Nehemiah adopted to preserve her from the foe, I would call upon myself and Reader to an higher subject arising out of it, and consider how our Almighty Governor, when about to return to the court of heaven, having finished the holy building of salvation in his own blood and righteousness, set watchmen upon the walls of his Zion, and poured forth abundance of grace that a standing ministry might be alive to the safety and security of his redeemed ones. Yes, blessed JESUS! methinks I see thee in the moment of thy departure sending forth thy servants, and bidding them to be very anxious for the everlasting interests of thy Zion; and under thy blessed SPIRIT to watch at thy gates, and at the doors of thine house, night and day, and to give the LORD JEHOVAH *no rest, nor peace, until he hath made Jerusalem a praise in the earth*. Ye ministers of my GOD! see that ye are found faithful to your post! Plead with the people! plead with

GOD in CHRIST; make mention of his purchase, of his blood, of his cross, of the register of the names in the book of life written in heaven; and never cease, never give over; but *be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort*. And oh thou adorable EMMANUEL! do thou bless and crown the labours of thy faithful sent servants, that Jerusalem *may again be peopled with men as a flock*.

CHAPTER 8

CONTENTS

This is an interesting chapter, for it records the solemn manner in which Nehemiah caused the law to be read in the presence of the people.

NEHEMIAH 8:1-2

(1) ¶ And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. (2) And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

The first day of the seventh month was a remarkable day in the estimation of Israel, for the LORD had appointed that an holy convocation should be observed on that day; (Numbers 29:1.) and the blowing of the trumpets. The various days and services by this ceremony of the blowing of trumpets, were all significant of the year of redemption. It must have been an animating sight to have beheld Israel once more gathered together in the great street of the city, even their beloved city of Jerusalem, to hear again after the ancient method, the law of God read to them by a scribe. But Reader! think of your

privileges in having the gospel of salvation proclaimed every day, in every street and city, which is not as the law, the ministration of death, but the power of an endless life in JESUS. And if all Israel gathered as one man upon this occasion, how inexcusable are those who stay away from the house of God, and neglect to hear the wholesome truths of redemption.

NEHEMIAH 8:3-8

(3) And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law. (4) And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam. (5) And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: (6) And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground. (7) Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. (8) So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

The length of the service in reading the law implies, that this was a more than ordinary occasion. And it is remarkable that though Ezra had been in Jerusalem, at the time that this service was so solemnly observed, for many years, yet we never hear of it before. Probably the building of the wall inspired the people with greater confidence. The bringing out of the book before the people, and opening it in their view; their standing up at the reading of it, by way of testifying

their great reverence for it; and Ezra's blessing the LORD, with the people's answering Amen, amen, with lifted up hands, and bowing faces; all these were delightful signs of the real devotion of the heart on this memorable occasion. Blessed be GOD! amidst all the decays of vital godliness in the mass of the people, still there is a reverence observed, at least in our churches, on the reading of the scriptures. And the sweet savor the people of GOD feel at those seasons, becomes no small testimony that a relish for divine truths still is among us. Oh! that the LORD would increase it. I beg the Reader to remark what is said, in this account, of the expounding the word, reading, and causing the people to understand the reading. This not only becomes an authority for ministers to expound the word of life, as they read it to the people, but also a lovely example. And surely GOD doth own, and will bless, the labors of scribes well instructed in the mysteries of the gospel, when under the SPIRIT'S teaching they bring forth out of the *treasury things new and old*.

NEHEMIAH 8:9

(9) ¶ And Nehemiah, which *is* the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

Tirshatha means governor. And here Nehemiah presided in that capacity. But what I particularly request the Reader to observe with me is, the effect the reading of the LORD'S holy law had upon the people. Certainly we may conclude that their tears were both tears of sorrow for sin, and of joy in GOD'S mercy. And as the law, without an eye to JESUS as the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, could never minister joy to any poor sinner; I venture to believe that some, at least, of this assembly were enabled by

faith to look beyond the law, and behold him to whom the law acted as a schoolmaster. And if so, what a precious view, is here held forth to the church concerning faith in CHRIST. The Reader will be pleased to observe that I do not speak decidedly upon this point. I rather use caution. I only say, that if Nehemiah, or Ezra, or any of the people, were enabled by the LORD so to do, what an interesting glimpse of JESUS was here afforded; and how charmed must have been the soul of every faithful believer present.

NEHEMIAH 8:10-12

(10) Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is* holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. (11) So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved. (12) And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

Reader! do observe how truly beautiful when blended together, is charity with devotion. *Thy prayers and thine alms* (saith the angel to Cornelius) *are come up for a memorial before* GOD. Acts 10:4. Observe the expression; JEHOVAH is your strength. Who doth this mean but JESUS? Surely He is the strength of his people, and the arm of the LORD. Isaiah 52:1.

NEHEMIAH 8:13

(13) ¶ And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

How blessed is it to follow up the sabbath day's employment in the study of GOD'S word with the next day's attention, bringing to remembrance what we then heard. When the parlour or the kitchen, or those who have neither, make the chamber an echo to the sanctuary, and rehearse among their

household, or their friends, or acquaintance, what they heard on the preceding sabbath concerning JESUS. And what encouragement is there to this in GOD'S blessed word! The prophets tells us that *they that feared the name of the LORD were often talking one to another; and the LORD hearkened and heard it*. And the Evangelist tells us that while the disciples of JESUS were talking of him by the *way*, *JESUS himself drew near and went with them*. Luke 24:15. Reader! depend upon it, when JESUS, in the sweetness and preciousness of his name, is in the mouth and upon the lips, from the abundance of the heart awakened by grace, the LORD will bless such edifying conversation, and impart greater degrees of knowledge both to speaker and hearer. See Malachi 3:16, 17. Luke 24:14, 15.

NEHEMIAH 8:14-18

(14) And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: (15) And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written. (16) So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. (17) And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. (18) Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *was* a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

This custom of erecting booths is kept up to the present hour by the Jews. But alas! to what purpose? Do they read the law

as their fathers did, from the first day to the last of their feasts? I fear not; though I presume not to judge them. But thus far I am authorized to say; *their minds are blinded; for until this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.* But what a precious scripture is that which so sweetly and graciously promiseth: *Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the LORD, the veil shall be taken away.* 2 Corinthians 3:14-16. Oh! who will not add, in all the fervency of prayer, Hasten, LORD, the gracious hour! may the LORD JESUS, the great deliverer, *arise in Zion, and take away ungodliness from Jacob!*

REFLECTIONS

PRECIOUS chapter this, which in the view of Ezra reminds me of JESUS! how was it possible indeed to see Ezra taking the book, and opening it before the people, and not call to mind what I have read of thee, thou Holy Saviour, when as a Lamb thou, and thou alone, wert found worthy to open the book of GOD, and loose the seals thereof. And were the people of the captivity anxious to hear Ezra the scribe read out of the book of the law, and shall I not be, extremely solicitous that thou, most blessed JESUS, should open to me the precious words of salvation? Did they weep with holy tears at what they heard. And shall my soul remain, unmoved at the gracious words which proceed forth from thy mouth? Was the law of Moses, which contained the ministration of death, glorious to their view? And shall not life from the dead in the gospel of thy blood and righteousness, be abundantly more glorious? Oh! precious, precious Lamb of GOD; let me join the universal song that filled heaven and earth, in the moment redemption work was made known, and cry out with them; *Thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD, by thy blood.* Yes! thou adorable Redeemer; the church hail thee in heaven; the

church praise thee on earth. Oh! let a poor worm send forth his feeble breathings, poor and feeble as they are, and sing as they did, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.* May all *glory be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.*

CHAPTER 9

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We have in this chapter an account of a solemn fast appointed in Jerusalem, in which the Levites take a very principal part in confessing their sins.

NEHEMIAH 9:1-2

(1) ¶ Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them. (2) And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

This fast seems to have been appointed with a view to implore the pardon of God for the mingling with the idolatrous nations of the earth. And as the law, that enjoined them not to make intermarriages, was evidently with an eye to the promised seed in JESUS, this fast must be considered more particularly as a solemn ordinance of faith.

NEHEMIAH 9:3

(3) And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God *one* fourth part of the day; and *another* fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.

The order of the fast is here stated. Reading and prayer divided the service. When we have by meditation, and the

diligent perusal of GOD's, word, informed ourselves of GOD's mind; prayer by faith in JESUS sweetly follows.

NEHEMIAH 9:4-5

(4) ¶ Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God. (5) Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said, Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

The names of the Levites who engaged in the solemn service of the day are here recorded with honourable testimony. It is a blessed thing to bear a part in the duties of the sanctuary, when done with a single eye to GOD's glory.

NEHEMIAH 9:6-31

(6) Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. (7) Thou *art* the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; (8) And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it, I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou *art* righteous: (9) And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea; (10) And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as *it is* this day. (11) And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters. (12) Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. (13) Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with

them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: (14) And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant: (15) And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them. (16) But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, (17) And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou *art* a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. (18) Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This *is* thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; (19) Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go. (20) Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. (21) Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. (22) Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. (23) Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess *it*. (24) So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would. (25) And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness. (26) Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy

prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. (27) Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies. (28) But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; (29) And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. (30) Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. (31) Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou *art* a gracious and merciful God.

This is a beautiful recapitulation of Israel's history as a church. It takes in some of the principal features of God's gracious dealings with his people in his covenant engagements. And I cannot but beg the Reader to remark with me how the LORD the HOLY GHOST evidently taught by causing it to be recorded and handed down in the church's history, that the best possible argument, in imploring God's mercy and blessing upon future occasions, is to tell the LORD what mercies and blessings he hath showed in what is passed. Reader! make use of this argument with an eye to CHRIST; and see how unanswerable it becomes. Oh! how precious is it to tell GOD our FATHER, who is here called *a GOD of pardons*, in all our approaches, that we hope and expect his mercy, because he hath already, the first and greatest of all mercies in the gift of his dear Son, exceeded all he hath

now to bestow, or we to need.

NEHEMIAH 9:32-38

(32) Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. (33) Howbeit thou *art* just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly: (34) Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. (35) For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. (36) Behold, we *are* servants this day, and *for* the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we *are* servants in it: (37) And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we *are* in great distress. (38) And because of all this we make a sure *covenant*, and write *it*; and our princes, Levites, *and* priests, seal *unto it*.

Here is contained the great request Israel had to make to the covenant GOD of their fathers. They acknowledge GOD's justice in all that was come upon them. But they still plead for mercy on the ground of GOD's covenant. And the chapter closes with an account of the solemn sealing of the covenant anew by the princes, Levites, and Priests. So that here is a vast deal of gospel in this transaction. For whether the whole body of Israel were so well informed of the grand features of the covenant, as to eye the LORD JESUS as the sum and substance of all, is not to the purpose. It is sufficient to us in proof, that the LORD'S eye was upon it to this one end. GOD had given his dear Son for a covenant to his people. And in

the publication of this covenant to Abraham and his seed, certain it is that the charter of it ran in these words; *In thy seed, which is CHRIST, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Galatians 3:16, with Genesis 17:1-8.

REFLECTIONS

READER! there is a sweet improvement suggested to us in this solemn fast of GOD'S ancient people, which we shall do well to observe, for this will be to convert their afflictions into a source for our joy. I mean the sense they had of the long series of blessings shown to them and their fathers, and their sad use and abuse of them. And was Israel singular in this? May not you and I justly take up the same language? Have not our lives been marked with mercy? Our fathers and their fathers through every past generation; what do the histories of all speak, but the same solemn truth; GOD'S grace and man's unworthiness. Hence the Psalmist, after a long and beautiful recapitulation of divine love and goodness, as manifested in the history of Israel, makes this charming observation; *Whoso is wise will ponder these things; and they shall understand the loving kindness of the LORD.* And Reader! if we ponder these things as they concern our own private history, depend upon it, like Israel, we shall discover GOD'S gracious tokens all the way along the path of life we have trodden; and his pardons and blessings in the midst of all our ingratitude, and rebellion, and sin.

But when the mind is oppressed and overwhelmed under such a sense of departures and backslidings from the LORD GOD of our fathers, what a relief is afforded in the contemplation of GOD'S covenant love in the person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. How infinitely precious to every poor sinner becomes the view then of JESUS and his finished salvation? How delightful is it to take refuge in JESUS when under a conscious

sense that I am nothing but sin, he is the LORD my righteousness; and he is made of GOD to all his people *wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.* Oh! precious Redeemer! to thee I come; in thee my soul finds confidence. Thy blood and righteousness pleads more for thy people's salvation than all their transgressions plead against them. Here then, do I desire, like the Princes, and Levites, and Priests of the congregation, to renew the covenant in thee, for thou art the whole of it, and set to my seal *that GOD is true.*

CHAPTER 10

CONTENTS

This chapter records the names of them that subscribed to the covenant. And here also are the outlines of the covenant itself.

NEHEMIAH 10:1-28

(1) ¶ Now those that sealed *were*, Nehemiah, the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah, (2) Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, (3) Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, (4) Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, (5) Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, (6) Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, (7) Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, (8) Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these *were* the priests. (9) And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; (10) And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, (11) Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, (12) Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, (13) Hodijah, Bani, Beninu. (14) The chief of the people; Parosh, Pahathmoab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, (15) Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, (16) Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, (17) Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur, (18) Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, (19) Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, (20) Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, (21) Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua, (22) Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, (23) Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub, (24) Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek, (25) Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, (26) And Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, (27) Malluch, Harim, Baanah. (28)

And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding;

I did not think it necessary to interrupt the progress of the reading in going over the catalogue of those that signed the covenant. It was not done by all the people, but by the elders and leading men, beginning with the *Tirshatha*, that is the governor; then followed the priests; next to them the Levites; and then the chief of the people; making in all eighty-four persons, including Nehemiah the governor. And we are told that the rest of the people joined in the covenant, both men and their wives, their sons and their daughters; all, as many as were arrived to years of discretion and knowledge. Was not this a type of the gospel church, concerning which the LORD promised in the last days to pour out of his SPIRIT, that our young men should prophecy, and our old men see visions, and upon the LORD'S servants and handmaidens that grace should be given? What a precious thing it is to behold and trace the uniformity between the Jewish and the gospel church; and to discover that the covenant is one and the same, being founded in the everlasting love of JEHOVAH, and summed up and finished in the person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NEHEMIAH 10:29-39

(29) They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; (30) And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: (31) And *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and

the exaction of every debt. (32) ¶ Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God; (33) For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy *things*, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and *for* all the work of the house of our God. (34) And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring *it* into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as *it is* written in the law: (35) And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD: (36) Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as *it is* written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: (37) And *that* we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. (38) And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house. (39) For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

Here are some of the particulars to which the people pledged themselves by this covenant to be bound. But what I would desire the Reader to regard, as in my esteem being beautifully descriptive of the great feature of the gospel, is the redemption of the first-born of their sons, so strikingly set forth in the law: Exodus 13:11-16. And as this was expressly appointed as typical of the people's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, nothing can be more plain than that the

deliverance from the bondage of sin and death, which that event prefigured, immediately pointed to the person and work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Thus we find in all ages, and in all periods of the church, GOD the HOLY GHOST kept alive in the minds of his people the glorious redemption of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. And the whole covenant from beginning to end referred to this, and in this had its completion.

REFLECTIONS

How truly beautiful is the church of GOD when considered in her several orders and characters. Here in this chapter we have a faint representation of it. The people of GOD are here set forth as renewing their covenant, signing and sealing to the testimony of GOD'S truth, their right of covenant blessings in him; and his authority and power over them by virtue of his having taken them into covenant with him. These distinguishing relations, if I may so call them, are marked down. Each in his rank and order subscribe his hand to the blessed truth. The governor begins, the Priests and Levites follow; and the rest of the people bring up the great account. And is this not the case of GOD'S church and people in all ages? Chosen out of the world, and distinguished and set apart from the world, GOD acknowledgeth himself to be, the gracious FATHER of his CHRIST; and his people in CHRIST as a people which he hath formed for himself, and who shall show forth his praise. JESUS is the true *Tirshatha*, the governor of his people; all his people are made kings and priests unto the FATHER by him. And as all his household, both young and old, both high and low, of both sexes, and characters, subscribe and set to their seal that GOD is true; so He graciously poured out of his HOLY SPIRIT on all, according to *the measure of the gift of CHRIST*. My soul! art thou of this family? Hath the LORD this day avouched thee to be his servant? And hast thou

avouched the LORD to be thy GOD? Yes! blessed JESUS! in thee I pray to be found. Thou art the covenant, and the whole of the covenant. Here would I subscribe my hand, and set to my seal. And oh! blessed LORD, do thou set me as a seal upon thine heart and as a seal upon thine arm. Let thy blessed SPIRIT seal my soul unto the day of redemption. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

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We have in this chapter an account of the residence of the rulers and certain others who voluntarily undertook to make Jerusalem the place of their abode. The list also of those chosen by lot to dwell there.

NEHEMIAH 11:1-2

(1) ¶ And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts *to dwell* in *other* cities. (2) And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

It doth not appear what was the cause that the generality of the people were averse to live in Jerusalem. (As it was the holy city, one might have expected that they would have been more eager to have fixed their residence there, than in the distant villages or lesser towns of Israel). Probably the fear of the enemies of Israel, or the apprehension of the Persian power, under which they were in tribute. Certain it is, however, that those who volunteered to live there were considered true patriots, and had the blessing of the people. Reader! even now it requires much grace to step forward in the cause of JESUS, and declare ourselves to be volunteers in his cause.

NEHEMIAH 11:3-19

(3) Now these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants. (4) And at Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of Perez; (5) And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Colhozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. (6) All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men. (7) And these *are* the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah. (8) And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight. (9) And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city. (10) Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joarib, Jachin. (11) Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God. (12) And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah, (13) And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, (14) And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son of *one of* the great men. (15) Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; (16) And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, *had* the oversight of the outward business of the house of God. (17) And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. (18) All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four. (19) Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, *were* an hundred seventy and two.

That the dwellers in Jerusalem were counted worthy of double honor is evident from the HOLY GHOST having caused their names to be thus honorably recorded. Oh! it is most valuable indeed to be recorded among the servants of the LORD.

NEHEMIAH 11:20-36

(20) ¶ And the residue of Israel, of the priests, *and* the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance. (21) But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa *were* over the Nethinims. (22) The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers *were* over the business of the house of God. (23) For *it was* the king's commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day. (24) And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah the son of Judah, *was* at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people. (25) And for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjatharba, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and *in* the villages thereof, (26) And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Bethpheet, (27) And at Hazarshual, and at Beersheba, and *in* the villages thereof, (28) And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof, (29) And at Enrimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth, (30) Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom. (31) The children also of Benjamin from Geba *dwelt* at Michmash, and Aija, and Bethel, and *in* their villages, (32) *And* at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, (33) Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, (34) Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, (35) Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. (36) And of the Levites *were* divisions *in* Judah, *and* in Benjamin.

No doubt all these, though not resident in Jerusalem, were of high esteem, and probably gracious souls scattered through the cities and villages of Judah to be examples of others in following the LORD. It is well to be noticed in any way that is honourable in the service of the LORD. No one, however

humble in his station, is overlooked or forgotten when thus a follower of the LORD, How graciously GOD himself speaks of such, when as the High and lofty One, inhabiting eternity. JEHOVAH declares that he *dwelleth with the man that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Isaiah 57:15.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! whilst thou readest the honourable testimony that is given to the people who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem, the holy city; and observest how the people blessed them for it; think of the yet far happier privilege of those who dwell under the continual light of GOD'S countenance, and are *citizens with the saints and of the household of faith.* Their admission into the church is sacred; their residence there is blessed; great are their privileges, and everlastingly secure their interest. United to their spiritual head, the LORD JESUS; united to each other in him; members of his mystical body, and members of one another; how closely joined to JESUS; what blessings, mercies, enjoyments, portions, are they born to, and entitled to, by their new birth, redemption in JESUS, and their privileges in his blood and righteousness? My soul! is this thy mercy? Art thou indeed a resident in the holy city? Hath the Son of GOD made thee free indeed! oh! how sweet to live under his constant eye; to see now the king in his beauty by faith, and shortly to see him in his glory! Blessed king in Zion! precious LORD of Jerusalem, even the beloved Jerusalem, which in the days of thy flesh thou didst weep over; and for the redemption of which thou didst shed thy blood; be thou my chief joy, my daily portion. Thy people shall indeed dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations. They shall be continually praising thee. LORD, make me of the happy number, that dwelling in thy

Jerusalem below I may at length be admitted into the new Jerusalem which is above, when she shall come down from GOD out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, to take all her citizens that GOD himself may be with them, tabernacle forever in them, and wipe away all tears from their eyes.

CHAPTER 12

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Though this Chapter contains little more than a record of the names of those who first returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel, yet it forms a most important Chapter, because it hath in it the record of the several characters as they succeeded in the High Priest's office.

NEHEMIAH 12:1-8

(1) ¶ Now these *are* the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, (2) Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, (3) Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, (4) Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah, (5) Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, (6) Shemaiah, and Joarib, Jedaiah, (7) Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These *were* the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua. (8) Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah, *which was* over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren.

It should seem that the office of superintending the subjects of thanksgiving, was of no small importance in the priests' employment, by the testimony here given.

NEHEMIAH 12:9

(9) Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *were* over against them in the watches.

What is meant by being appointed over against them in the watches, unless it means making responses in praising God, is not easy to gather.

NEHEMIAH 12:10-26

(10) And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada, (11) And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua. (12) And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; (13) Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; (14) Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; (15) Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; (16) Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; (17) Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; (18) Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; (19) And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; (20) Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; (21) Of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel. (22) The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, *were* recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian. (23) The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, *were* written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. (24) And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise *and* to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward. (25) Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, *were* porters keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates. (26) These *were* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

It should seem that the service of the gates, appointed by David, the people of the captivity were anxious to revive. But how it was performed, or what particular service made use of, is not known.

NEHEMIAH 12:27-43

(27) ¶ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and

with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. (28) And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi; (29) Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem. (30) And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. (31) Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great *companies of them that gave* thanks, *whereof one* went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate: (32) And after them went Hoshaiiah, and half of the princes of Judah, (33) And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam, (34) Judah, and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, (35) And *certain* of the priests' sons with trumpets; *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph: (36) And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them. (37) And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward. (38) And the other *company of them that gave* thanks went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall; (39) And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate. (40) So stood the two *companies of them that gave* thanks in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me: (41) And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, with trumpets; (42) And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer. (43) Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

Nehemiah had very largely described, in the former part of his book, the labours in building the wall; and therefore he will

not pass over the dedication of it. The account is truly interesting. And as he himself, though governor, took an active part in the service, it is no wonder that all ranks and orders of the people joined in the festivity. The joy was so great, that their voices and musical instruments were heard afar off. But Reader! think what joy of soul that will be, when *the LORD shall build up Zion, and her glory shall appear*. When the king of Zion shall arise to turn away ungodliness from Jacob! In the longing expectation of this great event, how hath the mind of the faithful been directed in all ages! How fervent the cry which hath in different periods burst from innumerable hearts; LORD, cut short thy work in righteousness, and hasten thy kingdom!

NEHEMIAH 12:44-47

(44) ¶ And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited. (45) And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, *and* of Solomon his son. (46) For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. (47) And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: and they sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

I pass over every inferior consideration in those verses, to call the Reader's attention to what appears to me infinitely surpassing every other: I mean, that the holy songs of Nehemiah were evidently corresponding, if not in the very words with David's Psalms; for so it is here remarked; and let the Reader recollect that all these treated of JESUS. Of the incarnate JEHOVAH Nehemiah therefore sung. What a blessed

testimony that the same gospel views as we now have, and the same gospel songs as we now sing, were in the days of Nehemiah. The only difference lies here: they sung of him that *was* to come—one of his well-known titles. We sing of him that *hath* come, and accomplished all things. But one and the same subject occupied the minds of both, namely, Redemption. Blessed be GOD, may the church say, in all ages, for JESUS CHRIST, *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* Ephesians 1:7.

REFLECTIONS

FROM the perusal of this Chapter my soul may learn that the minutest point belonging to the church of JESUS, in all ages, hath been interesting, The very porters of GOD'S house are spoken of with honourable testimony. David, indeed, though a prince, and a great one, declares himself that he would rather have been *a door-keeper in the house of GOD than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.* Think, then, my soul, to what an honour art thou arrived, if so be JESUS hath betrothed thee to himself, and made thee his in an everlasting covenant and union not to be broken? Pause, and contemplate thine high privileges. Given by GOD thy FATHER to the person of his dear Son, JESUS hath bought thee, purchased thy ransom, subdued the unwillingness and stubbornness of thy nature by the sovereignty of his grace; endowed thee with all spiritual gifts, and graces, and blessings; undertaken, by the influences of his SPIRIT, to complete thine education; and by his own power when life is ended to bring thee unto glory. Are these thy mercies, my soul, and thy privileges in JESUS! And dost thou not love him, adore him, desire to live to him; and make him thy whole glory? Oh! precious Redeemer! be thou more and

more precious, more and more lovely and desirable to my view. Oh, marvellous grace! Oh, stupendous mercy! JESUS hath loved me, and given himself for me, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour! LORD! banish all other thoughts, drive out every buyer and seller from thy temple, which is my body and thy lawful right. Come in, LORD JESUS, and live, and reign, and dwell there. Be thou my GOD, my LORD, my righteousness, and let my soul's salvation be to thy glory.

CHAPTER 13

CONTENTS

We here arrive to the close of Nehemiah's wise and pious government. The chapter relates several interesting circumstances. Nehemiah had returned to his master at Persia; and as it should seem, was permitted to visit Jerusalem a second time. He reforms certain abuses crept in during his absence; and particularly restores the sabbath to its original Sanctity.

NEHEMIAH 13:1-3

(1) ¶ On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; (2) Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. (3) Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

The history of Moab's conduct to Israel, and the vile attempt of Balaam, we have Numbers 22:23, 24. And the LORD's commands in consequence we have Deuteronomy 23:3-5. But

added to these, the prohibition of alliances with the people of the land was among the distinguishing features of the LORD's covenant. GOD's people *were to dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the nations*. Oh! how precious and blessed is it in all this to eye JESUS. I must not dismiss these verses without first taking notice how blessed the reading of the law was to the people. When they had heard of GOD's holy will, that the stranger should be separated from Israel, the people obeyed. See, my soul, how vastly important it is to have the word of the LORD read in our churches, in our houses, families and closets. Oh! blessed book of GOD, I would say, thou Holy Bible, the merciful epistle sent down from heaven; be thou my meditation all the day, and let mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may be occupied in it. Oh! blessed JESUS, thou holy Lamb, who alone was found worthy to open the book, and loose the seals, do thou, LORD open to my soul all the wondrous things of thy law; and open my heart to the right apprehension of it, that I may separate all that is mixed, and corrupt in my heart, and cast it out.

NEHEMIAH 13:4-9

(4) And before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, *was* allied unto Tobiah: (5) And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded *to be given* to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests. (6) But in all this *time* was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king: (7) And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. (8) And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. (9) Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the

frankincense.

It should seem very plainly from what is here said, that Nehemiah had returned to Persia, and now was come back to Jerusalem. During his absence *Eliashib* the High Priest, to his everlasting disgrace, from his alliance with *Tobiah*, had not only paid this open enemy of GOD and his church great respect, but had dared to desecrate the temple by giving him an apartment in it: and to make room for him had removed the things belonging to the temple service. What an awful character must have been this High Priest! Oh! how unlike thee, thou great High Priest of our GOD and of thy people! But stop, my soul; doth not every minister do the same, nay, if possible, worse *than Eliashib*, who substitutes falsehood for truth in the services of the sanctuary? Who teaches the people to accommodate *Tobiahs* of every description and character, instead of CHRIST. Alas! alas! what rubbish of anything, of nothing, of worse than nothing, is sometimes made to supply the place of JESUS, and his one-salvation, for poor perishing sinners. Oh! for the spirit given to Nehemiah to reform these abuses, to be poured out now, that an holy zeal might cast forth the false refuges of lies out of the LORD's chambers wherever they are found.

NEHEMIAH 13:10-13

(10) ¶ And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field. (11) Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. (12) Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. (13) And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office *was* to distribute unto their brethren.

This forms an interesting passage, and makes a good lesson for the regulation of ministers with their people. Wherefore the Levites had fled, is not said. I should hope not because their stipend was kept back. And yet if they fled away, and in consequence the people then withheld it, the story tells much worse. In either case it is a sorry representation. Had the Levites kept up an eye to GOD, however ill their services were requited, GOD would have taken care that his servants should have been fed. Oh! what an huge volume of complaints is gone up before GOD, and the dreadful pages multiplying daily, of unfaithful ministers fleeing from their post like those Levites; fleeing, but not feeding their flocks; and taking wages, but giving no service. And on the other hand, how many of the people receiving their ministers labors, but not requiting them, except with ill-will: of all horrible accounts at the last day, surely this will be found the most tremendous!

NEHEMIAH 13:14

(14) Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

I admire the frequent expression of Nehemiah in which he prays to be remembered. It is not said by way of heightening his labours; for let the Reader remark with me, he doth not ask for a *reward*, but only the LORD'S *remembrance* of him. Sweetly, LORD JESUS, doth it suggest thy desire of being remembered by thy disciples, when in the holy supper thou didst provide a standing token for a memorial.

NEHEMIAH 13:15-22

(15) ¶ In those days saw I in Judah *some* treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner of* burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified *against them* in the day wherein they sold victuals. (16) There dwelt men

of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. (17) Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing *is* this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? (18) Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. (19) And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and *some* of my servants set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. (20) So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. (21) Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do *so* again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no *more* on the sabbath. (22) And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and *that* they should come *and* keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.

Reader! doth it not strike thy mind while reading this account of the profanation of the sabbath, that there is but too great a resemblance between the days of Nehemiah and the present, in this crying sin of our guilty land. Must not everyone say that will speak the truth, that there never was a period more alarmingly evil in this particular than the present. Oh! ye masters of families! parents of the rising generation! are ye not seriously concerned what judgments of the LORD may follow! and will ye not attempt a reform to prevent a sin big with the most awful evil, both as it concerns the present life and that which is to come. And oh! ye ministers of the sanctuary and faithful magistrates of the people, may the LORD encourage your hearts and hands to follow the bright example of Nehemiah, and to bring back the hallowed sabbaths of the LORD to their original sanctity. Nehemiah's prayer at the close of this passage for GOD'S remembrance of him, sweetly explains the sense in which he looked for that

remembrance; namely, in the greatness of divine mercy. And where is the greatness of GOD'S mercy but in JESUS CHRIST.

NEHEMIAH 13:23-31

(23) ¶ In those days also saw I Jews *that* had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, *and* of Moab: (24) And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. (25) And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. (26) Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. (27) Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? (28) And *one* of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. (29) Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. (30) Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business; (31) And for the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

Here we have recorded another instance of the zeal of Nehemiah in reforming abuses, both as it concerned the divine honor, and the people's happiness. Nothing could be more important than the preservation of GOD'S people to themselves. The LORD by the prophet complained of this abuse. I had planted thee (said GOD) a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me. Jeremiah 2:21. And spiritually considered, did it not all along point to the undefiled union between JESUS and his church; —JESUS and his people? How sad a breach then was this ungracious alliance

in GOD's Israel? And that even the sons of the Priests should be foremost in this degeneracy! Nehemiah closes his book with once more repeating his prayer, for the LORD's remembrance of him. And that blessed promise which GOD hath left upon record by his servant the prophet seems to be a sweet answer. The LORD hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him. And the LORD adds, and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels. Malachi 3:16, 17.

REFLECTIONS

BEHOLD, my soul! how GOD'S people have been enjoined in all ages to keep separate from all others, and never to mingle with them, much less to form alliances with them, and learn their works. See then that thou art come out from among them and touch not the unclean thing. In GOD'S original appointment the people of his dear Son dwell alone. They have a distinct mark and character, Given to JESUS. Purchased, redeemed, ransomed *by* JESUS. Regenerated by the spirit *of* JESUS, and set as a seal of the SPIRIT *on* JESUS hand, and *in* JESUS heart. Oh! then as one of the LORD'S ransomed sinners may it be my portion thus to be known, and distinguished. Let no *Tobiahs*, no *Sanballats*, neither *Ammonites* nor *Hanaanites* be in my alliance. But oh! let me be found one with JESUS, united to my LORD: and CHRIST my LORD be formed in my heart, *the hope of glory*. And oh! for grace to be so known in reverencing the sabbaths of my LORD, the ordinances of JESUS, his word, the ministrations of his grace, and all his holy things. LORD, remember me for my good in all these, according to the greatness of thy mercies, in JESUS thy dear and ever blessed Son.

And now farewell, thou noble Tirshatha, thou magnanimous Nehemiah, thou great and faithful servant of the most high

GOD! I pray for grace to imitate thy lovely example. And amidst all the opposition of the Sanballats and Tobiahs of the present day, may it be my happiness to be distinguished, as thou wert in thy generation, valiant for the truths sake; and only zealous to be approved before GOD.

But oh! Almighty GOD! thou who didst give to Nehemiah all he possessed of fortitude and grace in this blessed cause; to thee would I chiefly look, and while delighted with the history of the servant, recognize the hand of the Almighty Master; influencing, guiding, guarding, and giving success to Nehemiah in all! Yes! HOLY SPIRIT! it is thou which hast in all ages raised up faithful servants, to be honoured instruments in thy almighty hand, for good to thy people. To thee, then, be all the praise and all the glory. I desire to bless thee for thy mercies to this great man, in giving him so distinguished a post in thy church. I desire to bless thee for causing his history to be handed down as an example to succeeding ages. And oh! LORD, grant that all may be blessed to bring glory to GOD, and happiness to thy people in JESUS CHRIST, to whom with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST be endless praise. Amen.

The Works of Robert Hawker

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THE BOOK OF *ESTHER*

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of Esther is as singular a record as any in the Bible. That it hath been received into the canon of scripture, and accepted as part of the inspired writings, is sufficient to confirm its divine authority; at least that part which is contained in the ten chapters inserted in this book. What follows as the supposed continuance of the history in the book called the *Apocrypha*, is altogether, so questionable, that the Jews never received it into the canon of their scripture.

The book itself contains an interesting memoir of that part of the Jewish history which belongs to the children of the captivity which remained in Babylon, and fell under the Persian government, who did not return to Jerusalem with the captives which returned, when permitted so to do in the reign of *Cyrus*, king of *Persia*.

It is not certain who was the penman of it, though from a passage in one of the chapters (9:20.) it should seem that

Mordecai committed it to writing. Certain it is, that he was well qualified for the office.

The subject is the danger to which that part of God's church was exposed from the hatred of her enemies; and the Lord's watchful care over his people in the wonders of his providence. Some few leading characters here and there interspersed, seem to point to the Lord Jesus; and which the reader will do well to be very diligent in looking after.

The period of time to which this book refers is not very deafly ascertained. That it was a considerable space after the first return of the children of the captivity is certain, for Cyrus was then king, and Darius followed. And the first year of the reign of Cyrus was about 536 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas this could not have been less than twenty years after. Some indeed have dated it nearly 70 years after.

I only here, as in all former instances, request the Reader to begin the perusal of it in prayer, that he may find sufficient cause to end it in praise. *All scripture* (the apostle saith) *is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

CHAPTER 1

CONTENTS

This book opens with the history of a great feast made by the king of Persia to his high lords and captains. The queen being sent for to the banquet, refuseth to come.

ESTHER 1:1

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this *is* Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, *over* an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:)

It is not very material to enquire, and especially as the Holy Ghost hath not shown, who this Ahasuerus was. It is more than probable it is the same with Artaxerxes, Ezra 4:6, 7.—But in respect to the extent of his empire, I think it more important to remark that it must have been a most extensive one. It was much larger than the one Daniel speaks of, Daniel 6:1. But Reader! think what a dominion is that of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is from *sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth*. Think also, amidst all the greatness of Ahasuerus, how short and transient his reign was. Whereas Jesus reigneth forever, and of his duration and kingdom there shall be no end. Hail, thou glorious, thou almighty, thou universal and eternal monarch! Psalm 72:8, 17-19.

ESTHER 1:2-9

(2) *That* in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in Shushan the palace, (3) In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, *being* before him: (4) When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, *even* an hundred and fourscore days. (5) And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; (6) *Where were* white, green, and blue, *hangings*, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds *were of* gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. (7) And they gave *them* drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. (8) And the drinking *was* according to the law;

none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. (9) Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women *in* the royal house which *belonged* to king Ahasuerus.

Reader! what a pitiful feast is this after all! to what good but waste. To what purpose but gluttony. To what intention but to feed our corrupt passions, lust and vanity. But turn your thoughts to Jesus. He hath made a feast indeed to all his princes and servants. *A feast of fat things*; and where he himself is both the Lord of it, and the whole of the banquet. Ahasuerus's feast was held for his princes and his nobles: But Jesus hath made a feast to all people: Isaiah 25:6. Ahasuerus's feast lasted for 184 days: Jesus's feast for ever, Ahasuerus showed the riches of his kingdom: Jesus hath not only showed his people his glory, but made them partakers of it, and causeth them to sit down with him in his kingdom. Oh! for grace to adore the sovereign Redeemer as the king in Zion, and the Lord both of heaven and earth.

ESTHER 1:10-22

(10) ¶ On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, (11) To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she *was* fair to look on. (12) But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by *his* chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him. (13) Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so *was* the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: (14) And the next unto him *was* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, *and* Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, *and* which sat the first in the kingdom;) (15) What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains? (16) And Memucan answered before the king

and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that *are* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. (17) For *this* deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. (18) *Likewise* shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus *shall there arise* too much contempt and wrath. (19) If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. (20) And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. (21) And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: (22) For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that *it* should be published according to the language of every people.

We have here the relation of the sad effects of feasting and drunkenness, which for the most part end in broils and contentious, and sometimes even in bloodshed and murder. Reader! recollect in your own knowledge whether you cannot call to mind evils resulting from intemperance. Indeed it can produce no good. The pampering our corrupt appetites, and feeding more than nature requires for sustenance, is at all times pernicious. Here we have ancient history of a divorce between Ahasuerus and his queen. And in more modern times what horrible consequences have ensued in public bodies, and in private life, from the excess of sensuality. Reader! depend upon it the happiness of man, even in relation to this life only, must consist *in crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts*.

REFLECTIONS

MY Soul! let some of the improvements this scripture furnisheth lead thee to contemplate the sad state of man by the fall? What do we read of this great king and his vast empire of good. What hungry bellies did he fill; what poor did he nourish: and what misery did he relieve? Not a word of these royal acts. How would his name have been handed down to posterity had some sweet records like these have been given to us. And yet infinitely higher, and more illustrious, had his reverence and love of God been recorded. Could it have been said that his court and people, led by his example, were pious towards God, and gracious towards men? Instead of this, we hear of nothing concerning him but feasting and lust, pride and passion.

From such a prince let us turn to one who was, and is, the reverse. Yes! blessed Jesus, thou art the prince of the kings of the earth; and both in empire, in love, and power, and grace, and goodness, all thy people can desire. Under thy reign everything is formed for real splendour, real happiness and joy. Thou causest them that love thee to inherit substance, yea durable riches, and righteousness. Thou makest a feast indeed, a gracious, spiritual feast, and art thyself the food thereof. And thy feast is to lead thy people into green pastures, and feed them beside the still waters of comfort. And by and by thou wilt bring, them all home to thine everlasting mansions of light, and joy, and happiness above, where thou wilt lead them *to fountains of living waters, and where thou wilt wipe away all tears from all eyes.*

CHAPTER 2

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This chapter is a continuation of the history, resulting from the former. Vashti the queen being deposed, Esther, a jewish girl, is chosen. Mordecai her relation is enabled fo make discovery of a treason meditated against the king.

ESTHER 2:1-4

(1) ¶ After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. (2) Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: (3) And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given *them*: (4) And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

The most interesting remark, as it strikes me upon what is here said, is, to observe into what a degraded state our poor nature is fallen, when that which ariseth from the fall of our nature is made a pretence to the indulging of it. The union of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, the apostle tells us, was a mystery, intimating the resemblance between *Christ and his church*. But when the devil corrupted our nature to separate from God, the chastity of man's attachment to his partner was corrupted also. Ephesians 5:25-33.

ESTHER 2:5-6

(5) *Now* in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name *was* Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; (6) Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

Most likely the whole cause for which the history of this transaction in the Persian court is recorded in the scriptures of

God, is only to introduce certain great events belonging to the church. So that in fact the principal part of the history begins at this place. The Reader, therefore, will not fail to keep this as the grand point in view through the whole. And let him further observe, by what slender means the Lord is pleased to carry on his great designs concerning his church and people. When Jesus, our adorable Redeemer, came upon earth, in what an humble way and manner was he introduced. Who should have thought such vast and glorious designs as redemption hath produced; should have opened with so low a beginning?

ESTHER 2:7

(7) And he brought up Hadassah, that *is*, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid *was* fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

Though Esther makes in the after-part of this history so considerable a figure, yet her introduction is but humble.

ESTHER 2:8-20

(8) So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. (9) And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, *which were* meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best *place* of the house of the women. (10) Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew *it*. (11) And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her. (12) Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of

their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with *other* things for the purifying of the women;) (13) Then thus came *every* maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. (14) In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. (15) Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. (16) So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which *is* the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. (17) And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. (18) Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, *even* Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king. (19) And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. (20) Esther had not *yet* shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.

I do not think it necessary to interrupt the progress of this history through these verses with any remarks. The relation given of the events is in a beautiful style of simplicity. Esther is represented in a most amiable light, and with a mind, suited as it should seem, for any nation. We may and we ought indeed, to observe, in the wonderful transition of circumstances, from the condition of a poor Jewish orphan, apparently friendless, and unconnected with any that seemed likely to promote her advance in the world to that of the throne of Persia, what great events the Lord in his providence

is pleased to accomplish, and it should direct our minds to look up, and contemplate a divine hand in every event. But Reader! I can tell you of a still more marvellous instance of Almighty power, namely, when a poor friendless sinner is taken from the prison and the tyranny of Satan, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost, betrothed to Jesus, and made a child of God by adoption and by grace.

ESTHER 2:21-23

(21) ¶ In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. (22) And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told *it* unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name. (23) And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

I request the Reader not to lose sight of this transaction, particularly the part that Mordecai had in it; for it became a point of great importance in the sequel of Mordecai's life. This small event, as it should seem to have been respecting Mordecai, the Lord graciously overruled, when a deep and desperate attempt was made against the church in the after stages of cruelty intended to be exercised upon it, and by it accomplished the church's deliverance. By small means sometimes the Lord carrieth on the secret purposes of his holy will. It is beautiful to mark how the Lord doth this in all our own concerns. The Psalmist saith, that *whoso is wise will ponder these things, they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* Psalm 107:43.

REFLECTIONS

READER! let the view here afforded of the sad corruption and base lusts of our poor fallen nature, add one conviction more to all thou hast already received of the great necessity and immense blessing of the pure gospel of Christ. Well might the angels call it *glad tidings of great joy, which should be to all people*. For what tidings more glad, or what joy greater, than to tell a poor sinner, who feels a body of sin and death, of uncleanness and inordinate affection, that *there is a fountain open to him for sin and uncleanness; that there is a spirit to mortify the deeds of the body, by which he may live*. Oh! the unspeakable mercy folded up in this proclamation of *liberty to poor captives*. Captives to sin, to Satan, to divers lusts and pleasures, to the effect of anger, malice, hatred, variance, and all the works of the flesh. Yes! precious Jesus, thou hast brought deliverance in thy gospel from the vile passions of our nature in this life; and by thy great salvation deliverance from the wrath to come. Oh! Lord deliver me from myself, from my own corrupt nature; from a body of corruption under which I yet groan. Make me holy as thou art holy, and never, dearest Lord, suffer me upon any occasion, or from any cause, to be making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof?

Reader! when you have gathered this instruction from the view of the ungoverned lusts of men, as read to us in this chapter; turn your thoughts and gather another sweet instruction, from the overruling providence of God, as sweetly taught us in this history in making the very corrupt passions of men, minister to his glory. Never doth the Lord manifest more strikingly his sovereignty and grace, than when he compels the very passions of bad men, to promote the sacred purposes of his holy will. The church of God was about to be brought into danger. How shall the Lord, without openly displaying his interposition, preserve it? Why thus. Ahasuerus

turning off his queen Vashti to gratify his anger, shall be influenced to the choice of Esther, to supply her place. And Esther, unknown to him, being of the children of the captivity, shall be brought forward as the Lord's instrument, to the preservation of his people. Neither is this all. For as a secondary aid to the accomplishment of this purpose, Mordecai shall be brought acquainted with a plot laid against the king's life, a record shall be made of his loyalty, which shall not immediately be rewarded, but brought forth in due season. Oh! how beautiful is it, to watch the ways and works of our wonder-working God. Justly is it said, *that his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known*. Reader! make application of this blessed doctrine to your own person and circumstances, and depend upon it you will find continual opportunity, of proving the same thing. *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him*.

CHAPTER 3

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We have here the church of God brought into great danger, and threatened with total destruction. Haman the Agagite is advanced by the king to great honors; being slighted by Mordecai he determineth revenge upon the whole nation of Israel.

ESTHER 3:1

(1) ¶ After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that *were* with him.

The Reader should recollect, for the better apprehension of this history, that at this time the kingdom of Persia, as the Roman in after ages, and the Babylonian in former times, swayed the sceptre of the then known world. This Haman therefore, it is probable, had been brought under the government of Persia, and being at court had gained the favor of Ahasuerus.

ESTHER 3:2-4

(2) And all the king's servants, that *were* in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did *him* reverence.

(3) Then the king's servants, which *were* in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment?

(4) Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he *was* a Jew.

At the first reading of this passage, it may seem somewhat extraordinary to a common Reader, that Mordecai should refuse to pay homage to Haman. But the reason will soon be discovered, when we call to mind what God had commanded his people on this point. Haman, we are told, was an Agagite; a descendant, therefore, of that Agag, who was king of the Amalekites; against whom the Lord had sworn, that his people should have *war, from generation to generation*. Hence, therefore, Mordecai considered the Lord's command, and refused to bow down to an Amalekite: so that nothing can be more beautiful in proof of Mordecai's faithfulness. Though his life was at stake, and he knew that the absolute power of the king might order him to death without trial; yet he feared not the wrath of the king, like another champion for the truth of old, for *he endured, as seeing him who is invisible*. Exodus 17:14-16. Deuteronomy 25:17-19. 1 Samuel 15:2, 3. 32, 33. Hebrews 11:7.

ESTHER 3:5-6

(5) And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. (6) And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, *even* the people of Mordecai.

Mark the true Amalekitish spirit in this monster of iniquity. Suppose that Mordecai was ever so deserving of death, was it not enough, Haman, to cut him off; but thou must destroy a whole nation with him? Alas! what a desperate height the bad passions of bad men are capable of advancing to. But, Reader! may we not spiritualize the passage, and behold in it (like Pharaoh in Egypt) the hatred of the world against the church of Jesus. It was the enemy of souls which caused this hellish design to take flame in the breast of Haman. And at the bottom of this intended destruction, it was Jesus, and his church and people, which the Devil aimed at one blow to destroy. Oh! how precious it is, to behold the Lord's watchful eye over his people. *Destroy it not, (saith He that looketh on) there is a blessing in it.* Yes! Jesus is in it, and it cannot be hurt. Isaiah 65:8.

ESTHER 3:7

(7) ¶ In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, *to* the twelfth month, that *is*, the month Adar.

It should seem, that what is here said concerning the casting of the lot, means as if Haman was using some art or contrivance, by way of better forwarding his malicious designs. One thing, however, seems clear from it, that, as the lot did not turn up until the *twelfth* month, it gave a longer time for the Lord's purposes, concerning the delivery of his

people, to ripen. Solomon tells us, *that the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* Proverbs 16:33. No doubt, while these diabolical designs of Haman were contriving, the Lord's people were sharply exercised. And, no doubt, great opportunity was afforded for prayer. Reader! the delay of judgments and of mercies may be all sanctified, when they lead us the oftener to the throne of grace.

ESTHER 3:8-9

(8) And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws *are* diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it *is* not for the king's profit to suffer them. (9) If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries.

Now the policy of hell begins to work. Never, surely, was there a deeper scheme of revenge formed. Oh! how well it is for as that the Lord looks on. Reader! what a relief is it to the mind, when at any time iniquity abounds, to remark the tender, watchful love of Jesus over his church. His message to the church of *Smyrna* is an example of this kind, never to be forgotten. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten day; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* Revelation 2:10. How sweet and consolatory are these words. The devil, like Haman, would have cast them *all*; but the Lord saith, it should only be *some* of them. And he would have cast them into *hell*; but no, saith Jesus, it shall be but in *prison*. And he would have kept them there *for ever*; but it shall be only *ten days*. Oh! how sure is the crown, when Jesus hath purchased it.

ESTHER 3:10-11

(10) And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

(11) And the king said unto Haman, The silver *is* given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Was there ever so foolish, as well as worthless, a monarch, as this poor unthinking Persian, to consent to an act so cruel. Reader! remark it, wherever the gratification of corrupt lusts reign in the body, the mind will be also under the dominion of cruelty.

ESTHER 3:12-15

(12) Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that *were* over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and *to* every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. (13) And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, *even* upon the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and *to take* the spoil of them for a prey. (14) The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. (15) The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

It is impossible to conceive the different effects, which must have been called forth in the different minds of the people, throughout the whole empire, in consequence of this edict. What a mercy did the Lord manifest to his people in the midst, that the whole kingdom were to be apprised of it, before that the execution was to take place. So Jesus holds forth grace to his people, and even to the rebellious, a space

for repentance. Having planned the ruin of the poor defenseless Jews, the king and Haman sit down to drunkenness. While God's people are afflicted the enemy shouts. Here let us wait awhile, and see how the Lord will work. In every trial these sweet words should comfort during the dark hour: *For the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord.* And when God aviseth, woe to the oppressor. Psalm 12:5.

REFLECTIONS

IF we anticipate the history of this memorable event, as the sacred writer hath in the subsequent chapters given it, we shall not only derive a most blessed lesson, how to wait the Lord's time in all trials for deliverance; but we shall learn also, how to possess our souls in patience during the dark hour. Never, perhaps, was there a more deadly blow aimed by any wretch, than this Agagite leveled at the poor Jews. And the sequel shows us that it fell wholly upon himself. Reader! depend upon it, such will be all the stratagems and schemes of Satan, in his various attacks upon Jesus and his Church. It is not enough to say that his designs shall do no harm; we must say more than this, and be convinced that they shall all do good. *For all things work together for good to them that love God.* Doth Satan plan my soul's destruction? Doth he want to get me into his snare? doth he desire to have me, that he may sift me as wheat? Do I know these things? do I feel, at times, his power? Doth he join with my corruptions to cast me down? And doth a sense of this make me cry to the Lord? Doth it cause me to fly out of myself, and take refuge in Jesus? Surely then, the Lord overrules even the devices of the enemy to my soul's welfare. And I ought to rejoice, as the Holy Ghost, by his servant James, commanded the church, when *falling into divers temptations.* Here then, blessed

Jesus, let my soul always rest on thee, and thy finished work of salvation, when at any time unpromising events and discouraging trials occur. Oh! for grace, at all times, to exercise faith on that sweet promise: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

CHAPTER 4

CONTENTS

This chapter begins with the relation of the effect Haman's plan had upon the minds of the Jews. The great distress in which the whole were involved. An account is given to Esther. She conferreth messages with Mordecai upon it. A fast is appointed by Esther, before she ventures into the king's presence.

ESTHER 4:1-3

(1) ¶ When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry; (2) And came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. (3) And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

The subject riseth to a very interesting point at the opening of this chapter. Mordecai well knew that he was the cause which had called forth Haman's vengeance. He doth not recant however, or humbly seek peace with Haman. This would have been to have courted the favor of man, and slighted the confidence he had in God. It was God's cause in which he was embarked: and, no doubt, his eyes were to the Lord for

deliverance. But until deliverance should be wrought, if it pleased the Lord to grant such a mercy, Mordecai gives vent to sorrow. It is certainly a beautiful feature in his character, that he came forth publicly, by this cry in the midst of the city, to show that he was a Jew. But while viewing the subject in its first and literal sense as an history, we may, I think, without violence, as it concerns the church of God, behold it also spiritually. A proclamation of God's righteous law is gone forth against sin and transgression; for, void of deliverance by Jesus, universal, and everlasting destruction is assuredly to fall, from the presence of our Lord, on all who know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And while the awakened sinner is unacquainted with the means of escape in the redemption by Jesus, like Mordecai he will rent his clothes and cry aloud with a great and bitter cry; *what must I do to be saved?*

ESTHER 4:4-12

(4) So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told *it* her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received *it* not. (5) ¶ Then called Esther for Hatach, *one* of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it *was*, and why it *was*. (6) So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which *was* before the king's gate. (7) And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. (8) Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. (9) And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. (10) Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; (11) All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner

court, who is not called, *there is* one law of his to put *him* to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. (12) And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

The several conferences here, carried on by means of the chamberlain between Esther and Mordecai, serve to show how much Esther took it to heart. But the Persian custom totally precluded the women of the king's chamber, to have any personal conversation, with any other than the chamberlains appointed by the king to attend them. This may serve to explain why it was, that Mordecai could not be permitted to see Esther in person. Even so critical a moment as this made no allowance. Reader! pause over this part of the history and consider the happiness of God's people. A throne of grace is always open to thee. Jesus not only is ready to receive his people, but he waits to be gracious. His hand is full of gifts, and his heart full of love, and grace is dropping like the honey-comb from his lips. And lest his people after all the many blessed things which are said of him, should still be backward to draw nigh; we are commanded to come boldly to a throne of grace in his blood, that we may obtain *mercy and find grace to help in all time of need*. Hebrews 4:16.

ESTHER 4:13-14

(13) Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. (14) For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?

Though I must not swell the observations on this history too largely, yet I must beg the Reader to remark with me several

very striking traits of character, in this account of Mordecai. In the first place, what faithfulness he used with the queen; telling her she was a Jew, and most certainly as a Jew, she would, and must be, dealt with in the end by this desperately wicked enemy, Haman. In the next place, Mordecai's faith in God is eminently great upon this occasion. Whether Esther would or not stir herself in the perilous moment; yet the cause was God's, and deliverance would come. And thirdly, Mordecai gently intimates, that no doubt the Lord had advanced her to the throne purposely to be his instrument; but if she neglected it, her ruin, and the whole house of her fathers, would be the more abundantly aggravated. By these arguments the faithful Mordecai endeavored to direct the eye of Esther to the Lord, under this pleasing confidence, that as the Lord had placed her where she was for his glory, he would help her through every difficulty, in the accomplishment of his own blessed designs for his people's deliverance. Reader! do not fail to make application of these most gracious thoughts of the faithful Jew, to thine own circumstances, and the circumstances of the church of Jesus in all ages, as they may be required. It is sweet, it is precious, to eye the hand of the Lord in all events. And it is equally so to trust God upon all occasions. The Holy One of Israel is engaged for his people's welfare, both by word, and by oath, and by the blood and righteousness of his dear Son. And he hath manifested his faithfulness, as all the saints have borne testimony under all trials. Why then, Reader, shall you or I be an exception to this everlasting care and love that Jehovah hath to his people? Oh! for faith to give God in Christ the credit of God, and to believe in him when matters are most dark and discouraging.

ESTHER 4:15-17

(15) Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*, (16) Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast

ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. (17) So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

How the Lord wrought upon the mind of Esther is evident from what is here said. She enters not upon the service to which she was called, without first looking up to the Lord both for a blessing and direction. Reader! she did as I pray God you and I may have the same grace to do upon all undertakings for God's glory, and our own happiness; she sought to God according to that blessed promise, which thousands have found true, and none ever failed in: In *all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths*. Proverbs 3:6. And it is a maxim sooner or later to be depended upon, he that begins in prayer will find cause to end in praise. I admire the piety of Esther. She was indeed a true Israelite in setting up a fast herself, and in calling upon the church to the same. Here was a sweet example of what is frequently spoken of, but not so generally regarded, the communion of Saints. Though Esther and the Jews of the city of *Shushan*, were separated by walls and absent in body, yet were they present in Spirit. And oh! what might we not expect to follow such spiritual converse among the people of God, when we call to mind that one and the same Almighty Spirit, is the quickener of all, the helper of the infirmities of all, and maketh *intercession for the saints according to the will of God*. Romans 8:26, 27. The resolution Esther took of going in uncalled before the king, was highly proper and noble. God in covenant is a sure God; and in all cases which are for his glory and his people's welfare, he will manifest himself their helper. But (as if Esther had said) if there be a doubt concerning this particular providence now pending, if the Lord hath given us up to chastisement, I can but perish; and if I do

I will yet die trusting. Reader! while we admire this woman's faith, let you and I seek grace to exercise that faith yet higher. None can perish who hang on God's covenant engagements in Jesus. And therefore to say (as some do say,) if I perish, I will perish at Christ's feet, is a contradiction in itself, and plainly manifests that their faith who say so, is not what it should be. Oh! for faith to believe the record which God hath given of his Son. And in this faith to go in before the king of Kings, and Lord of Lords, with a firmness of assurance like Job. *will he plead against me (saith Job) With his great power? No. But he will put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him so shall I be delivered for ever from my judge.* Job 23:6, 7. Reader! pause, and admire the grace of faith given to this man. And while you admire, beg of God to be made a partaker of the same. Surely, the true believing soul in Jesus, if he gives credit to the word of Jehovah, or the infinitely precious value of the Redeemer's blood and righteousness, can never fear to perish, while secured in the double stronghold of God the Father's sovereign grace, and God the Son's justifying righteousness. Lord! grant in this faith my soul may daily, hourly live, and in this perfect assurance die. Amen.

REFLECTIONS

READER! here is a large fund of rich things in this chapter, to call up thy most awakened contemplation. Mordecai, in the prospect of the destruction of his countrymen the Jews, covered himself with sackcloth, ran into the midst of the city, and uttered a loud and bitter cry, in token of the threatened miseries of the people. But if you and I had but a deep sense of the threatened punishment of everlasting miseries, which are hanging over the heads of all *that hold the truth in unrighteousness*; could we but properly ascertain the sorrows

of that tribulation, and wrath, which must assuredly one day light upon all the workers of iniquity; what bitter dolorous cries would issue from the heart, in the sad prospect of such dreadful, everlasting misery? But how little do the most awakened consider, as they ought these solemn things! God speaks once, yea twice, and man regards it not. Oh! Lord! take to thyself thy great power, and turn back the hearts of the people to seek thy face, before *the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come.*

Reader! think, if it be possible, of the vast difference between the court of Persia, and the court of heaven. See in the case of Esther the queen, how wretched that one so high in rank should yet be in danger of her life, if presuming to come into the king's presence uncalled. Whereas thou hast not only a court of heaven, and a throne of grace at all times to fly to; but one there who commands thee to come boldly, to find mercy and grace to help in all times of need. One, who makes thy cause his own. One, who is more interested for thy welfare than thou art for thyself. One, who hath loved thee and given himself for thee. Oh! precious, precious Jesus! to thee, Lord, would I come; not according to the law of my obedience, for I have nothing to plead of this kind; but in the law-fulfilling, and all-perfect righteousness of thy finished salvation. And oh! how sure and certain is my reception of grace and mercy from thee; since thou hast said.; *All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me, and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out. My sheep shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Be thou everlastingly blessed, O my God and Saviour; and let a throne of grace witness for me, that in thee and thy salvation do I put my trust; *so shall I never be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*

CHAPTER 5

CONTENTS

We have here the prosecution of the history concerning Esther's going in before the king. She adorns herself in her royal apparel, and approacheth the king. He receives her graciously.

ESTHER 5:1-2

(1) ¶ Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on *her* royal *apparel*, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. (2) And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that *was* in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

Highly interesting as the account here is of Esther's appearing before the king, and anxious as we feel ourselves while prosecuting the history, until the event of her success is known yet there is a subject which this tale naturally tends to awaken in the mind vastly more interesting, namely, of every poor sinner's appearing before God. Reader! hath not your own heart suggested the thought, and did not the relation of the state in the which Esther stood, lead your mind to consider how the sinner must one day stand, *before the judgment seat of Christ*. Precious Jesus! what unspeakable mercies hast thou bestowed upon thy people, in that their approach to God in thy blood and righteousness, is warranted, their acceptance insured, and the golden sceptre not only always held forth, but they are received as partakers of thy throne, and will one day sit down with thee in it, and be there for ever. Revelation 3:21.

ESTHER 5:3

(3) Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what *is* thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

Reader! do not overlook the hand of the Lord in this business. It was God which disposed the king to be so gracious. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

ESTHER 5:4-5

(4) And Esther answered, If *it seem* good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. (5) Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

There was a great deal of wisdom as well as modesty in this request. Such an opportunity as a banquet would afford, would better favor the petition she had further to present than immediately preferring it now. When highly favoured souls have the presence of the Lord Jesus, and, like the beloved apostle John, lie in Christ's bosom, they feel more confidence to tell Jesus all their secrets.

ESTHER 5:6-8

(6) And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. (7) Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is*; (8) If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to morrow as the king hath said.

It should seem that Haman had no consciousness that Esther was a Jew, for if he had it would have struck him, that Esther was implicated in the warrant of the king, for the general

execution of all the Jews. Probably, the Lord overruled this to his more sure destruction. And I cannot but think, that the same gracious Lord overruled the mind of Esther, from some cause which she perhaps could not even to herself explain, why she postponed making known what her request was, the *first* day of the banquet. The opening of the next chapter informs us, that the same night, which was the night preceding the *second* banquet, the king's sleep departed from him, and by a providence he had no consciousness of, he was led to the perusal of the chronicles of his kingdom, where Mordecai's loyalty was brought to his recollection, in saving the king's life from a conspiracy, as mentioned in the second chapter. Hence, therefore, this became a great strengthening to promote the gracious designs of God, in the deliverance of his church and people from Haman's cruelty. Reader! nothing is more profitable than to watch even the smallest leadings of God's providences. The least token, the least word sometimes dropped, when it is to accomplish the designs of God, become the introduction to a train of the greatest events. Esther's postponing her request no doubt was productive of great mercy. Reader! do not fail to recollect, how enhanced the Lord's blessings frequently are by their delay. We are, like children, all in haste to gather the fruit, though unripe, and would be injurious. God keeps it till it is more suited for us, and our hearts more suited to receive it.

ESTHER 5:9-13

(9) ¶ Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. (10) Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. (11) And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all *the things* wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. (12) Haman said

moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. (13) Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

The sacred historian hath drawn the portrait of this man in a short compass to a full length painting, and of the most finished kind, in a description of misery. He confesses, in the midst of all the possessions the highest rank in the court of eastern magnificence could afford, that such dreadful malignity rankled within, that the whole was nothing, so long as he saw a poor Jew whom he envied, sit without doing him reverence in the king's gate. Reader! pause over this, and remark how wretched must be the state of a man's heart, which is open to such dreadful corroding passions! how little to be esteemed then must be all outward things, when a profusion of them cannot ensure happiness. And above all think, I charge you, how infinitely precious must be that blessed and only remedy, which the gospel of Jesus affords, for changing the heart, and curing such guilty passions.

ESTHER 5:14

(14) Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

The subject is here wrought to the most finished point of everything that is interesting; and everything as far as human malice, aided by diabolical stratagems, could effect evil, seems hovering over the poor Jews. Thus the Lord frequently permits the malice of bad men, to go to the greatest length for the exercise of his people's faith, the greater disappointment and ruin their foes, and the more illustrious

display of his own glory. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise him, the remainder of wrath will he restrain.* Psalm 76:10.

REFLECTIONS

Who can read this history of Esther's going in before the king, full of fear, doubt, and a thousand misgivings; and not call to mind the state, in which many of God's people go in before Jesus their king and God in Zion! and who can behold the kindness and complacency with which the king received Esther, and not have his heart led out, to contemplate the everlasting love, and kindness, and favor, which the Lord Jesus showeth to all his poor petitioners. Surely any of the Lord's redeemed ones have cause to blush, who keep back through fear from Jesus, when we here behold Esther going in unsent, uncalled, and contrary to the law, and yet finding favor; while every poor sinner that feels his need of Jesus is called, invited, nay even commanded to come, and the golden sceptre is always held out, and Jesus waits to be gracious. Reader! let this sweet view be productive of all its designed effects in our hearts. We have no uncertainty, no ifs or peradventures, respecting our reception. We have no Hamans to oppose us; for though Satan the adversary, is said to stand resisting, yet blessed be our God he is rebuked. But we have a sure, a successful, an all-prevailing advocate with the Father, who ever lives, both to plead, and to ensure our acceptance. Oh! for grace then to go always with holy boldness, not in slavish fear, nor in bondage frames, for this is highly unbecoming the redeemed of the Lord; but let us come, as those whom the Son of God hath made free, and in whom God our Father hath called us to the privilege and adoption of sons. Oh! how very delightful would all seasons, and especially holy ordinance seasons prove, if by faith in

God's dear Son, the redeemed of the Lord would at all times draw nigh in the blood of the cross.

Reader! as Esther made a pause before she ventured to bring her petition too hastily to an issue; so let you and I, in all great events concerning the Lord's providences in the world. Though this chapter closeth with a dark and lowering aspect, yet it is in the Lord's hands. He is everlastingly pursuing the salvation of his people. *Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Leave all events with Jesus. Hast thou trusted him with thy soul; depend upon it he careth also for the body. Leave every concern in his hands. He doeth all things well. Remember that sweet scripture, *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth knowledge, shall keep the heart and mind in Christ Jesus.*

CHAPTER 6

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The black cloud with which the church was covered, in the preceding chapter, begins in this to brighten up. Ahasuerus, unable to sleep, causeth the records of his kingdom to be read to him. This leads to Mordecai's advancement. Haman begins to meet with mortification. Esther's petition is presented.

ESTHER 6:1

(1) ¶ On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

I beg the Reader to mark the opening of this chapter. The king could not sleep. We need not stay to ask wherefore he could not: but rather behold the cause in the Lord. Scripture tells us, it is *the Lord that giveth his beloved sleep*. But when the Lord hath any providences to be accomplished, he never can want the means to bring them about; even his enemies shall be restless, if such a state can better minister to his glory. In this sleepless state; the king commands the chronicles of his kingdom to be read to him. Reader! if you or I lay sleepless, let us read the book of God, or meditate in the night watches upon Jesus, and his great salvation. I beg the Reader to mark yet further, the particularity of the king's choice, in having the Chronicles of his kingdom read to him. In those eastern courts soft music was made use of, to lull the monarchs to sleep. Reading the events of his kingdom, was more likely to induce thought than to cause forgetfulness. Daniel 6:18.

ESTHER 6:2

(2) And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

Reader! go on to remark the hand of the Lord in what is here related. How came the persons who read to the king, to light upon this part of the Chronicles which referred to Mordecai? Surely he that made the king sleepless, caused the Readers of the Chronicles to turn to this chapter. Oh! how sweet is it, to see God's hand in all providences! and if possible how far sweeter, to trace the Lord's hand, in causing his servants the ministers to read such scriptures, and to preach such sermons as they themselves are perhaps unconscious of, but yet the Lord directs to the heart of sinners. *Surely* (saith the patriarch) *the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*. Genesis 28:16.

ESTHER 6:3

(3) And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

Reader! look still with your eye beyond the letter of the word, and discover one behind the whole, like the prophet's vision, (Ezekiel 1:26) directing both the heart of the king and his servants. And oh! that God's exercised and afflicted people, might learn from the case of Mordecai, as related in this instance, that while he was waiting as he thought, the impending judgment, the Lord was hastening to him in mercy. Such is it with God's people at all times. *All these things* (Jacob said) *were against him*. But, in reality, they were all making for him. Genesis 42:36.

ESTHER 6:4

(4) ¶ And the king said, Who *is* in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

Every verse in this sweet chapter is interesting. No sooner was the morning arrived, than Haman, alive to his malice, was already at court, waiting to see the king on the business for hanging Mordecai. Reader! think how malicious the devil is to accuse the brethren: think how Jesus rebukes him. Under all thy fears, recollect that there is One always on the throne, whose redemption is complete, and whose intercession never fails.

ESTHER 6:5

(5) And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

Haman is announced. Ahasuerus is ready for his purpose, and Haman for his: but oh! how different their views. Think of

this, my soul, when the enemy storms most. Never is the triumph of hell nearer the close, than when Satan grows most furious.

ESTHER 6:6-11

(6) So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? (7) And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, (8) Let the royal apparel be brought which the king *useth* to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: (9) And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. (10) Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, *and* take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. (11) Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

Reader! When you have made all due reflections on the history, and beheld in it, with wonder, how the Lord overrules all things to his own glory, his people's good, and their enemies ruin: and when you have made suitable application of it to your own case and circumstances, and the circumstances of God's church and people in all ages; then turn your thoughts to Jesus, who, as the Glory-man, Jehovah delighteth to honor. Oh! who can behold, Jesus in the glories of his most gracious character, as the Head and King of his church and people, and not bend the knee before him, and with the whole soul confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the

glory of God the Father! Hail! thou King of kings, and Lord of lords!

ESTHER 6:12

(12) ¶ And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hastened to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

Reader! observe, and closely observe, the different effects wrought upon the minds of those two men. Mordecai was not elated: he, did not hasten to the King after his promotion. He did not seek to get the decree, for the destruction of himself and people, reversed: neither did he seek to be revenged upon Haman. No, his cause was in good hands, the Lord's hands, *He that believeth shall not*, for he need not, *make haste*. On the other hand, Haman, stung to death, feels all that mortified pride can feel: but no grace of repentance, no sorrow, no compunction at the infamy of his conduct, only at his disappointment. And, Reader! can you desire stronger, evidence than this affords, that there is, there must be all this difference between grace and nature: Wherefore was the nature of Mordecai thus directed, but because grace had wrought it in him. And wherefore Haman still hastening to ruin, but from the malignity of his own mind.

ESTHER 6:13-14

(13) And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every *thing* that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai *be* of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. (14) And while they *were* yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Observe, Reader! the ground on which the wife of Haman, and those around him, forebode evil. If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews; why, what were they? Captives, poor,

tributaries, and in desolate circumstances. But they were a seed in covenant with God: though outcasts, yet God's outcasts. Isaiah 18:4. And as a praying seed of Jacob, they had power with God to prevail. Reader! think only of the vast privileges of God's people. *If God be for us, who can be against us.* Haman is now hastening to the banquet, no doubt, as he thought, to repair all; but in reality to hasten on his final ruin. Pause, Reader, and contemplate the hand of God in all.

REFLECTIONS

READER! while I pray for grace both for you and myself, that we may derive all suitable instruction from our gracious covenant God, as held forth to us in this chapter, manifesting himself in the deliverance of his people, and the ruin of his enemies, both as the God of providence and of grace, I would beg of you, with greater earnestness, to let what is said of Mordecai, and the honor put upon him, lead your mind to the contemplation of Jesus. Surely in the day, when from the gate, and from the prison, Jesus was exalted at God's right hand as a Prince and as a Saviour, and all principalities and powers made subject unto him, the exaltation of Jesus, as the glorious Head of his church, was then set forth; and as our adorable Redeemer and Saviour, Jehovah manifested that he delighted to honor him. And think how the Lord Jehovah hath indeed delighted to honor him. He hath not only given him a name which is above every name, but it hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. He hath not only made him the Saviour of poor sinners, but he hath made all the angels of light to worship him. All the employment and service of his church below is, to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. And all the work of the church above is also to honor Christ: the song of angels, as well as of the

redeemed from among men, is addressed to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb that was slain, forever and ever.

Reader! how shall you and I honor him whom the Father delighteth to honor? There is but one way. Oh! for grace to follow it. I would pray for faith to honor Jesus as the Father honors him. And while Jehovah commits all his glory to Jesus, so would I commit all my salvation: I would honor Jesus as the Sent of God, the sealed of God, the Anointed of God, the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. Yes! blessed Jesus! I would desire so to honor thee, as everlastingly to love thee, to live to thee, to be no longer my own, but as thine by purchase, by the sovereignty of thy grace upon my heart, and as the gift of the Father to thee, for the blessed purposes of my salvation. Blessed be God for all providences, all promises, all mercies, all dispensations; but above all, blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

CHAPTER 7

CONTENTS

Here we have in this chapter the final ruin of Haman. Esther, at the banquet, presents her petition; prays for her life, and the life of her people: accuses Haman of his villany. The king orders his execution.

ESTHER 7:1-2

(1) ¶ So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. (2) And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom.

It should seem that the king was as anxious to know and to answer Esther's request, as she was to present it. He again repeats what he had twice said before, that to the half of his kingdom, let her request be what it might, it should be granted. Here, Reader! pause and consider, that if this poor heathen was so jealous of his honor to fulfil his word, what must thy God be to fulfil his promises? He that graciously proclaims himself as the faithful God. Deuteronomy 7:9. Oh! for faith to give the Lord the honour due unto his name!

ESTHER 7:3-4

(3) Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: (4) For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

Is not this petition of Esther, spiritually considered, very suitable for the petition of every poor sinner before a gracious God, in Christ? Are we not sold? have we not indeed sold ourselves by sin, by iniquity, and transgression? And had our slavery been for God's glory, how could we have stood up for deliverance from it. But when it is for the triumph of Satan; oh! surely Jesus will rescue us from the wrath to come, and take us from the power of the enemy.

ESTHER 7:5

(5) Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?

No doubt the king must have been greatly surprised at the nature of this request. But, Reader! our petitions are all known, and all answered before they are delivered. He that

hears prayer, is the Awakener of prayer, as well as *the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

ESTHER 7:6

(6) And Esther said, The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

How delightful was this honest boldness. *The righteous are bold as a lion.* Think of Haman's terrors: his own conscience accused him: he needed no other. Alas! what an awful day will that be to the sinner, when standing before the judgment-seat of Christ. Oh! for grace now in the day of grace *to flee from the wrath to come!*

ESTHER 7:7-8

(7) ¶ And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath *went* into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. (8) Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

What passed in the king's mind is not known; but it should seem that he returned with more anger, and the situation of Haman, fallen down before Esther in a way of supplication, tended but to inflame his passion the more. All was graciously arranged by the providence of the Lord, to hasten on the ruin of Haman. Behold, Reader! how wisely and securely the Lord orders all things for the accomplishment of the sacred purposes of his will.

ESTHER 7:9-10

(9) And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made

for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. (10) So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

It is not the smallest evidence of the general worthlessness of Haman's character, that this *Harbonah* was so ready to suggest to the king the gallows Haman had erected to hang Mordecai upon. Thus he fell into his own snare. And the very method he had taken for the destruction of a man who had never injured him, proved his own death. Pause, and contemplate the sure end of the ungodly. And what a display is made of the Lord's providential superintendence through all. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord. But let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.*

REFLECTIONS

READER! do not let the history of this wretched man Haman pass away from thy mind, without leaving the suitable reflections the review of such an awful character ought to occasion. What our blessed Lord said of some in his days seems applicable to some in all the days of the Church; *Ye are* (said Jesus to them) *of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning.* And what a resemblance doth the character of Haman bear to such a stock? His hatred to poor Mordecai, stirred up by the evil spirit, disdained to show itself against an individual only; the whole race shall die. Inflamed by power, by pride, and a troop of evil passions, he prosecutes his implacable malice, and to the attainment of this one object he would sacrifice every other. Pause, Reader, as you contemplate the man. Recollect that the same depravity is every man's by nature; and, but for grace, the evil which one man feels disposed to do, all would feel disposed to do.

Nothing makes the difference, but the sovereign, free, restraining, preventing, and renewing grace of God in Jesus. Oh! for a thorough sense of this upon the heart! Oh! for a more awakened knowledge of our infinite and eternal mercies in Jesus. Oh! for ever blessed, blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

One word more before we quit this chapter. See, Reader, in Either's suit obtained, after all the difficulties which seemed to lay in the way, that the cause of God's people can never be overlooked, nor forgotten. Hence, then, let us gather a renewed evidence that in Jesus and his great salvation are everlastingly secured to his people all the blessings contained in redemption. Trials, and difficulties, and seemingly impossibilities of deliverance, may, and must indeed, beset the people of Jesus in their way; but never forget this; Jesus is everlastingly pursuing one invariable plan of happiness concerning them. Oh! for grace to love Jesus, and to know Jesus as a friend, even when in his providences he seems to frown as though he was an enemy. Oh! for grace to lean upon one arm, when with the other he is correcting; to cleave to him, when we cannot take comfort from the darkness of his ways towards us. By and by (the soul saith) he will appear to my joy: I shall behold his face in righteousness. I know that all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth. Things are now dark; but the morning will come. Oh! for grace, then, to wait the Lord's time, and to be convinced that all things must and do work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

CHAPTER 8

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We have in this chapter, what might have been expected, as a sequel to the former; Haman's whole house involved in his ruin: Mordecai advanced: and the Jews delivered from the ruin which had been long hanging over them.

ESTHER 8:1-2

(1) ¶ On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he *was* unto her. (2) And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

Reader! the history before us will lose much of the beauty of it unless we see how far, and in what sense, it teacheth us. And doth it not, sweetly teach that transition from mourning to joy, which the afflicted people of God are sometimes suddenly made to experience? Doth it not, moreover, show us how short-lived the triumphs of the wicked over God's people are? And yet more: Are we not led to contemplate, from the advancement of Mordecai, how gracious the Lord deals by his people, when they who sow in tears are caused to reap in joy? But after all these, and the like improvements, what a faint shadow is the resemblance of what is here related, to the riches and honors Jesus bestows upon his people, when, from leading them to see their misery in themselves, they are made to inherit substance in him, and when he fills all their treasuries. Proverbs 8:21.

ESTHER 8:3

(3) ¶ And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews.

I admire the character of Esther in this particular most eminently, in that she forgot not the state of her brethren in affliction. Haman's proclamation for the destruction of the Jews in all the provinces, signed by the king, and sent forth throughout the empire, was still in force, and the poor captives, no doubt, lay trembling in the expectation of the day. Esther therefore allowed not herself to enter upon the fruit of her services, for her own personal comfort, until she saw them provided for also. I cannot but greatly admire, this conduct in Esther: but while I admire Esther in this, how can I overlook thee, thou blessed Jesus, who, when thou hadst vanquished death, hell, and the grave, and returned to glory, remittedst not thine attention one moment to the concerns of thy people below. And do I not know, thou dear Lord, that such is thine unequalled love to thy redeemed, that never will thy triumphs be complete, till thou hast brought them all around thee in glory, that *where thou art, there they may be also*.

ESTHER 8:4

(4) Then the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king,

It is delightful to see how the Lord directed the mind of the king. But oh! what is it to the tenderness of our glorious King, who everlastingly holds forth the sceptre of his grace to all his petitioners!

ESTHER 8:5-8

(5) And said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing *seem* right before the king, and I *be* pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which *are* in all the king's provinces: (6) For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? (7) Then

the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. (8) Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

Though, by the very foolish law of the Medes and Persians, the king having once issued a decree, could not reverse it, yet he consented to do that which was nearly to the same purpose; what they desired concerning the salvation of the Jews. Reader! while we lament the pride and ignorance of man, who is every day liable to err, that any of his decrees should be irreversible, we cannot sufficiently admire and adore that glorious perfection of our covenant God, whose purposes in Jesus are like himself, unchangeable. Oh! the confidence the Lord's people find in this!

ESTHER 8:9-14

(9) Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that *is*, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which *are* from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. (10) And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed *it* with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, *and* riders on mules, camels, *and* young dromedaries: (11) Wherein the king granted the Jews which *were* in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, *both* little ones and women, and *to take* the spoil of them for a prey, (12) Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, *namely*, upon the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month Adar. (13) The copy of the writing for a commandment

to be given in every province *was* published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. (14) *So* the posts that rode upon mules *and* camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

If the Reader be curious to calculate, he will find, I believe, that this new proclamation was made about nine months before the fatal day that Haman had appointed for the destruction of the Jews was to take place. So that it was little short of two months from Mordecai's bitter cry, to this time of reversing it. So long the Lord sometimes suffers his dear children to be exercised, even when all the while he hath determined upon their deliverance. Oh! for grace ever to keep such things in remembrance. Could Mordecai, and the people of the Jews, had they been commanded to have chosen their own mercies, have desired greater than the destruction of their sworn foe, and the being enriched with his spoils? Think of this then, ye people of God, under all your difficulties. Very shortly *God will bruise Satan under your feet*; and that song shall be sung in full chorus 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.* Revelation 12:10.

ESTHER 8:15

(15) ¶ And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

No doubt Mordecai was humble under all this splendor, and rejoiced more in the people's salvation, than in his own purple. Think, Reader! of thy Jesus, who passed through the

streets of Jerusalem, agreeably to the Prophet's account of him ages before, meek and lowly: Zechariah 9:9. with Matthew 21:5-9. Behold him in his purple before Pilate, when he stood as thy Surety! John 19:5. Look at him with an eye of faith, as John saw him, *in a vesture dipped in blood.* Revelation 19:13.

ESTHER 8:16-17

(16) The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. (17) And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

We can easily conceive the joy of the Jews. But what I more particularly desire to remark, is, the conversion of many of the people of the land to their religion. Must not the Lord have graciously overruled this wonderful transaction in the court of Persia, which, no doubt, was in every one's mouth to his glory. And was it not a type, of the after call and conversion of the Gentile to the Jewish church? Isaiah. 49:6.

REFLECTIONS

OF all the sweet reflections which arise out of this chapter, (and many and interesting they are), I desire chiefly to have my soul directed to the contemplation of Jesus, in his love to this people which the anxiety of Esther, for her countrymen the Jews, so strongly prompts the mind to consider. If she felt such concern as to cry out, How can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people; or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? Think, Reader, whether it be possible to conceive Jesus will look on, and suffer any of his to perish? Recollect the interest he hath in them, the relationship in which he stands towards them; the purchase he hath made of them; the vast price they cost him; the love

he hath to his Father who gave them to him; and the pains he hath gone through, to make their salvation sure? And can you suppose it possible, that he will suffer one of those little ones, which trust in him, to perish? Consider what he is in himself: His glory, greatness, almightiness, and sovereignty, as God and man in one person. Consider what he is in his alliance with his people: There is not a relationship in nature but Jesus fills. He is our everlasting Father. *As one whom his Father comforteth*, (he saith himself) *so will I comfort you*. He is the husband of his church, the brother, the friend. In short, under the tenderest and most endearing characters, he condescends to represent himself, as it by way of confirming his love, which is stronger than death and more vehement in its warmth than coals of fire. And consider what Jesus hath done to satisfy their souls, in the assurance of his unalterable love. He assumed the very nature of man, to convince man by such a palpable evidence of it, how his heart was towards his people. And having stood up as our surety, borne our sins, carried our sorrows, and though knowing no sin in himself, yet being made sin, and even a curse for us, and having satisfied the divine justice, answered the whole law, taken the punishment, finished transgression, made an end of sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, washed poor sinners in his blood, clothed them in his righteousness, he now ever liveth to see the whole purposes of his salvation, fully accomplished: can He endure to see any evil upon his people; or those for whom he died brought into everlasting ruin? Can Jesus look on and behold the destruction of his kindred? Reader! think of this and cast thy soul upon him who careth for thee? Oh! precious Jesus! I would say, cause me to rest with full assurance of faith, and to triumph in thee and thy great salvation!

CHAPTER 9

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We have in this chapter the sequel of the whole history. The day long appointed for the destruction of the Jews being arrived, and the Jews having obtained a new grant, to stand up for their lives, defend themselves and are victorious. Mordecai appoints an annual commemoration of this mercy.

ESTHER 9:1-10

(1) ¶ Now in the twelfth month, that *is*, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;) (2) The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people. (3) And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. (4) For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. (5) Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. (6) And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. (7) And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, (8) And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, (9) And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha, (10) The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand.

If we look at this history simply as such, though it certainly forms a very interesting one, yet we shall not gather the great and leading design, which we may reasonably suppose the Holy Ghost graciously intended from it, in causing it to form a part in the sacred canon of scripture. I would therefore desire the Reader to look further into it, and amidst several points of

view in a way of providence, which are highly worthy our regard, I think we may with safety conclude also, that it was evidently designed in a spiritual sense to show us the watchful care, that the Lord hath over his Church in all periods. Seen in this view, how decisive is it to contemplate the sure ruin of all the Church's enemies; and the sure prosperity of herself amidst all opposition. *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them; woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him.* Isaiah 3:10. We see here the whole house of Haman destroyed. But amidst all, the Jews touch nothing of the spoil. Sweet feature in the character of God's people. *Touch not the unclean thing, lest ye be like to it.*

ESTHER 9:11-16

(11) On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. (12) And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what *is* thy request further? and it shall be done. (13) Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which *are* in Shushan to do to morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. (14) And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. (15) For the Jews that *were* in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand. (16) But the other Jews that *were* in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey,

When we behold this great slaughter, and trace it back to the first cause; how wonderful are the ways of God. But add to this consideration, if we call to mind the Lord's declaration

concerning the everlasting war, the Lord had said he would have with Amalek: no doubt this was one hour, if not the full decisive time, when the name of Amalek was to perish from under heaven. And is not the Church now looking forward to that glorious hour, when all the enemies of Jesus shall be destroyed.

ESTHER 9:17-19

(17) On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. (18) But the Jews that *were* at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth *day* thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth *day* of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. (19) Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar *a day of* gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

I should be inclined to hope and trust, that this was a religious festival, blessing God for so great, so unexpected, and so wonderful a deliverance. Oh! how great, unexpected, and wonderful is the deliverance to a poor sinner, just ready to perish; when the soul is made to hear the voice; *Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.* Job 33:24.

ESTHER 9:20-32

(20) ¶ And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that *were* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, *both nigh and far*, (21) To stablish *this* among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, (22) As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. (23) And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them; (24) Because Haman the son of

Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; (25) But when *Esther* came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. (26) Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and *of that* which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them, (27) The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their *appointed* time every year; (28) And *that* these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and *that* these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. (29) Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim. (30) And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, (31) To confirm these days of Purim in their times *appointed*, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry. (32) And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

The appointment of an annual festival, to treasure up in the minds of the people, and to hand down to posterity, the signal deliverance the Lord had wrought for his people, forms a beautiful close to this interesting history. And the manner in which it was to be observed, in praises and acknowledgments to the Lord and liberality to men, serves to show the graciousness of the design. When our prayers, and our alms come up for a memorial before God; these are suitable things to blend together. The Jews of the present hour keep in remembrance this festival. But alas! how can they observe any deliverance with suitable acknowledgments, when

ignorant of the great Deliverer; and unconscious that all offerings, to make them acceptable, can only be presented in and by him.

REFLECTIONS

MY soul! while proclamations are made and religiously observed, for the annual celebration of deliverances; do thou get away to the mountain of holiness, in the gospel Church of Jesus, and daily celebrate that great deliverance from the wrath to come, which the Son of God by his glorious undertaking and accomplishment, wrought out for poor sinners, who are brought to believe in his name. Here is an everlasting festival indeed, opened to thy unceasing contemplation and thy joy. And here it is that we find *the kingdom of God not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Here then, my soul, seek grace from God, to celebrate in a constant jubilee, thy deliverance from the curse of God's law, the alarms of thine own conscience, the terrors of a guilty mind, with all the just apprehensions of the wrath to come. Blessed be God! the king's decree hath been published and sent through all the provinces: Jesus gives grace, mercy, and peace. And God *so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. And God the Holy Ghost confirms the glorious truth, in giving poor sinners grace *to believe the record which God hath given of his Son*. Lord! cause my soul to receive the truth in the love of it: and oh! grant that I may by faith live in the daily enjoyment of it; and at length arrive to the everlasting celebration of it in the realms above, where Jesus will be eternally adored, and praises of redemption be unceasingly offered to God *and the Lamb*.

CHAPTER 10

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This very short chapter, being unconnected with the history of the church, seems to have been inserted here only to record the advancement of Mordecai, and the happy state of God's people under his favor.

ESTHER 10:1-2

(1) ¶ And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea. (2) And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

The greatness and power of this Persian prince would not, I venture to believe, have been noticed in the scripture, had it not been from the situation of the church of God connected with it. The Bible is only careful to carry on the thread of history, respecting the several kingdoms of the world, as they succeeded each other, by way of showing how they ministered to the introduction of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Daniel was commissioned to tell the king of Babylon, that *the God of heaven, in the days of these kings, would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed*. Therefore the Reader of the sacred scriptures is led by the hand to observe just so far, and no further, as might enable him to trace the divine footsteps marking the way through these temporary kingdoms, in which the Lord setteth down one, and putteth up another; all ministering, though they thought not so, neither did they intend it, to the bringing in that kingdom of our Lord Jesus, *which shall stand for ever*. Hence, the *Persian* succeeded to the *Babylonian*; and the *Roman* (which about this time began to make a little

appearance in the world) was to succeed the *Persian; in the* most peaceable and flourishing part of which, Christ was to Come. Daniel 2:44.

ESTHER 10:3

(3) For Mordecai the Jew *was* next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

What a delightful character is given of Mordecai! Accepted of his brethren; seeking their happiness, and speaking peace to all his seed. Think, Reader what a blessing such a man must have been in his days.

But oh! forget not to look to One infinitely higher, infinitely greater, infinitely surpassing every other, both in love, and grace, and mercy. Thou, O blessed Jesus, art the happiness of all creation, and of thy church, in a most peculiarly sweet way: accepted indeed of all thy brethren, for their happiness thou seekest, and thou not only speakest peace to all thy seed, but thou thyself art our peace, and our portion for ever. Micah. 5:5.

FAREWELL Mordecai! blessed be a faithful God in covenant for his faithfulness to thee and his people. Sharp were thy exercises, and deep the waters of tribulation, which broke in upon thee; when under the pressure, a loud and bitter cry issued from thy very soul. But oh! how hath the Lord brought thee out, and led thee through fire and water, until he hath brought thee into a wealthy place. See, my soul, and in the view always take confidence in the contemplation, how certain the issue is in all the appointments of the Lord. Not one thing hath failed, neither can ever fail, of God's covenant engagements to his people; but all are come to pass as it is this day. And shall not all the promises in Christ Jesus be sure

to all his seed? Did Mordecai utter a loud and bitter cry in the midst of the city, while in the very moment the Lord was bringing about all the gracious purposes that followed: and shall my soul forget the unequalled cry of Jesus in the garden, when in an agony the sweat of his sacred body was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground! Was the Son of God thus afflicted, and his soul exceedingly troubled, in the very moment when, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, he was to be taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain, that by his stripes we might be healed, and by his death our souls live forever: and shall my heart despond, or doubt the efficacy of his blood, and the security of his righteousness? Oh! Lord, henceforth give me more firmness, more assurance of faith, that I may behold thee in those sacred seasons accomplishing redemption, sure to all thy seed. Thou must see the travail of thy soul. The solemn word, the solemn oath is gone forth; *Men shall be blessed in thee; all nations shall call thee blessed.* Hail! holy, blessed, almighty Jesus! In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. To thee do I come, and in thy salvation make my boast. Thou art the Lord my righteousness, the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof. Amen.